

HOLY LAND TRIPS IN FLORIDA?



Take a Holy Land trip without going to Israel! Holy Land Experience theme park in Florida offers Jerusalem with its Temple Mount for Biblical lands enthusiasts.

Religious tourism has been growing for a number of years. Yet trips to many European pilgrimage destinations or to the Middle East are, in today's economic climate, difficult for many people to achieve. For Americans living around the Florida area, coincidentally not too far from the infamous Bible Belt, there is a handy solution to the problem. Opened in 2001, the **Holy Land Experience** theme park looks and feels like Jerusalem with the added advantage of having educational qualities. Amongst the attractions is the **Via Dolorosa**, where Jesus is supposed to have walked on his way to the Calvary. Furthermore, there is the six-storey **Temple Complex**, where Bible stories are re-enacted. Another attraction is found in the form of the **Dead Sea Qumran Caves**, a replica of the place in Israel where the ancient Dead Sea Scrolls were found.

This is where a 55-minute film is available for viewing about the history of the area. The park is also home to **The Scriptorium: Center for Biblical Antiquities**, where some of the world's rarest Bibles and oldest religious artefacts are housed, even ones dating back to the 7th century B.C. Once inside the Jerusalem City Gates, the visitors can mingle with first-century Roman soldiers. Or you can stroll through the Street Market and browse in quaint stores such as the Old Scroll Shop. The park also attracts visitors with its Jerusalem Model A.D. 66 which measures 45 by 25 feet and is regarded the world's largest indoor model of Jerusalem.

Although it is not the 'real thing' the Florida theme park might be a good start for would be pilgrims to Biblical lands.

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