



COME UP ON THE MOUNTAIN

By Jeanne-Louise Viljoen



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1 INTRODUCTION

The Bible has lots to say about the majestic use of Mountains and their link to God and Jesus Christ. Discover the use of these magnificent land marks on our planet earth. However, pay close attention to their function through the eyes of God and His people.

Each mountain will be discussed in depth, as well as the symbolism and prophetic meaning behind them.

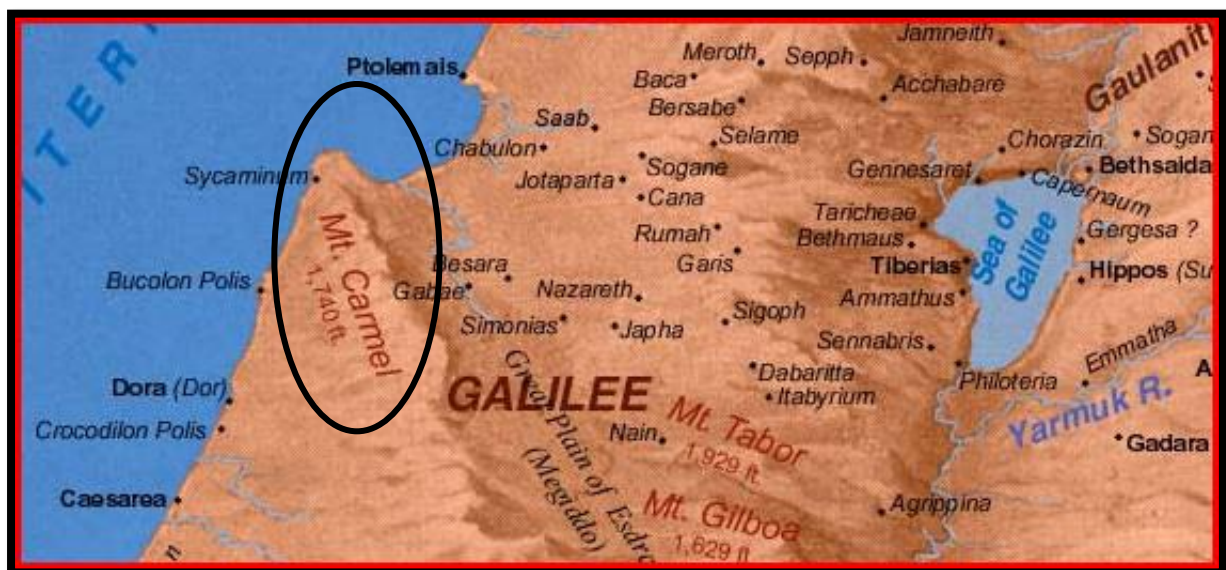
2 MOUNTAINS OF THE BIBLE

While undertaking this journey through the bible, look out for the lessons you can learn from the events that take place around these famous mountains.

2.1 MOUNT CARMEL

The mountain is a high ridge next to the Mediterranean Sea. Here the effects of famine would be less noticeable. The view from Mount Carmel is unprecedented. A person can see halfway across Israel to Migdal Ha-Emek and the mountains near Nazareth, especially Mount Tabor. The Mediterranean is also visible to the opposite side. It contains pine, eucalyptus, and cypress trees. Caves are also found here, and Elijah had also resided in one of the caves found on Mount Carmel. 250 sites inhabited by prehistoric human beginning have been discovered.

Elijah also established a prophetic school on this mountain when he returned from exile. The events of Elijah, King Ahab and Jezebel fall between the years 930 to 586 B.C.



Where the prophets gathered

1 Kings 18:19 (NKJV) "Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

Israel's fascination with Baal and Asherah

- Asherah was the wife of Ei, who was head of the pantheon.
- Asherah was a fertility goddess whose exploits and worship were linked to Baal.
- She was worshipped throughout Syria-Palestine and even in Egypt.
- Asherah was seen as the Mother of the gods.

- Thus, it may appear that at times Judahites worshiped her as the wife of Yahweh.
- Inscriptions in northeast Sinai at Kuntillet, were found dating from the time of the divided kingdom, after 930 B.C.
- Israel's worship of them finally brought their destruction.
- This is yet another example of why there should be no other gods in your life, accept the one true living God.

1 Kings 18:20 (NKJV) "So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel."

Ahab abandoned the living God

- Ahab, at times, was known to be the most evil king of Israel.
- He also battled with indecision.
- He never served the Lord with all his heart, but was acknowledged to have shown courage and actual meekness before God.
- 1 Kings 21:29 says that God noticed Ahab's humility before Him, and because of this, God would not bring calamity in Ahab's day, except God will bring it in the day of his son.
- What a lesson for a father and ruler to learn in this piece of text. The sins of the fathers visit the sons.
- Ahab's evil actions brought tragedy on his son.
- As a ruler and as a father we need to take note of our actions, as they do carry consequences, not just on your own life, but on the lives of those around you.
- Ahab was married to the Phoenician princess called Jezebel.
- The marriage was politically vital and reflected the increasing fame of Israel's 3th dynasty. Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of Sidon, according to 1 Kings 16:31.
- At the time of Ahab, Sidon was one of the most dominant and richest areas in and around Israel.
- Their ceramic dishes are artistically beautiful. Jezebel has an upper-class charisma that probably has overwhelmed those around her.
- Since Ahab displayed indecision, he was easily influenced into wickedness, especially by his wife.
- The covenant Ahab made with Jezebel through marrying this pagan woman, caused a destructive outcome.
- Jezebel had the prophets of God murdered as stated in 1 Kings 18:13. She also caused fear in the prophet Elijah, whom also predicted her body would be eaten by dogs after her death in 1 Kings 21:23.
- As an outcome, Elijah's influence over Ahab was overcome by the power of Jezebel.
- This resulted in Ahab completely abandoning God and openly worshipping Baal.
- Ahab built an altar, temple, and wooden image for Baal.
- By abandoning the true God, Ahab also rejected God's instructions to steer his life.
- The king's disobedience allowed his wife to kill Naboth in order to steal his land.
- However, Ahab's disobedience would end his life tragically.
- He died in combat and his blood was licked up by the dogs as prophesied.
- Ahab left behind a bad legacy, where he was remembered as someone who did evil in the sight of God, more than anyone who ever lived before him.

Mocking Canaanite Religious Ritual

- Israel's God Yahweh displayed His power in the confrontation that happened between Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal.
- The prophets that were personnel in Jezebel's court, were being paid by her, and numbered 850.
- The amount of prophets employed also suggests the richness of the kingdom.
- The way Yahweh displayed his power was by setting alight Elijah's sacrifice by fire from heaven, where the god of the prophets, Baal, was not able to do so.

Elisha journeys to Mount Carmel

2 Kings 2:25 (NKJV) "Then he went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria."

- Elisha was the man in this text, who made his home now in two places; Mount Carmel and Samaria.

Shunammite woman comes to Elisha

2 Kings 4:25 (NKJV) "And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel."

Insight regarding Mount Carmel

Judgement was well known regarding this Mountain. It is also seen as a sacred high place for burnt offerings and sacrifices in early Canaanite and Israelite times. On this mountain, a lot of people were trained up in the prophetic by Elijah.

2.2 MOUNT EBAL

On the shoulder of Mount Ebal, the ancient fortified city of Shechem was found. This land on the mountain is also associated with Abraham's grandson Jacob, who purchased a well here. Jesus also sat at this very well talking to the Samaritan woman (John 4:5-30). The well is over 70 feet deep (20 meters). Towns here would be surrounded by natural springs and would be close to an ancient road-system. This road lay between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, as they faced each other.

On Mount Ebal there is not much growing on the barren grey rocks

Shechem on Mount Ebal was also the burial place of Joseph found in Joshua 24:32. In 333 B.C. Alexander the Great allows veteran Macedonians in the city of Samaria, so residents had to move to a new city on Mount Gerizim; some rebuilding of Shechem.

In 380 A.D. a cruciform church was built over Jacob's well.

The events surrounding Mount Ebal, fall between the years 1850 B.C. to 380 A.D.

Today the modern city Nablus, between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, has encountered unrest for many years.





Cursed by God

Deuteronomy 11:29 (NKJV) "Now it shall be, when the Lord your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal."

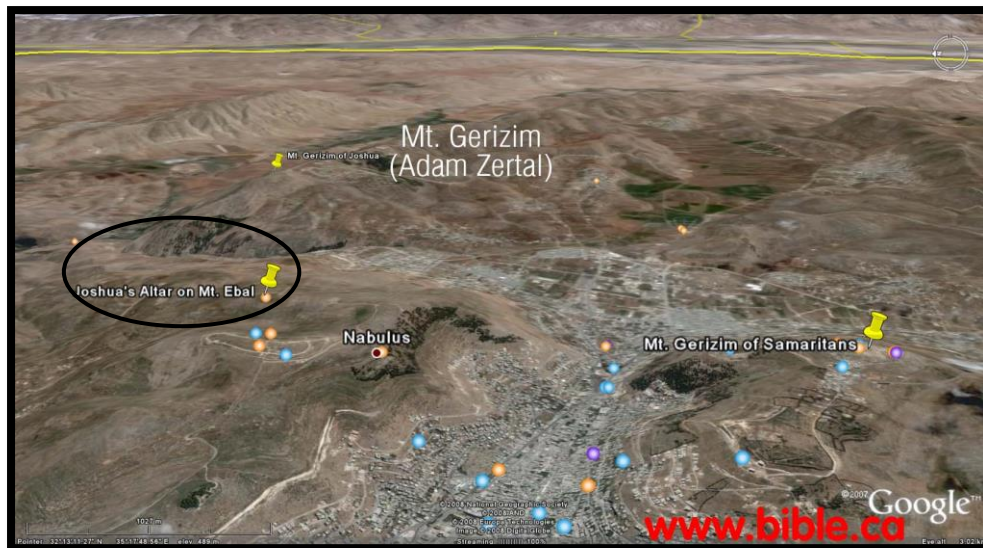
Joshua renewed the Covenant at Shechem

Joshua 8:30 (NKJV) "Now Joshua built an altar to the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal,"

Deuteronomy 27:4 (NIV) "And when you have crossed the Jordan, set up these stones on Mount Ebal."

Joshua's altar on Mount Ebal

- This altar is described in Deut 27:1-18 and Joshua 8:30-33 to be built on Mount Ebal after entering Canaan.
- In 1980 a similar rectangular structure was discovered on Mount Ebal. It was constructed of un-worked stones (in the state they were originally found).
- The structure is 9 meters long and 7 meters wide, filled with layers of ash, animal bones, potsherds and stones.



- Based upon the pottery and related finds at this open-air religious site, excavators have dated it to the early iron age, about 1200 B.C., which is significantly later than the conquest.
- This may be Joshua's altar, **but it may also not be**. Here are some reasons why:
 - Current dating, 1200 B.C. of the site does not match the earlier suggested date related to the conquest in 1400 B.C.
 - Biblical sources list only cattle, sheep, goats, doves and pigeons as valid sacrificial animals. Remains of these were found, but bones of other species were also found, especially those of fallow deer.
- So the Iron structure was possibly constructed on the site of Joshua's earlier altar.

Joshua 8:33 (NKJV) "... Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel."

