

The name of the Jordan in Hebrew means “that which goes down.” In fact, the Jordan descends from 1,312 feet above sea level near Caesarea Philippi (ancient Paneas, or Banyas) (see Slide 47) to 686 feet below sea level at the Sea of Galilee. This severe drop in only 25 air miles accounts for the turbulent water that makes the Jordan not navigable, as this view shows. From the Sea of Galilee, the river then descends to 1,300 feet below sea level at the Dead Sea over a length of 65 air miles. One can imagine that lions might be seen here in the dense thickets of vegetation as in biblical times (Genesis 49:9).