

The Accordance Bible Lands PhotoGuide Overview



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The *Accordance Bible Lands PhotoGuide Overview* contains detailed articles describing the most important biblical locations in Israel and surrounding countries, illustrated with high-quality photographs. More than just a collection of pictures, the *Accordance Bible Lands PhotoGuide Overview* is specifically designed to be a teaching tool which helps make the Bible come alive.

It includes following features:

- Photographs of biblically significant sites and regions in Israel, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Sinai, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome.
- A detailed article on the Hebrew Tabernacle, complete with photographs of a life-size replica of the Tabernacle located at Timnah, Israel.
- Photographs of an excavated village at Nazareth complete with walled terraces, watchtowers, a stone quarry, and a winepress dating back to the first century.
- Important artifacts, such as a bronze serpent dating to around the time of Moses, a horned altar from Beer-sheba, and more.
- Pictures of the bema at Corinth where Paul stood trial.

Teachers and pastors especially love the *Accordance Bible Lands PhotoGuide* because the user license allows you to use the images in teaching and preaching contexts.

Introduction

A number of years ago, an experiment in communication was conducted in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A researcher, posing as a native Bostonian, stationed himself in Harvard Square and asked passers-by how to get to Central Square. Assuming him to be somewhat familiar with the area, the people he stopped gave him very concise directions, such as “First stop on the subway.” The next day, the researcher conducted the same experiment, this time dressed as a tourist, and the people he stopped gave him much more detailed directions. The conclusion the researchers drew from this experiment was that language becomes increasingly compressed the more speaker and listener share a common understanding of the subject being discussed.

One can see this same dynamic in the Bible. The book of Judges was written to a group of people who all spoke the same language, who all shared the same history and culture, and who all lived in the same geographic area. Consequently, places and customs are given only brief description. The book of Luke, on the other hand, was written to Christians who were scattered throughout the Roman empire, many of whom were unfamiliar with the geography and customs being described. Luke is therefore much more detailed in its description of geographic features or local customs. Yet even the book of Luke was written to people who were all familiar with Roman rule, who utilized the Roman system of roads, who spoke the same language, and who all lived during the same period of history. Luke was therefore able to make assumptions about his readers which are no longer true of us.

When one reads the Bible, we do so as “tourists” who are often completely unfamiliar with the places and time periods being discussed. When the Bible says, “First stop on the subway,” we understand it not as locals who already know how to get to the subway and which train to take when we get there, but as strangers who aren’t quite sure where to go next. Thus, if someone really wants to gain a deeper understanding of the Scriptures, we need some way to get a feel for “the lay of the land.”

The *Accordance Bible Lands PhotoGuide: Overview* is designed to help modern day students of the Bible do just that. Through descriptions and beautiful color photographs, you will be introduced to a greater sense of the geographical and historical setting in which the events of the Bible took place.

The *Accordance Bible Lands PhotoGuide: Overview* contains complete introductions and an overview of pictures from each available site. For more pictures of the biblical sites see the respective regional Biblelands Photoguides for Israel, Near East, Egypt, Europe, and Turkey.

SAMPLE

Masada (Μασάδα). A formidable stronghold in the Judean desert, overlooking the Dead Sea and situated about 10 miles south of En-gedi. Masada may be the desert “fortress” (*metzuda* in Hebrew) to which David fled in times of danger (1 Samuel 22:4-5; 24:22; 2 Samuel 5:17; 23:14; 1 Chronicles 11:16; 12:8, 16). The fortifications at Masada were first constructed by the Hasmoneans, and were later expanded by Herod the Great. Masada is famous as the site of the Jewish rebels’ final stand against the Romans after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. According to Josephus, the Jewish rebels finally chose death at their own hands rather than surrender to the Romans.



Figure 1: The Fortress of Masada. Built on the summit of a steep cliff rising 450 meters (1,480 feet) above the Dead Sea, the fortress of Masada was capable of withstanding an extended siege. This figure shows the eastern face, which could be ascended by the “snake-path” winding up its center (shown in more detail below). At the northern end of the mountain to the right, Herod built a spectacular three-tiered villa.



Figure 2: The Fortress of Masada. This figure shows an aerial view of Masada from the south, with the Dead Sea in the background.



Figure 3: The “Snake-path” to Masada. The eastern ascent to Masada is a narrow winding track which Josephus referred to as the “Serpent” (Josephus, War 7:282). It is a difficult fifty-minute climb to the summit.

