



**Jordan Rift Valley**—This dominant physiographic and geologic feature is a 375-kilometer (km) long strike-slip fault zone that affects the climate, hydrology, and anthropogenic activities of the region. Vertical displacement of the faults of more than 3,000 m resulted in the development of the Hula Valley, Lake Tiberias, and the Dead Sea. The elevation of the rift valley drops to about 400 m below sea level at the present shores of the Dead Sea, the lowest point on the surface of the earth. North of the Dead Sea, the valley has long been used for agriculture because of available water from the Jordan River and numerous springs along the flanks of the valley.



**Western and Eastern Escarpments of the Jordan Rift Valley**—Formed as the Jordan Rift Valley deepened, causing abrupt valley walls and deeply incised wadis across the escarpments. The area is characterized by deep canyons that cut through Upper Cretaceous sedimentary rocks into underlying rocks of Precambrian to Lower Cretaceous age.



**Jordan Highland and Plateau**—Jordan Highland consists mainly of deeply-incised Cretaceous sedimentary rocks that rise to elevations of as much as 1,200 m. These elevations drop gradually eastward toward the Jordan Plateau, which is characterized by flat open country with shallow incised wadis draining inland toward the various depressions. Basalt flows have markedly smoothed the relief in parts of the plateau.



**South Jordan Desert**—Extremely arid region characterized by mountains of exposed Paleozoic sandstone, dune deposits, and exposed Precambrian crystalline rocks near the Red Sea. Several extensive northwest-southeast oriented faults occur in this area.