Shechem

- Shechem was the first northern kingdom of Israel.
- Its name means "shoulder".
- The city has been destroyed and rebuilt many times throughout the centuries.
- This land was a significant city long before the Israelites occupied Canaan.
- Shechem was mentioned on Abraham's journey into the land of Canaan, where the Lord appeared to him at Shechem, and said to him this land would be given to Abraham's descendants. For this reason, this land has importance in the religious history of the Hebrew people.
- Canaan was conquered under the headship of Joshua, whom built an altar at Shechem.
- It accompanied a covenant observance in obedience to Moses' command.

Insight regarding Mount Ebal

Mount Ebal and some stage was cursed by God. Because of the covenant ceremony that took place before Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, symbolically Mount Gerizim represented the blessing of faithfulness when keeping the covenant; and symbolically Mount Ebal represented the curses when breaking the covenant.

The bible speaks of places that were cursed by God and by Jesus, and still today they are barren, dead, with nothing growing there. It is just such a powerful testimony to how curses can work in your own life. A curse leaves a person's life desolate, without, deserted, lacking, and devoid of favour and blessing.

2.3 MOUNT GERIZIM

A road lay between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, as they faced each other. According to John 4:20, the Jews worshipped on this mountain.

Around 388 B.C. or 332 B.C. the Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, claiming that Shechem rather than Jerusalem was the spot and the true dwelling of God.

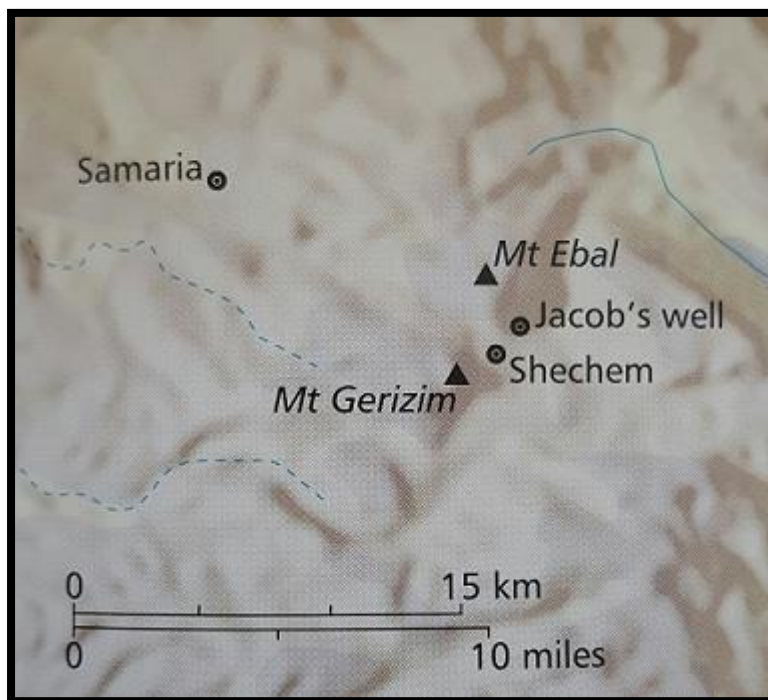
In 333 B.C. Alexander the Great allows veteran Macedonians in the city of Samaria, so residents had to move to a new city on Mount Gerizim; some rebuilding of Shechem. In 190 B.C. an alternative temple was built on Mount Gerizim according to 2 Maccabees 6:2; Josephus, Antiquities 11:8. In 129 B.C. both the temple and the city were destroyed by the Jewish ruler John Hyrcanus.

Then, in 36 A.D. Pontius Pilate was removed from office following his kills of Samaritan crowds near Mount Gerizim. In 484 A.D. Samaritans revolted in Neapolis against the Byzantine Christians, and Emperor Zeno builds the church of Theotokos on Mount Gerizim. In 700 A.D. the Muslims destroyed the Byzantine church on this mountain. Then in 1800 A.D. the Samaritans are allowed back to Mount Gerizim to celebrate their annual 6-week Passover.

Close to Shechem (Tel Balata), the old ruins of the city gate can be seen. It is at this city gate that:

- Abraham bought the area for his wife's tomb (Genesis 23:8-10);
- Boaz agrees to be Ruth's kinsman-redeemer (Ruth 4:1).

The events surrounding Mount Gerizim, fall between the years 1850 B.C. to 1800 A.D. Today the modern city Nablus, between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, has encountered unrest for many years.



Mount of Blessing

Deuteronomy 11:29 (NKJV) "Now it shall be, when the Lord your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal."

- From this text we can see Mount Gerizim was blessed by God.

Deuteronomy 27:12-13 (NKJV) "These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali."

Covenant Renewal

- God used the topography of the land to make a dramatic visual statement.
- The climate conditions at Mount Ebal causes a barren peak, while the climate conditions at Mount Gerizim causes well covered vegetation.
- So, Mount Ebal even looked the part where curses could be recited by the priests, and Mount Gerizim looked the part where blessings could be recited.
- Thinking on this, our words have power, so even nature gets affected by our words. The Lord probably also wanted mankind to see the effect of cursed words and blessed words.

Jotham speaks to the people of Shechem

Judges 9:7 (NKJV) "Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and cried out. And he said to them:

"Listen to me, you men of Shechem, that God may listen to you" "

- Jotham was the only brother of Abimelech who escaped, condemning Abimelech's deceitfulness. Jotham did this through a fable.

Samaritans' sacred mountain

John 4:20-21 (NKJV) "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father."

Here the woman may have tried diverting the conversation away from her own sins. The history though of where the place of worship should be, is as follows:

- According to the Jews, the exclusive place of worship was Jerusalem.
- The Samaritans had put up a rival place of worship on Mount Gerizim, which according to their tradition was where Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac, and where later on Abraham met Melchizedek.
- When the blessings and curses were read to the wilderness generation of Israel, the blessings were made to Mount Gerizim.
- Deuteronomy 27:4 instructed that an altar be erected on Mount Ebal, opposite Mount Gerizim. But the Samaritan scripture changed the verse to read "Mount Gerizim". The Samaritans altered history and tempered with the text of Scripture to glorify Mount Gerizim.
- Samaritans were the descendants of Mesopotamian peoples who were forced to settle in the lands of northern Israel by the king of Assyria, in 722 B.C.
- Samaritans combined their worship of Yahweh with idolatrous practices.
- Construction of the Samaritan temple to Yahweh on Mount Gerizim and the institution of a rival priesthood formed in 4 B.C.
- Josephus documented in Antiquities 11.8.2 that the high priest Manasseh was threatened with expulsion from Jerusalem because of his foreign wife, Nikaso, the daughter of the Samaritan Sanballat.
- Sanballat in turn promised to preserve the Manasseh priesthood and appoint him governor of the lands. Also Sanballat would build a similar temple found in Jerusalem, here on Mount Gerizim.
- The Samaritans viewed themselves as the faithful descendants of Israel and saw the Judeans as apostate, so accepted only the **Pentateuch** as Scripture. In their version Mount Gerizim is described as the chosen place of sanctuary.
- The history of the temple site at Mount Gerizim is full of confusion:

- From the time of the building of the Samaritan temple, 388 B.C., Samaria functioned as a temple-state under the leadership of their priests.
- During Greek domination, the Samaritan temple was renamed as the temple of Zeus, the Friend of Strangers.
- Then the Maccabeans came and destroyed the Samaritan temple in 128 B.C, by the priest-king John Hyrcanus. This caused a permanent rift between Jew and Samaritan.
- In 2 A.D. Emperor Hadrian built another temple to Zeus here.
- In 6 A.D. the Christian emperor Justinian constructed a church on this spot, that later got destroyed by Arabs in the 7th century A.D.
- Just like the Jews, the Samaritans expected the coming of a Messiah. To them Moses was the true prophet. And they believed according to Deut 18, a prophet like Moses would one day restore both themselves and their sanctuary.
- They describe this Messiah figure as the **Restorer**.
- Hence this Samaritan woman was reflecting this anticipation in her conversation to Jesus at the well. Jesus' reply was "I who speak to you am he". (John 4:26)

Insight regarding Mount Gerizim

From the book of Exodus it seems the Samaritans believed God lives on Mount Gerizim. The manifestation of the divine being at the holy mountain often was accompanied by lightning, thunder, earthquakes, loud noises, clouds and terror. Such a characteristic was present with God coming on Mount Sinai. Generally only priests were willing to risk experiencing such a presence of God.

To see how many wars have been fought about who has claim on what temple, makes you realize why Jesus came to set us free from the physical claim to where God is. God must live inside of us; have His home within our hearts and minds; this new temple that no one has claim over, accept Jesus Christ, through Jesus Christ.

2.4 MOUNT GILBOA

Mount Gilboa is a small mountain range of limestone that lies in the south-eastern part of the Jezreel valley. The mountain has an elevation of about 1,700 feet. The following areas can be viewed from this mountain:

- Galilee mountains
- The Emek
- The Mediterranean
- Jordan

The couple of maps above give an indication of where Mount Gilboa is situated in Israel.

Men of Israel slain here

1 Samuel 31:1 (NKJV) "Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa."

Saul and his sons slain here

1 Samuel 31:8 (NKJV) "So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa."

The tradition in ancient times was to collect clothes, weapons and armour of the slain. These items would then belong to the victor's temple and offered to the idols of their culture. Here, for the Philistines it was a great victory over the Israelites, as it reflected to them how great their gods were in giving them the victory.

Dagon, the god of grain, was the god worshiped by the Philistines and surrounding areas in Syria and northwest Mesopotamia.

Hundreds of years earlier, the Philistines had placed the captured Ark of the Covenant in the temple of Dagon at Ashdod (1 Samuel 5:2). Later Samson stood between the central pillars of the temple of Dagon and brought the temple down (Judges 16:23-31)

[My question is how could they even move the Ark, when it had such procedures in having it being moved. Did God allow this for some reason?]

Insight regarding Mount Gilboa

When the enemy has victory over us, there is the misconception that it was the enemy who was powerful to grant the victory. However, disobedience in the lives of Christians play a very big role in the enemy gaining victory, when the victory was expected to be God's. God does not go against our will. However, when we go against His will, the enemy has an open door and opportunity to move in and attack, and in some cases even win.

2.5 MOUNT GILEAD

The map below gives us an idea where Mount Gilead can be found.



Gideon divided the people for battle

Judges 7:3 (NKJV) "Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.' And twenty-four thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained."

Twenty-four thousand people feared for their lives, and thus left when Gideon gave them an opportunity to leave. This was two thirds of the army. The Mosaic law allowed military exemption for different classes of people, including:

- Those who had just planted vineyards;
- Those who were fearful;
- Those who just built a home;
- Those engaged to be married.

These facts can be found in Deuteronomy 20:5-8.

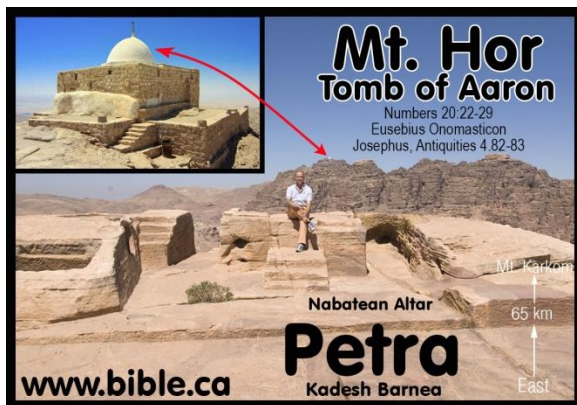
Insight regarding Mount Gilead

When we look at the list of reasons that exist in the Mosaic law for men to not attend in battle, it was surprising to see that fear here, was the main reason for the men to have left. How courageous those men, who remained, had to be as their numbers were now more than half.