For more pictures of Masada, see Masada in the regional PhotoGuide-Israel.

North end of Masada. Masada had an ideal topography for building a fortified settlement in the wilderness. The steep sides and the relatively flat top made it both easy to build a settlement and easy to defend the settlement. Most of the building activity was on the northern end of Masada.



Figure 1 and 2: Residential building of the commandant. This splendid residence was used by prominent associates of the king.



Figure 2: The Store-houses at Masada. According to Josephus, these store-rooms were used to store large quantities of grain, fruit, oil, and wine, all of which had remained fresh even though stored there for a hundred years. Weapons were also stored there in great quantities.

For more pictures of the North end of Masada, see North end of Masada in the regional PhotoGuide-Israel.

Northern Palace of Masada. Perhaps the most spectacular part of Masada is Herod's palace that sits on the northern edge of Masada. It had three tiers that overlook the desert and the Dead Sea.



Figure 1: The middle and lower terrace of Herod's northern palace at Masada. This figure shows the modern stairway to the lower terrace, with the middle terrace in the upper-right.



Figure 2: The lower terrace of Herod's northern palace at Masada. The interior of the lower terrace of Herod's three-terraced palace was richly painted. This figure shows a reproduction of the colors as they would have originally looked.

For more pictures of the Northern Palace of Masada, see Northern Palace of Masada in the regional PhotoGuide-Israel.

Top of Masada. Even though most of the building activity was on the northern end of Masada, there were areas of construction in other places. Most significant was the western palace of Herod, which is the largest structure on Masada.



Figure 1: Excavations at Masada. This figure shows the apartment building or garrison built by Herod and used to house either important officials or garrisoned soldiers. A large number of silver shekels, minted during the First Jewish Revolt, was discovered here. In the background on the right are the remains of a Byzantine church and Herod's western palace.



Figure 2: The Synagogue at Masada. Built adjacent to the exterior wall and oriented toward Jerusalem, this synagogue with columns and tiers of plaster benches along the walls was built by Herod and later modified by the Zealots. Two scrolls were discovered here containing portions of Deuteronomy and Ezekiel.

For more pictures of the Top of Masada, see Top of Masada in the regional PhotoGuide-Israel.

Water Cisterns of Masada. Water was a very important resource at Masada because of its location in a desert area. Herod built several water cisterns at Masada to provide water, especially during times of siege. With no natural source of water other than the occasional rainstorm, Masada relied on these water cisterns, which had a total capacity of about 40,000 cubic meters (1.4 million cubic feet or 10.5 million gallons).

Josephus tells how Herod's family and its guard of 800 was about to exhaust its water-supply while enduring a siege by Herod's chief political rivals. They were saved when a sudden cloudburst filled Masada's cisterns with water; thus allowing them to hold out until Herod could return to rescue them.



Figure 1: Collecting rain water at Masada. This figure shows an example of a channel on the east side of Masada near the main entrance to the site. The water is collected and brought into a cistern.



Figure 2: Large water cistern at Masada. This figure shows one large water cistern that illustrates its enormous size.

For more pictures of the Water Cisterns of Masada, see [Water Cisterns of Masada](#) in the regional PhotoGuide-Israel.

Roman Siege of Masada. Perhaps the most famous event at Masada was the Roman siege from 70 to 73 AD to suppress the last remnants of the Great Jewish Revolt. This revolt started in 66 AD and was mostly suppressed with the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD. However, at Masada the Jewish rebels were able to hold out against the Romans for another three years. According to Josephus, the Jewish rebels finally chose death at their own hands rather than surrender to the Romans.



Figure 1: The Roman camp at Masada. To ensure that none of Masada's defenders would escape, the Roman commander established eight fortified camps around the base of the cliff which were linked together by a wall. The largest of these camps is shown here.



Figure 2: The Roman ramp at Masada. The Romans chose to assault Masada from the west, where a broad promontory reached to within 500 feet of the summit. To make it possible for their siege engines to be brought against Masada's walls, the Romans constructed this 300 foot high ramp of earth, which was topped with an additional platform of stones. The ramp is one of the most impressive Roman siegeworks still visible today.



Figure 3: Roman catapult balls near the Roman ramp.

For more pictures of the Roman Siege of Masada, see Roman Siege of Masada in the regional PhotoGuide-Israel.

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