

The Valley of Achor?

Because the Wadi Qelt was the most convenient route from Jericho to the hill country it is a possible route for the Israelite entry into the promised land. The other likely route would be up the next major wadi to the north, which the map maker prefers, and thus marks Ai at the head of this wadi and labels it as the Valley of Achor. Either way the Israelites had to pass up such a difficult steep and frightening ascent. This valley is mentioned in Joshua 7:24 and 26. These events follow after the miraculous capture of Jericho by the Israelites under Joshua.

- What happened there?
- What happened before and after?

The Valley of Achor is gloomy and dangerous and was associated with the sin of Achan, yet in Hosea it becomes a “door of hope” (Hos 2:15).

The transformation of this same place gets described also in Isaiah 65:10.

Bible stories come alive through virtual visits and understanding the geography of the land of the Bible. For links to videos and other resources <http://sbc.org.nz> and click the link to “Land of the Bible”.

Satellite photography from Google Earth, maps Biblemapper <http://biblemapper.com/>

Photographs either from the author or from Todd Bolen at <http://BiblePlaces.com>, and video shot from a helicopter comes from Doug Greenwold at <http://preservingbibletimes.org/>



*Opening of the wadi Qelt near modern Jericho
(photo by .christusrex.org)*

The Land of the Bible

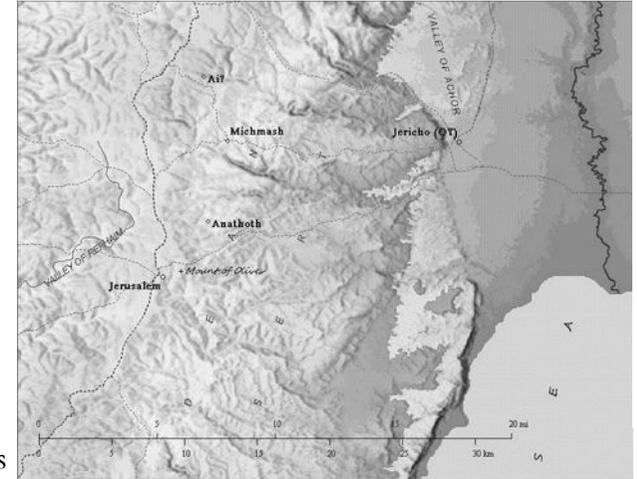
3. Jerusalem to Jericho: Wadi Qelt

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho

Jerusalem on the ridgeline of the Judean hills about 754 m / 2,474 ft above sea level, is almost level with the north of the Dead Sea. Jericho is in the Jordan valley just north of the Dead sea, about 250 m / 825 ft below sea level, east northeast of Jerusalem.

Josephus (a Jewish writer from about Jesus' time) says that the Roman road from Jerusalem to Jericho was about 150 Stadia (about 28Kms). In this distance the road must drop about 1,000 m.

Driving by Route 1 out of Jerusalem (without stops) takes a bit more than half an hour. A walking trail starts at the Ein Prat (a small perennial spring near Anaoth that contributes to the Wadi Qelt) which offers a popular destination with water in the desert.



Nahal Prat

Jerusalem and Jericho

Jerusalem in the hills gets about 50cms of rain annually and good dews in summer, Jericho gets only 20 cms. If it were not for “Elisha's Spring” it would be desert and not “the City of Palms”.

Wadi Qelt

The ancient road (even the Roman one) could not be cut through hills or bridge deep wadis, and so followed the sides of the steep Wadi Qelt. This wadi is a sharp gash cut by water into the limestone of the Judean Desert. It begins not far from Jerusalem and ends not far from Jericho.

We'll take three segments from a helicopter ride below the reserve. On the way we will pass the monastery and a Bedouin camp, we'll see how rugged the country around is, and why the road had to follow the walls of the gorge.

This is the geographical background to Jesus story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

- How long would the journey from Jerusalem to Jericho would have taken?
- Who saw the robbers' victim?
- What did the Samaritan do for the man?
- Where did he take him?



*The wadi just below the Prat Spring
(photo by Bar1254)*



*Wadi Qelt walking track below the monastery
(photo from traveladventures.org)*

Flash floods

On the day of our visit there was no rain in the hills east of the ridgeline. When there is rain here there is little vegetation to hold the water, and it runs off the steep hillsides very quickly getting concentrated in the streams at the bottom of wadis.

Often this can cause flash floods. The water rises very suddenly, sometimes going from a dusty dry stream bed to a raging torrent in minutes. As videos (search YouTube for “Flash Flood Judean Desert” or “Flash Flood Israel”) show such floods are dangerous for animals trapped in the bottom of a wadi.

Psalm 23:1-4

Psalm 23 contains two different pictures of what God is like one in vv. 1-4, the other in v.5. We'll focus on reading the shepherd imagery in vv. 1-4.

- List the actions that the psalmist describes the shepherd performing for the sheep.
- How does our visit to Wadi Qelt throw light on these pictures?



*There is a blue sky and distant few clouds when this "new" waterfall bursts from the cliffs
(from video by by Guy Shachar
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yj94OXAg78g>)*