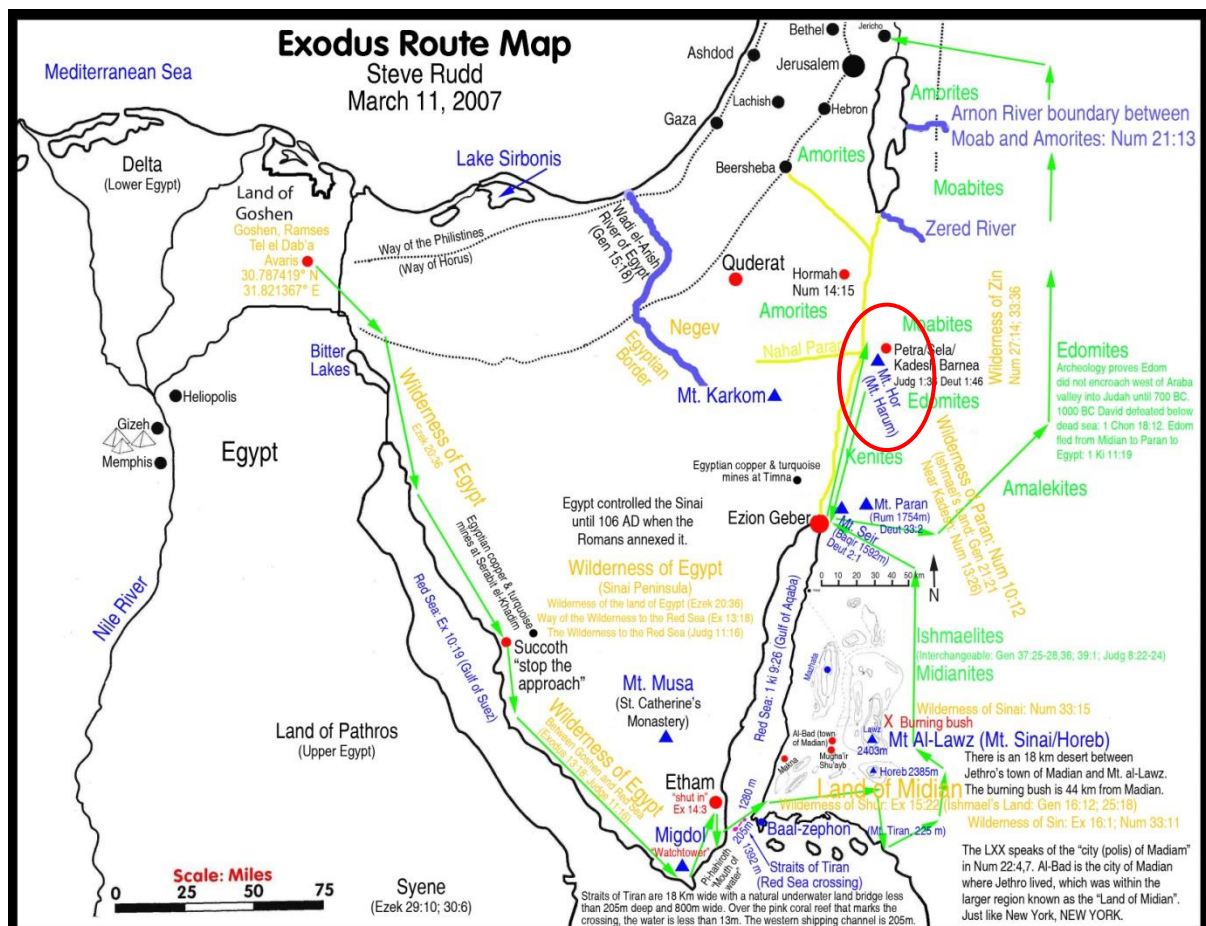
Fear has such a crippling effect on people, and it can hinder the greatest of triumphs. However, God is so faithful to those who stand in courage, as the scripture Joshua 1:9 declares. When God is behind it, it cannot fail.

2.6 MOUNT HOR

The picture below shows the place where God spoke to Moses and Aaron in Numbers 20.



Mount Hor is possibly also known as Jebel Madurah, about 15 miles northeast of Kadesh, on the northwest border of Edom.



Mount Hor is circled in red.

Lord speaks to Moses and Aaron

Numbers 20:23 (NKJV) "And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying: ..."

This is where the sad news came that Aaron was going to die. Eleazar would receive Aaron's duties of priesthood.

Aaron dies here

Numbers 20:25-28 (NKJV) "Take Aaron and Eleazar his son and bring them up to Mount Hor; and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; for Aaron shall be gathered to his people and die there. So, Moses did just as the Lord commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain."

Numbers 33:37-39 (NKJV) "Then Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor at the command of the Lord, and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month. Aaron was one hundred and twenty-three (123) years old when he died on Mount Hor."

Aaron died on the last year of the Israelites' wanderings in the desert.

Insight regarding Mount Hor

- What would you do when God calls you up a mountain where you are about to die?
- What preparations would you make before hand with your family?
- Would you be walking up the mountain with a heavy heart?
- Would you have the strength to walk up a mountain at the age of 123 year, know you are going to die up there?
- Or would you be walking up the mountain with a relieved heart that you will be coming home to God after wondering for 40 years in the desert?
- Would you have speculated what the Promised Land would have looked like? For now you will not be able to see the very place you wanted to enter after 40 years of travelling.
- Should you have done something differently that would have extended your life with a couple of months, to allow you the privilege to enter the Promised Land?

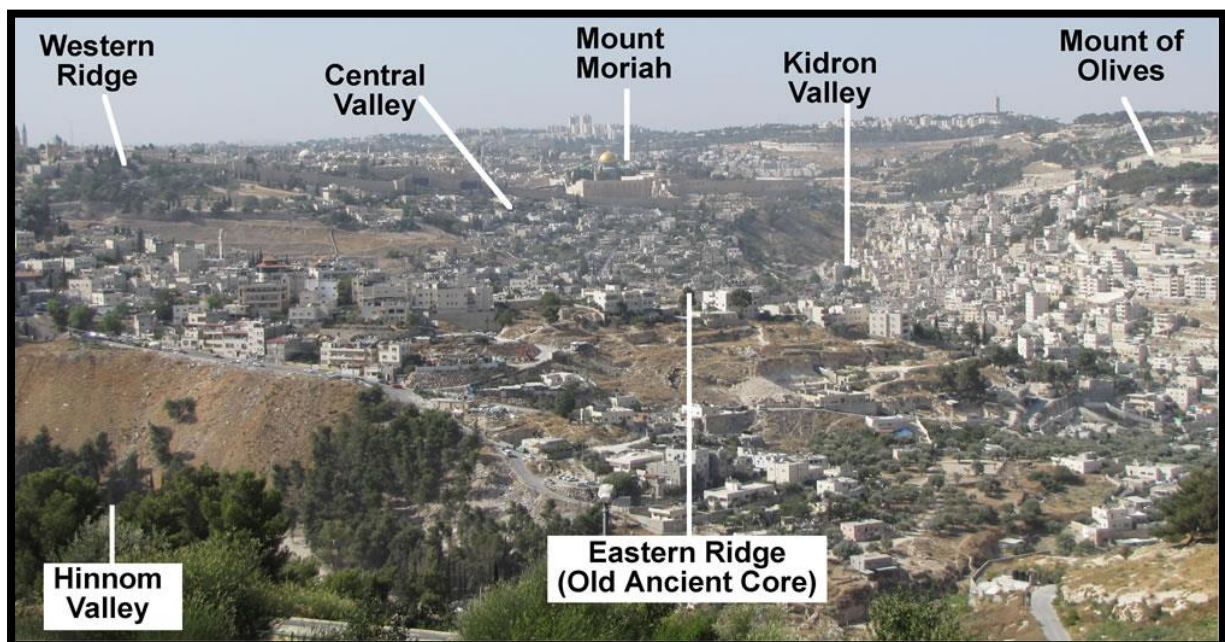
I am sure these were just some of the questions running through Aaron's mind at the time, standing at the base of Mount Hor; or even while climbing up the mountain. It must have been one of the most real and honest moments in his entire life.

Aaron's death must also have touched Moses deeply. A deeper emotion than usual, I would imagine - as he would also not be allowed to enter the Promised Land. Moses' own death was on the horizon as they were about to enter the Promised Land – the heaviness he may have been carry in his heart as he realised how far he had come with God, and because of disobedience, he too would not be able to complete the journey.

A lifetime of hard work, of planning, of any kind of labour, or to follow a vision or dream, can be brought to a sudden end, or made null and void; all because of one moment of disobedience or wrong choices. May we continually be aware of God's guidance. May our relationship with God be so steadfast and strong, that we will head His voice when He speaks to us. May we know His word through daily study, as it provides a moral compass and direction.

2.7 MOUNT MORIAH

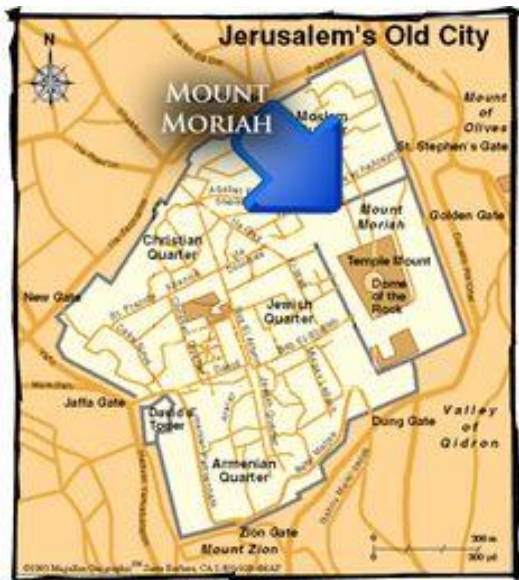
Mount Moriah is found in Jerusalem, within the walls of the old city. The Samaritans say that Abraham offered sacrifices, and one was able to reach the top of the mountain by steps, 300 in number.



“Moriah” means “Where the Lord provides” or “Where the Lord appears”. It is also the hill directly north of Mount Zion, the location of David’s tabernacle - *1 Chronicles 15:1 (NKJV)* “*David built houses for himself in the City of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it.*” Thus, we know the ark was housed here in the City of David.

Some background about the tabernacles and the ark:

- The original tabernacle built in Moses’ day had been placed in Shiloh, in central Manasseh (Joshua 18:1). It remained there until the ark was captured by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:1-11), when it was moved to Nob, 2 miles from Jerusalem (1 Samuel 21:1-6)
- Next, the tabernacle was moved to a high place at Gibeon (2 Chronicles 1:3), 2 miles north of Saul’s city Gibeah.
- When David became king, he left the Mosaic tabernacle at Gibeon, and appointed the priest Zadok to attend to its ministry.
- Even after David had built a new tabernacle on Mount Zion and brought the ark into it, the original tabernacle remained at Gibeon.
- Finally, Solomon brought the ark from Mount Zion and the “tabernacle of meeting” (tabernacle of Moses) from Gibeon and stored them in the new temple Solomon had built on Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 5:4-5).
- Thus, the tent of David was a transitional home for the ark between the wilderness tabernacle and Solomon’s temple.



- a. Mount Moriah is seen as a very sacred mountain. When Jacob has his dream in Genesis, he was in Bethel. He saw the ladder leading up to heaven on the opposite hill from where he was, called Mount Moriah. Jacob saw the ladder on Mount Moriah, and called it the gate of heaven – *Genesis 28:17 (NKJV)* “*And he was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’*” It was also referred to the House of God. Here the angels were ascending and descending between earth and heaven.

The base of the stairway sat on the solid rock of the Temple Mount platform, and when ascending upward, it leads to the entrance in heaven. Thus, the city of Jerusalem became known as the “city of God”, *Psalms 46:4 (NKJV)* “*There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.*”

- b. David had received direct instructions from the Lord that the very site that he had bought from Ornan, and where he had already built an altar, must be the location for the future first temple.

- c. Mount Moriah was also the location of the first and second Temple. The location is also known as the Temple Mount. Currently (2017), on the Temple Mount you will also find the “Dome of the Rock”. The “Dome of the Rock” was constructed in 691 AD. Strictly speaking this is not a Mosque, but a shrine to remember Mohammed’s “night journey”.

There are rules that exist that forbid orthodox Jews from going onto the site, as they may tread in the area once covered by the Holy of Holies in the former Temple. The exact location of this is still under debate. However, there is a strong case that location may be in one of two places:

1. On the highest rock on the site – the one at the centre of the “Dome of the Rock”.
 2. Further to the North-west, perhaps in line with the “Golden Gate”, which makes the tiny “Dome of the Spirits” the other site for the Holy of Holies.
- d. The “Dome of the Rock” is also said to cover the rock, which according to ancient Jewish tradition, was where Abraham almost sacrificed his son Isaac – Genesis 22:2.

Place where Abraham offered Isaac

Genesis 22:2 (NKJV) “Then He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.’”

Abraham had only one son by Sarah, Isaac. He was born under unique circumstances. Almost, portraying a type of Jesus. God promised Abraham and Hagar a son (Hebrews 11:17, Genesis 18:13-14), just as Jesus was promised to the nations (Genesis 12:3, Isaiah 7:14).

What a difficult time it must have been for Abraham and Sarah. Having to sacrifice their special son to God, who had given Isaac to them in the first place. God wanted to make sure that He is still the centre of Abraham’s life, and not his child. What a demonstration of Abraham’s trust in the Lord. He must have trusted God enough to know that God knows what He was asking.

However, God Himself, centuries later, would have to sacrifice His own Son, Jesus Christ, as an innocent lamb. What an amazing heart of the Father, and of the Son, to save humanity in such a dramatic and selfless way.

Elevation where Solomon built the temple

2 Chronicles 3:1 (NKJV) “Now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”

David had received direct instructions from the Lord that the very site that he had bought from Ornan, and where he had already built an altar, must be the location for the future temple. *1 Chronicles 21:18 (NKJV) “Therefore, the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”*

Remember though, a couple of verses back, in 1 Chronicles 21:15, God had commanded His angel to send a plague and destroy many of the people of Israel. This angel was standing on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, at that very moment. David saw this angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven with his drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem, in 1 Chronicles 21:16.

So, this holy place would become the perfect location to have built an altar where David could make atonement for his sins and withdraw the plague.

Insight regarding Mount Moriah

The Tabernacle contained a place in its design for the Holy of Holies. However, Israel was moving around, and the Tabernacle was designed by God to move around with His people, including the Holy of Holies. Jesus gets represented, in so many different ways, in every element of the Tabernacle.

Solomon then built a permanent home to God, with God's permission. The Temple would be at home, on Mount Moriah. Now, believers had to travel from all over to come to one place to serve God. The temple got destroyed and was then rebuilt by Nehemiah. Even Jesus came to visit the Temple and serve God the Father. But, Jesus moved on and spread the gospel and performed miracles and prayed – even outside of the Temple. Jesus knew that God the Father would hear His prayers no matter where He was on earth.

Our body is also seen as a temple, according to God's word. We are also able to accept the Holy Spirit that dwells within us. So, in a way, a reborn Christian becomes a temple for the Holy Spirit – in which case, could we consider that the Holy of Holies has found a place within each of us, all because of Jesus Christ?

The Threshing Floor background:

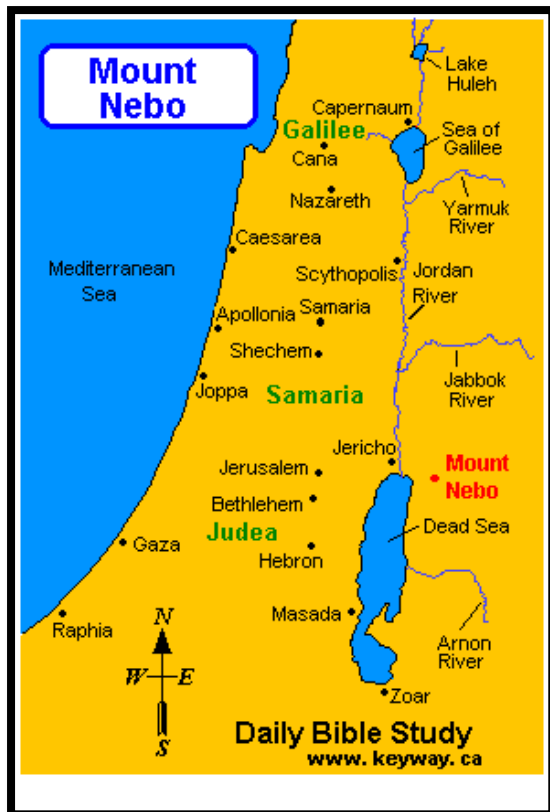
- Was an essential part in agriculture in the Ancient Near East.
- Round, with a diameter of 7.6 to 12.2 meters.
- Located near a village in an area exposed to wind.
- Used to separate wheat and chaff.
- The threshing floor was also a suitable location for legal transactions, criminal trials and public decisions.

2.8 MOUNT NEBO

Mount Nebo is the famous mountain where Moses died before the Israelites entered the Promised Land. It is a mountain summit near Heshbon about 10 miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea.



A Map to indicate where Mount Nebo is in relation to Mount Gilead.



Place where Moses viewed the Promised Land

Deuteronomy 32:49-50 (NKJV) "Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people;"

It is interesting to see the two brothers, Moses and Aaron both died on mountains. At Kadesh, Moses did not obey God's instructions as directed by God. And thus, God did not allow Moses to enter the Promised Land (*Deuteronomy 32:51 (NKJV)*).

We are reminded of how serious God takes His commandments, and that we cannot complete them halfway. Instead of completing God's commands in part, we need to complete them as God has instructed us. We need to be so careful in understanding God's complete will and complete word.

Insight regarding Mount Nebo

Mount Nebo is found in the land of Moab. According to Scripture (*Deuteronomy 34:5-6 NKJV*) Moses was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor. No one though, until this day, has been able to find his grave. There may be more to this story regarding the location of Moses' body. In the Book of Jude, Scripture reads:

Jude 9 (NKJV) "Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him ..."

It is clear in this Scripture that there is more going on here regarding the value of Moses' body. Jude 9 may seem to have been quoted from an apocryphal source known as "The Assumption of Moses", written in the first century A.D.

The city Moab

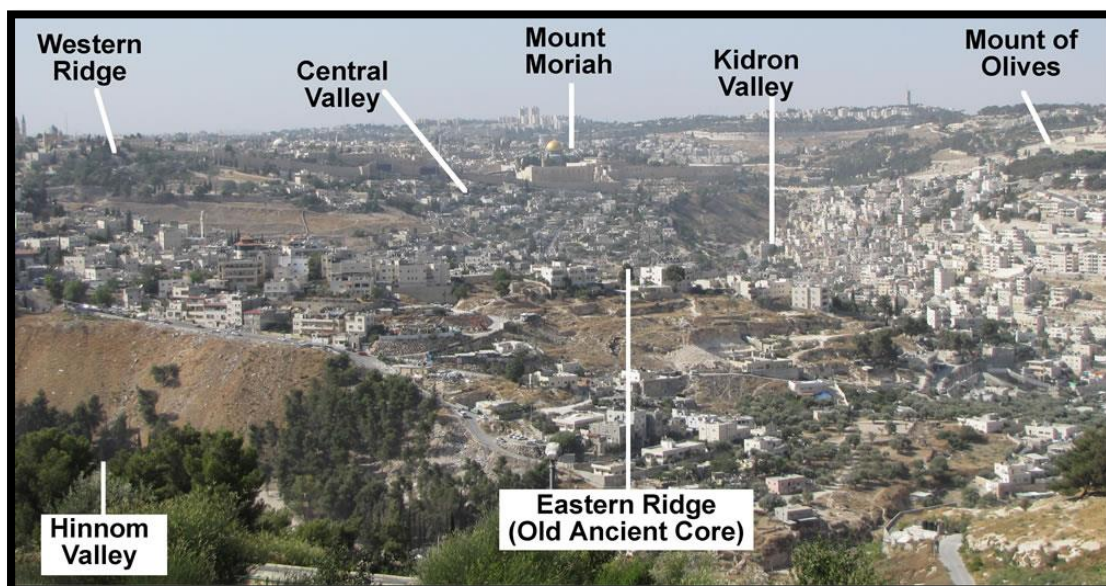
Today, the plains of Moab are known as Kerak, located approximately 18km east of the Dead Sea, situated in the Jordan Valley. Moab proper is located in an area of deep gorges of the Arnon River in the north and the Zeder River in the south.

2.9 MOUNT OF OLIVES

The Mount of Olives can be found overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem from the east. It also contains Judaism's most important and oldest cemeteries in the world. Among the graves you will come across are the Tombs of the Prophets, believed to be the burial place of Haggai, Malachi, and Zachariah. Most Jews believed, and may still believe, that here is the shortest route to heaven, since God's presence is always hovering over Jerusalem. Others have also believed that on the Mount of Olives, the resurrection of the dead will take place.



In the photo below you get a better idea of the geography and location of the Mount of Olives. It would take about 20 minutes to walk from Bethany to the crest of the Mount of Olives. The peak of the mountain is about 90 meters above the city.



In modern day Gethsemane, next door to the ancient olive trees, is the Tomb of the Virgin, which is a deep underground chamber housing the tombs of Mary and Joseph.

David flees

2 Samuel 15:30 (NKJV) “So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up.”

Prophecy of Christ's return

Zechariah 14:4 (NKJV) “And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which face Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move towards the north and the other half towards the south.”

Prophetic discourse delivered from here

Matthew 24:3 (NKJV) “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Jesus triumphal entry here

Luke 19:37-38 (NKJV) “Then as He was drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’”

Matthew 21:1 (NKJV) “Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, ...”

Christ's ascension from here

Acts 1:9-12 (NKJV) “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight... Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which was near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey.”

Jesus visited the Mount of Olives a lot

Luke 21:37 (NKJV) “And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet.”

Luke 22:39 (NKJV) “Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him.”

Insight regarding the Mount of Olives

As its name implies, this is a hill covered with olive groves. In the Old Testament this mount was included in the rituals of the Temple for the purification ceremonies associated with the sacrificing of a red heifer. Israel was commanded to make these sacrifices outside the camp, as stated in *Numbers 19:1-10 (NKJV)*. According to the Mishnah, the High Priest would leave the Temple to perform the sacrifice on the summit of the Mount of Olives.

In Ezekiel 11, Ezekiel was given a vision of the “glory of the Lord” departing from the Temple. It had gone “up from the city and stopped above the mountain east of it”. It seems the Mount of Olives was the last place where God's presence rested before departing. (*Ezekiel 11:23 NKJV*)

The valleys located near the Mount of Olives were also seen as the location where God's judgement over nations will rise up. (*Joel 3:2 (NKJV)* and *Zechariah 14:4 (NKJV)*). The “valley of Jehoshaphat” is also known as the “Kidron Valley”.

In conclusion, from the Old Testament views, the Mount of Olives was seen as a place of:

- Protection;
- Escape and departure;
- Idolatry;
- Sacrifice;
- Judgement and burial.

Mount of Olives a place of rest

Weary travellers that came from Jericho through the desert, would end up resting and sleeping here. This was especially true during Passover when the population of Jerusalem would be more than triple. Most travellers would sleep under the trees on the Mount.

Insight regarding the Mount of Olives and Jesus

It is at this mountain where Jesus cursed the fig tree (*Matthew 21:17-19 NKJV*), Jesus wept at a prophetic vision of Jerusalem lying in ruins. At the lower slopes of the mountain you will find the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus was arrested. According to tradition, Jesus ascended into heaven at the ridge of the Mount of Olives. This is also where the “Olivet discourse” or “apocalyptic discourse” took place.

The Mount of Olives though was Jesus’ favourite place.

Another fact is that Jesus’s triumphal entry happened from the Mount of Olives. If you recall, in the Old Testament Ezekiel had a vision of seeing God’s presence resting finally on the Mount of Olives before it departed. Now, Jesus was entering from the very same spot – Jesus having embodied the very presence of God Himself. What a major spiritual event took place here. And this will also explain why Jesus Christ had tears in His eyes at these moments. Here, the true and long-awaited King of Israel, Son of God, made His entry, God coming to His people, but His people could not see or realize what was transpiring before their eyes.

But in the same breath, Jesus foresaw the future state of the Temple –within a generation the Roman legions encamped around the Temple after destroying it. (*Luke 21:5-6 NKJV*) He also revealed this in *Mark 13:3 (NKJV)*, also known as the Olivet discourse. Jesus and His disciples were sitting on the Mount of Olives, opposite the Temple. Here Jesus also spoke of the Second coming of the Son of God.

The bigger picture here is that while Jesus was on the opposite side of the Temple, God was actually transferring His focus of a physical Temple, to Jesus becoming “The Temple”.

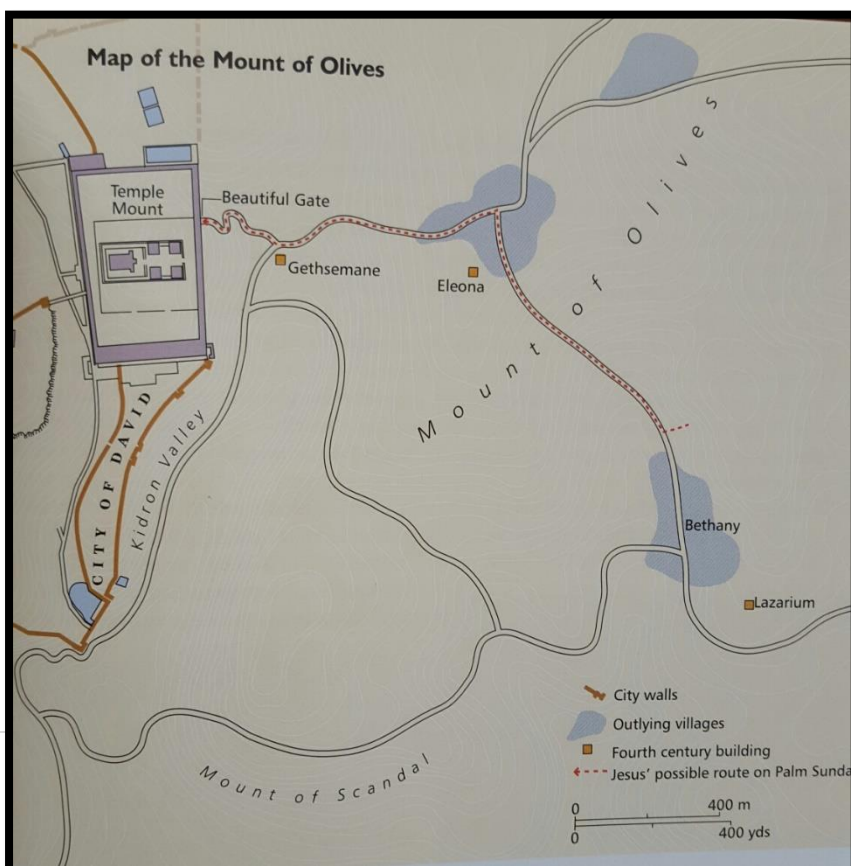


Photo from "In the steps of Jesus"

Gethsemane means "oil press". Jesus and Judas knew this garden well as they use to go there together quite often. Jesus and His 3 closest disciples would have walked from the Last Supper in the Upper City down into the Kidron Valley and then up towards Gethsemane (*John 18:1 NKJV*).

Just over the Mount of Olives is the village of Bethany, where a 1st century tomb belonging to a wealthy family can be found.

Important events that happened on the Mount of Olives:

980 BC.: David flees from the Mount of Olives in *2 Samuel 15:30 (NKJV)*.

: Later the Mount is used by Solomon as a "high place" for shrines for foreign gods in *1 Kings 11:7-8 (NKJV)*

622 B.C.: King Josiah's reforms lead to the removal of these shrines in *2 Kings 23:13 (NKJV)*

592 B.C.: Ezekiel in exile has a vision of the Lord's glory leaving the Temple in *Ezekiel 11:23 (NKJV)*

30 A.D.: Jesus' activity on the Mount.

55 A.D.: Governor Felix puts down the attempted storming of Jerusalem by a Jewish prophet from Egypt, gathered with forces on the Mount of Olives from *Josephus, War 2:13.5*

200 A.D.: The apocryphal *Apocalypse of John* (Chapter 97) refers to Jesus appearing to John in a cave on the Mount of Olives (supposedly during the time of his crucifixion).

290 A.D.: Eusebius describes many Christian visitors to the Mount.

333 A.D.: The Bordeaux Pilgrim visits the Mount.

335 A.D.: Completion of the Eleona church over a cave on the Mount of Olives (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine :43*)

381-384 A.D.: Egeria records her visit to the Mount of Olives, including services at Eleona and on the summit.

392 A.D.: Poemenia funds the *Imbomon* to mark the site of the ascension.

400-600 A.D.: Development of many monasteries and churches on the Mount of Olives.

1198 A.D.: Saladin gives control of the ascension site to local Muslims.

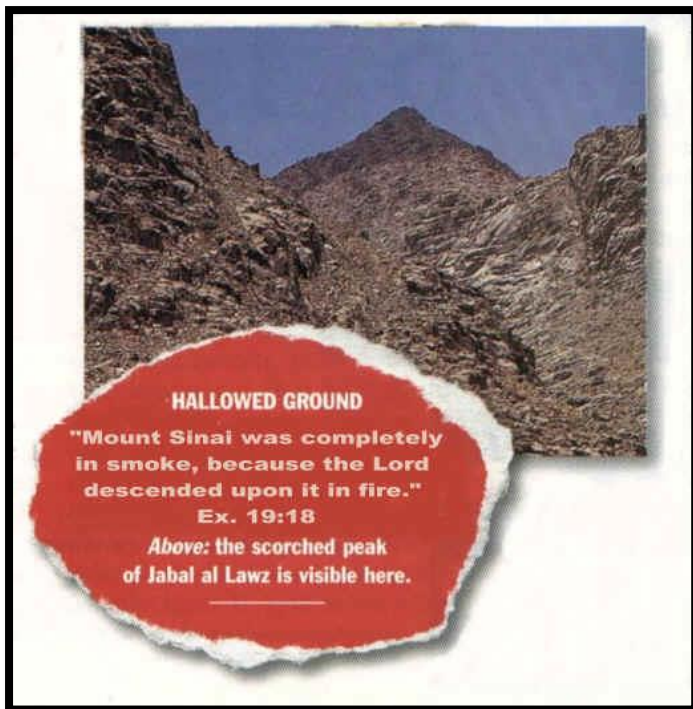
1857 A.D.: Development of *Pater Noster* site in a French convent for Carmelite sisters.

1924 A.D.: Church of All Nations built by Benedictines at Gethsemane.

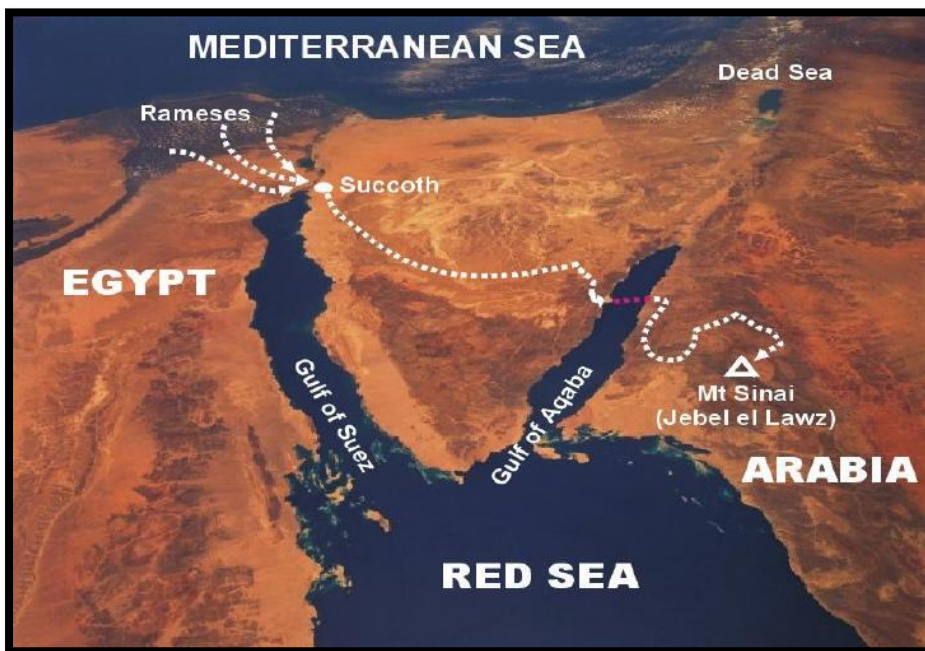
1955 A.D.: Franciscans build 'Dominus Flavit'.

2.10 MOUNT SINAI / MOUNT HOREB

Mount Horeb is possibly an alternative name for Mount Sinai. The meaning of the name is also "Desolate Place". This place was a very holy place of God. The map below indicates the most likely location for Mount Sinai – especially when you look at the description of the mountain's location.



The actual route of the exodus from Egypt as discovered by Ron Wyatt, can be see below:



Since Ron Wyatt found the Red Sea crossing, we know Mt. Sinai must be east of the Gulf of Aqaba. "This location of Midian east of the Gulf of Aqaba is verified by many other scholars. "The Biblical references connecting Sinai with Mount Seir, Edom and the land of Midian seem clearly to indicate this region east of the Aelanitic gulf (g. of AKABA) as pointed out by Beke (1834), Wallhausen (1886), Sayce (1894), Moore (1895), Shede (1897), Gall (1898), Gunkel (1903), Edward Meyer (1906), Schmidt (1908), Gressmann (1913), Haupt (1914) and by Alois Musil in 'The Northern Hegaz' (1911)" (On the Track of the Exodus, p. 87).

Mt. Sinai has to be in Midian:

- "Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well" - Exodus 2:15 NKJV. Maps indicate Midian is east of the Gulf of Aqaba in Northwest Saudi Arabia, in the area shown on the map above.

Moses fled to a foreign land, not to the Sinai Peninsula:

- "And she [Zipporah] bore him a son, and he called his name Gershom; for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land" - Exodus 2:22. Moses was in a different country, away from any Egyptians in Saudi Arabia. He could not have been in the Sinai Peninsula, as that area was Egyptian controlled territory, full of Egyptian mines and communication towers. Moses would have been easily captured in that area.

Midian and Horeb are in the same location:

- "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God" - Exodus 3:1. Jethro lived in the vicinity of Mount Sinai. Jethro was the leader of the Midianites who were found in this area, "East of the Gulf of Aqaba in the north-western regions of the Arabian Desert" Britanica. When researching the location of Mt. Sinai in Saudi Arabia that Mr. Wyatt proposed, I went to the East Tennessee State University Library and found two extremely detailed maps of Saudi Arabia. On BOTH maps I found the name "Jethro" next to the town of Al Bad, which is near Jebel el Lawz, the correct Mt. Sinai. Jethro was Moses' father-in-law as we saw in the texts above. He was from the town of Al Bad, according to the local people who live there today, which is only about 15 miles from Jebel el Lawz. The local people there today told Ron Wyatt that Jethro was from that area.

The same as Sinai

Exodus 3:1 (NKJV) "Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God."

Lord descends upon, in fire

Exodus 19:18 (NKJV) "Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly."

As we know that God is everywhere, our omnipotent Creator, His presence came down to meet with the Israelites. What an overwhelming sense of awe. The smoke and the fire speak of His great glory and His covering over them.

How wonderful to know that God could care so much for a people He had created for His glory. How loving and full of grace that action is.

Lord calls Moses to the top

Exodus 19:20 (NKJV) "Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up."

What a privilege to be called by the Creator of the universe, to come up to spend time with Him, alone. If any of us had to have a conversation with Moses about this very moment, I think it would be the most important and popular interview ever.

The glory of the Lord rests upon this mountain for 6 days

Exodus 24:16 (NKJV) "Now, the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud."

What a sight this must have been. God is always so faithful, especially when we call out for Him; especially when we draw closer and closer to Him. The cloud is always associated with the glory of the Lord. This seventh day could maybe have also been the seventh day of the week – the Sabbath.

Sons of Israel stripped of ornaments

Exodus 33:6 (NKJV) "So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb"

These ornaments represented the idolatrous worship of the golden calf. Their removing this was a sign of their repentance.

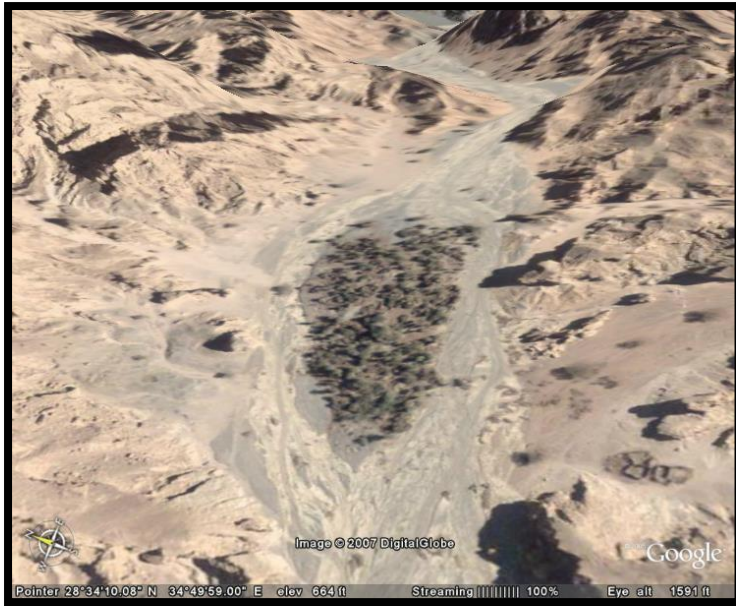
Insight regarding Mount Sinai / Horeb

- "So He [God] said, 'I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain'" - Exodus 3:12. Moses was to bring the children of Israel from Egypt to this same mountain in Midian, near Jethro's home, in a foreign land.



One of the caves of Jethro or Moses' cave near Al Bad.

- "For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia" - Galatians 4:25. Here we are clearly told where the mountain should be located, in Arabia. But where is Arabia? "...It is bordered on the West by the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea" Britannica. This clearly rules out the Sinai Peninsula, but it does include Saudi Arabia of course.
- "Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he had two sons. And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai." - Acts 7:29,30. All historically accurate maps, such as some produced by secular companies like National Geographic, show Midian in Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, maps placed in Bibles by the publishers may have Midian in the Sinai Peninsula in order to fit tradition, but not the Bible or the historical record.

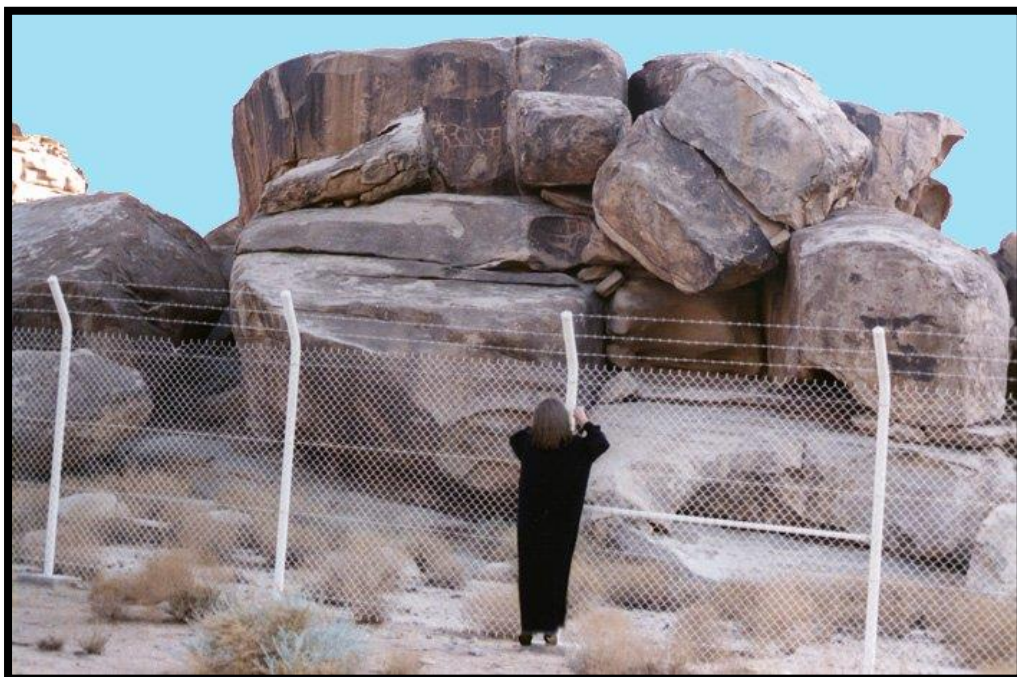


On the way to Mt. Sinai, Moses was in Elim in Saudi Arabia in the Midian Region, with 12 wells as mentioned in the Bible. On the pathway to Mt. Sinai in Arabia.

Josephus said that Mt. Sinai "was the highest of mountains in the city of Midian" which is just outside the town of Al Bad. Jebel el Lawz is the highest mountain in the upper two thirds of the country. Also, Philo said Mt. Sinai was located east of the Sinai Peninsula and south of Palestine.

The Saudi Government will confiscate any photographs of the mountain and will not allow any tourists into the country, but U.S. Government satellite photos and a few private photos smuggled out of the country reveal the secret mountain by its unique blackened peak. Unlike the traditional site, there are thousands of acres in which to encamp at the base of this mountain, while clearly being visible from the mountain top.

The Altar of the Golden Calf



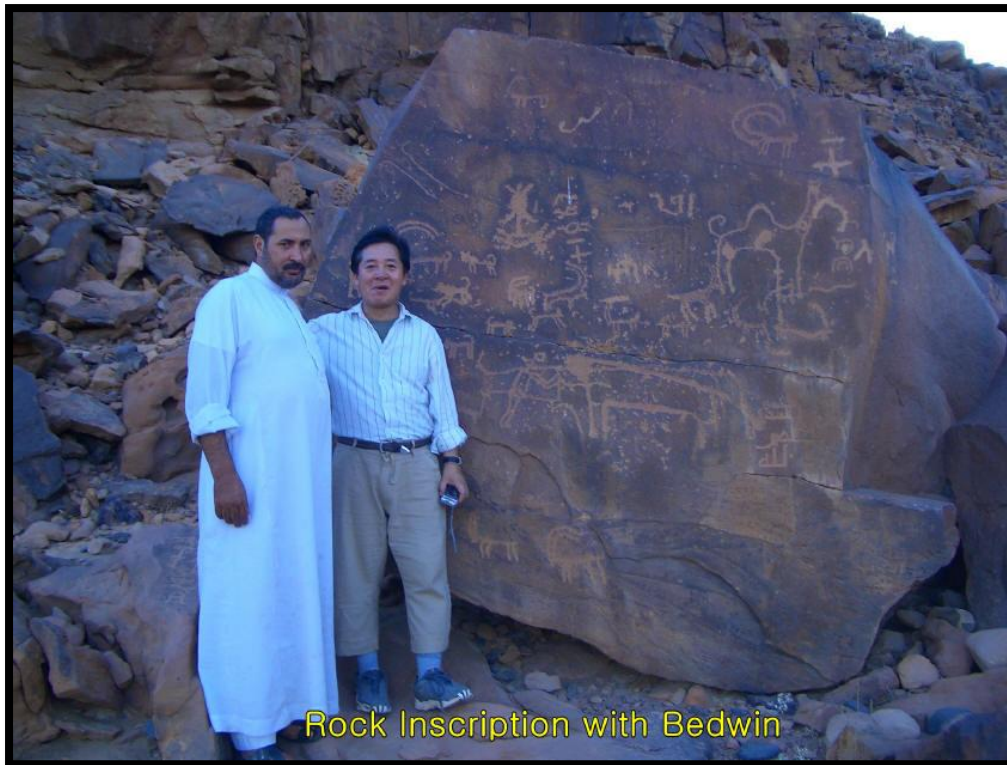
The base of which the golden calf altar was placed atop. Notice inscriptions of bulls. This is located in the encampment area at Mt. Sinai in Arabia and in Midian.



A dozen giant boulders are stacked in the encampment area and reveal 12 ancient Egyptian petroglyphs of bulls. It is believed the golden calf was placed upon these rocks. Large altars are found on the east and west sides of the mountain.



The amazing collection of artefacts found by Dr. Kim from his 12 trips out to Jebel el Lawz.



Rock Inscription with Bedwin

Dr. Kim next to drawings in the encampment area. Dr. Kim was a personal physician to a prince in Saudi Arabia and to the king. He lived in Saudi for around 15 years.



Menora inscription on the rock

Elijah

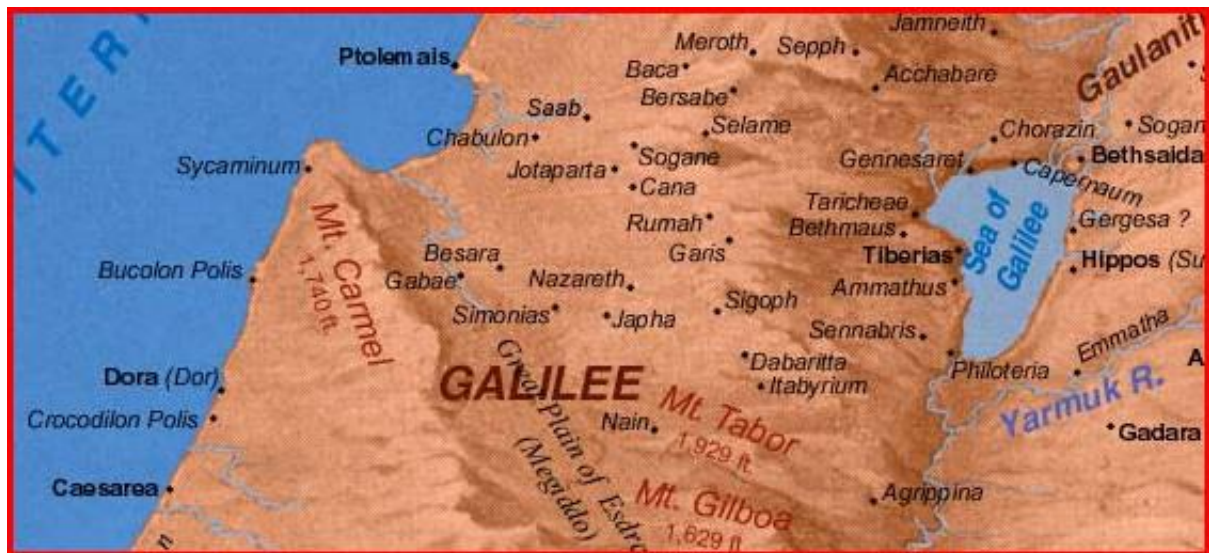
1 Kings 19:8 speaks of Elijah that journeyed to Sinai in order to encounter God. In this scripture Mount Sinai is referred to as Mount Horeb.

2.11 MOUNT TABOR AND REFERENCE TO MOUNT HERMON

Mount Tabor is near Nazareth and is the well-known site for the Transfiguration of Jesus. The mountain is about 1,300 feet (296 meters) high. The mountain is a distinctive, small mountain rising up from the Jezreel Valley, located some distance to the south-west of Lake Galilee. At the summit stands the Basilica of the Transfiguration, which marks where Jesus was transfigured as he spoke to Moses and Elijah in the presence of three of His disciples (Luke 9:28-36).

The Basilica was built in the 1920s over the ruins of long-destroyed Crusader and Byzantine churches. Also found on this mountain is the Church of Elias (Elijah), built in 1911 by the Greek Orthodox community. From this mountain, on a clear day, you can see the Sea of Galilee, Mount Hermon, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Emek.

There were aesthetic reasons for this identification. Tabor's well-rounded appearance gives it a natural aura of distinction, making it an easy place to identify with a sacred mountain. It has an accessible peak on which it is easy to imagine a mysterious event like the transfiguration taking place. But, mostly the practical reason was that it was a better option along the tourist route, to have this site marked here.



Mount Hermon is one of the most prominent and beautiful mountains in Lebanon. It is snow-capped throughout the year and rises to a height of over 9,200 feet (2,804 meters). The melting snow of Mount Hermon is brought down into the Jordan River. The mountain is a beautiful national park, hot springs, a Crusader fortress. This place is also famous for its Tabor trees, some of which date back to Jesus' time, and the time of the Second Temple. The so called "great cave" is also found at the foot of Mount Hermon. The headwaters of the River Jordan used to flow out directly from a spring within this cave, though now, because of an earthquake, they come through a crack beneath the cave.

Mount Hermon (Arabic: جبل حرمون or جبل الشيخ / ALA-LC: Jabal al-Shaykh ("Mountain of the Sheikh") or Jabal Haramun; Hebrew: הר חרמון, Har Hermon) is a mountain cluster constituting the southern end of the Anti-Lebanon mountain range. Its summit straddles the border between Syria and Lebanon and, at 2,814 m (9,232 ft) above sea level, is the highest point in Syria. On the top, in the United Nations buffer zone between Syrian and Israeli-occupied territories, is the highest permanently manned UN position in the world, known as "Hermon Hotel". The southern slopes of Mount Hermon extend to the Israeli-occupied portion of the Golan Heights, where the Mount Hermon ski resort is located. A peak in this area rising to 2,236 m (7,336 ft) is the highest elevation in Israeli-controlled territory.

The Hebrews called the mountain "Hermon" means "sacred", while the Amorites referred to it as "Šeni'r". Another name of the mountain is "Sirion" (Hebrew: שִׁירֹן Širyōn, meaning "breastplate"), the name that the Phoenicians (especially Sidonians) gave to "Mount Hermon", in which the term "Syria" might be derived from.



Mount Hermon is a cluster of mountains with three distinct summits, each about the same height. The antilibanos (anti-Lebanon range), of which the Hermon range constitutes the southernmost part, extends for approximately 150 km (93 mi) in a northeast-southwest direction, running parallel to the Lebanon range on the west. The Hermon range covers an area of about 700 km² (270 sq mi) of which about 70 km² (27 sq mi) are under Israeli control. Most of the portion of Mount Hermon within the Israeli-controlled area constitutes the Hermon nature reserve. The entire relatively narrow range, with the Lebanon-Syria boundary along its spine, extends from 25km northeast of Mt. Hermon to 45km southwest of it.

The springs, and the mountain itself, are much contested by the nations of the area for the use of the water. Mount Hermon is also called the "snowy mountain," the "grey-haired mountain", and the "mountain of snow". It is also called "the eyes of the nation" in Israel because its elevation makes it Israel's primary strategic early warning system.

Deborah sends Barak here to defeat Canaanites

Judges 4:6-7 (NIV) "She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, 'The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun, and lead the way to Mount Tabor. I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands'""

At this dramatic mountain Tabor, in the period of the Judges (1150 B.C.), the Prophetess Deborah and her general, Barak, led the Israelite tribes to victory over the Canaanite general Sisera of Hazor. Thus, this mountain is seen as a Canaanite "high place" or altar from at least the 2nd millennium B.C.

Insight regarding Mount Tabor & Mount Hermon

In reality the event is more likely to have occurred on the lower slopes of Mount Hermon, 50 miles (80 kilometers) to the north of Lake Galilee, or in the adjacent hills of Gaulanitis. There is nothing in the biblical accounts to suggest that Jesus was on the peak of a mountain.; they only speak of Jesus going up a high mountain. (Mark 9:2) The word mountain in our translations is a little misleading as here the same word covers what we would call a "hill". There are many such sites in the foothills of Mount Hermon.

Psalms 89:12 refers to both Mount Hermon and Mount Tabor. This Psalm could be a prophecy of Christ's marvellous transfigurations' on both these mountains. As a historian, Josephus mentioned that in the first century there had been a village on the top of Mount Tabor. Josephus himself built a wall around it to defend the site in the Jewish Revolt of A.D. 67. (War 2:20; 4:1) So from a historian's perspective this mountain would hardly service as a place for the transfiguration.

The Old Testament writers have often spoken of the land stretching from 'Dan to Beersheba', and Dan was one of the towns in the foothills of Mount Hermon. In this region, where much of the area is marked by the flat volcanic rock of Gaulanitis, the most obvious location is somewhere on the lower slopes of Mount Hermon. Jesus was taking them to a place that is far removed from others, out of sight and hearing. It is a place for private revelation from God.

The Epic of Gilgamesh mentions that Mount Hermon split after Gilgamesh kills Humbaba, the Guardian of the Cedar Forest. One translation of Tablet V states, "The ground split open with the heels of their feet, as they whirled around in circles Mt. Hermon and Lebanon split."

In the Book of Enoch, Mount Hermon is the place where the Watcher class of fallen angels descended to Earth. They swear upon the mountain that they would take wives among the daughters of men and take mutual imprecation for their sin (Enoch 6). The mountain or summit is referred to as Saphon in Ugaritic texts where the palace of Ba'al is located in a myth about Attar. The Book of Chronicles also mentions Mount Hermon as a place where Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel were the heads of their families.

Various Temples of Mount Hermon can be found in villages on the slopes. There is a sacred building made of hewn blocks of stone on the summit of Mount Hermon. Known as Qasr Antar, it is the highest temple of the ancient world and was documented by Sir Charles Warren in 1869. An inscription on a limestone stele recovered by Warren from Qasr Antar was translated by George Nickelsburg to read "According to the command of the greatest (nd) Holy God, those who take an oath (proceed) from here." Nickelsburg connected the inscription with oath taken by the angels under Semjaza who took an oath together, bound by a curse in order to take human wives in the Book of Enoch (1 Enoch 6:6). Hermon was said to have become known as "the mountain of oath" by Charles Simon Clermont-Ganneau. The name of God was supposed to be a Hellenized version of Ba'al or Hadad and Nickelsburg connected it with the place name of Baal-Hermon (Lord of Hermon) and the deity given by Enoch as "The Great Holy One".

Eusebius recognized the religious importance of Hermon in his work Onomasticon, saying "Until today, the mount in front of Baniyas and Lebanon is known as Hermon and it is respected by nations as a sanctuary". It has been related to the Arabic term al-haram, which means "sacred enclosure". Another Greek inscription found in a large temple at Deir El Achayer on the northern slopes notes the year that a bench was installed "in the year 242, under Beeliabos, also called Diototos, son of Abedanos, high priest of the gods of Kiboreia". The era of the gods of Kiboreia is not certain, nor is their location which is not conclusively to be identified with Deir al-Achayer, but was possibly the Roman sanctuary or the name of a settlement in the area.

In Psalm 42, which leads the Psalms of the northern kingdom, the Psalmist remembers God from the land of Jordan and the Hermonites. In Song of Songs 4:8, Hermon is an instance of an exotic locale, and the Song of Ascents as well as Psalm 133:3 make specific reference to the abundant dew formation upon Mount Hermon.

Arab-Israeli conflict

During the sixth day war in June 1967, a part of Mount Hermon in Syria was captured by Israel. It was regained by Syria on October 6, 1973, the first day of the Yom Kippur War, following the First Battle of Mount Hermon. Israel recaptured both the formerly Israeli-occupied sector and the pre-Yom Kippur War Syrian-controlled sector on October 21, 1973, during Operation Dessert. The pre-Yom Kippur War Syrian-controlled sector was returned to Syria after the war.

The Israeli-occupied sector of the mountain became patrolled by the Israel Defense Forces and the Israel Police, and the Israeli Security Forces have maintained a strategic observation post for monitoring Syrian and Lebanese military activity near Mitzpe Shlagim ("Snow Lookout"), which is at an elevation of about 2,224 m (7,300 ft). Its neighboring peak, at 2,236 m (7,336 ft), is the highest elevation in Israeli-occupied territory.

Since the onset of Syrian Civil War, the Syrian-controlled Hermon has continued to be under pro-Assad forces, though clashes have sporadically erupted on the mountain range and spilled into

Lebanon and the Israeli-occupied portion. Most notably the Islamist rebel factions of Jaish al-Haramoun took part in the fighting on the Southern slopes of the mountain.

Here are a few facts you might want to know about the Hermon:

1. Mount Hermon is located in the highest point in Israel. It covers an area of 5,000 acres and arises to 2814 meters above sea level. It is believed that in the past the mountain arises to 4000 meters above sea levels!

2. The name Hermon is derived from the Hebrew word pronounced ker-mone, meaning abrupt.

3. Mount Hermon is mentioned a few times in the Hebrew Bible. One example can be found in Deuteronomy 3:8-

”וַנִּקַּח בְּעֵת הַהוּא, אֶת-הָאָרֶץ, מִיַּד שְׁנֵי מְלָכֵי הָאֱמֹרִי, אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן—מִנְחֵל אַרְנוֹן, עַד-הַר הָרְמוֹן.”

” And we took the land at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, from the valley of Arnon unto mount Hermon”.

4. Mount Hermon is called “the eyes of the state” to mark the Third Battle of Mount Hermon during Yom Kippur war, between the Israeli Army and the Syrian Army.

5. Mount Hermon is also mentioned in the New Testament. The Book of Matthew tells of Jesus and his disciples journeying north from Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee to the city of Caesarea Philippi at the southern base of Mount Hermon. Many people believe that The Transfiguration occurred somewhere on Mount Hermon.

6. Since 1981, the Israeli-occupied portion of the Golan Heights has been governed under Golan Heights Law. Only in Mount Hermon you can find a ski resort in a territory held by Israel.

7. Geographically, Mount Hermon is a separate part of the Golan Heights.

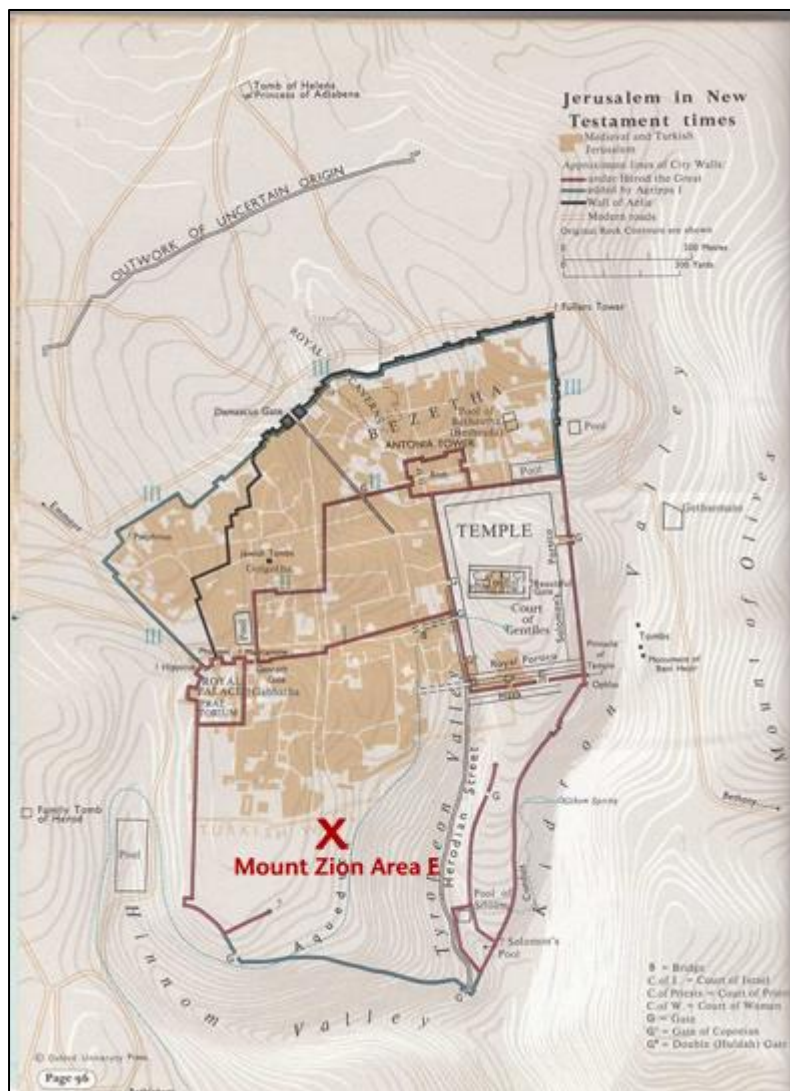
2.12 MOUNT ZION

Mount Zion is a very important location and is easily spotted when you approach the walls of the Old City from the west or the south. Some famous locations on the Mount are:

- Dormition Abbey
- King David's Tomb
- Room of the Last Supper (Coenaculum or Upper Room) – This is where Jesus gathered with His disciples to celebrate Passover and the Last Supper.
- Oskar Shindler's grave in the graveyard on Mount Zion. Oskar was a German businessman who fervently worked to save the lives of Jewish slave laborers during the Holocaust.



As you can see, Mount Zion is not a remote mountain, but mostly like a hill. It is the hilly are of Jerusalem – more specifically, the Temple Mount. It has a large human population.



The term “Zion” in the Old Testament is used as a kind of code word for the coming kingdom of God. Zion was a symbol of God’s dominion over the whole earth, as well as the promise of a great future, when the Gentiles would come and submit to Israel’s God. The worship at the temple was a foretaste of the future, when David’s kingdom would extend over all humanity forever. The very presence of Zion in a human city, Jerusalem, was proof that God’s covenant was with people and that, unlike the gods of the nations, He would indeed dwell among them.



David Conquers Jerusalem

2 Samuel 5:7 (NIV) “Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the City of David.”

David could not rule a newly unified nation from a southern base at Hebron. Jerusalem was ideal for its central location, natural defences, on a rise surrounded on three sides by deep valleys. This place also lacked the previous attachment to any of the tribes of Israel (although it was situated in the territory of Benjamin). The site was first occupied during the third millennium B.C. and was a royal city run by the Jebusites during the time of Abraham. David cleverly devised a means of attack and turned the venerable old fortress into his own possession – the City of David. Mount Zion can be seen as a synonym for Jerusalem.

The Word of the Lord Concerning the death of Sennacherib

2 Kings 19:31 (NIV) “For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors.”

The promises here are for both the immediate situation, for more remote times of regathering, and ultimately the final regathering of the Jewish people into their land in the time of the coming Messiah.

The Mountain of the Lord

Isaiah 2:2-4 (NIV) “In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many people will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths. The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.””

Mount Zion here is seen as a copy of the heavenly reality. In the coming kingdom, the city of Jerusalem and its glorious temple will again become prominent. It is just so fascinating to see that

everything the enemy tries to discredit that involves the Lord, will later be restored to its full measure of majesty – even the mountain – the natural environment.

Cornerstone in Zion

Isaiah 28:16 (NIV) “So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.””

Here the Lord promised to establish His future kingdom on the sure foundation of justice and faith. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone. And it will be laid in Zion. This means Jesus will return to Zion – Jerusalem.

God Redeems Jerusalem

Isaiah 52:8 (NIV) “Listen, your watchmen lift up your voices; together they shout for joy. When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes.”

Watchmen were always stationed on the walls of Jerusalem. However, here it could also be referring to those who long for salvation.

The Holy Hill

Psalms 2:6 (NKJV) “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.”

Here Mount Zion is described as the Holy Hill. The reason being:

- Place where Abraham bound his son Isaac (Genesis 22)
- Where the Holy Temple was built (2 Chronicles 3)
- Where Jesus Christ was crucified (Matthew 27)

Psalms 9:11 (NIV) “Sing praises to the Lord, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.”

Psalms 87:2 (NIV) “the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.”

Psalms 2:6 (NKJV) “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.”

Here the scripture mentions Zion, implying Jerusalem. David and his legitimate heirs were given a divine promise that they would rule the Israelites under the Lord's blessing. Any attack on the king of Israel was an assault on God's promise.

The site of Zion was “holy”, for it was declared to be so by God. It was the place where Abraham bound his son Isaac (Genesis 22), where the holy temple was built (2 Chronicles 3) and where the Saviour Jesus would die (Matthew 27).

I sometimes wonder if, by divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, David was actually writing about the second coming of Jesus Christ, and His rule over the world from the holy hill, Mount Zion, in this passage?

Romans 9:33 (NKJV) “As it is written: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.””

Reading this passage, one can almost hear the voice of God the Father speaking. God is declaring here that Jesus Christ, His own Son, will be this stumbling rock. He will confront every wrong belief and teaching, bringing truth to all people. And whomever believes in Him and this truth, will not be sorry – their lives will flourish.

Romans 11:26 (NKJV) “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;””

Hebrews 12:22 (NKJV) "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,"

In contrast to Mount Sinai which is related to the Law, here people are encountering Mount Zion, where Jesus's blood set them free from the Law.

Revelation 14:1 (NKJV) "Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads."

Insight regarding Mount Zion

Where heaven and earth met, humans and deities could come together. On the physical landscape of the ancient world, this meant mountains. Since ancient people thought deities actually lived on the peak of a sacred mountain, they built temples or altars on or near the mountain in honour of the gods.

In Exodus 19:20, Israel's God, Yahweh lived on Mount Sinai. Later, the Judeans believed Yahweh took up His residence on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, while the Samaritans said He lived on Mount Gerizim near Samaria.

Jerusalem – the 'city of peace', the 'holy city', beloved 'Zion'. The Old Testament is full of praise for this small city, nestled in the Judean hills. Founded by David on the site of an earlier Jebusite town around 1000 B.C., it became the mother city of the Jewish nation and gradually expanded over the centuries. By the time of Jesus it is estimated to have had a population of around 40,000.

The Old Testament city had experienced great moments:

- Return of the ark from Philistine captivity – 2 Samuel 6.
- David's City.
- The dedication of the Temple – 1 Kings 8.
- Its rescue from the siege of Sennacherib – Isaiah 37.
- The idolatrous rule of King Manasseh – 2 Kings 21.
- Its burning and destruction by the Babylonians – 2 Kings 25.
- Jesus had His last supper with His disciples.
- Jesus was sentenced before Pilate. Jesus was kept at the high priest's house in the Upper City.

The Herodian City

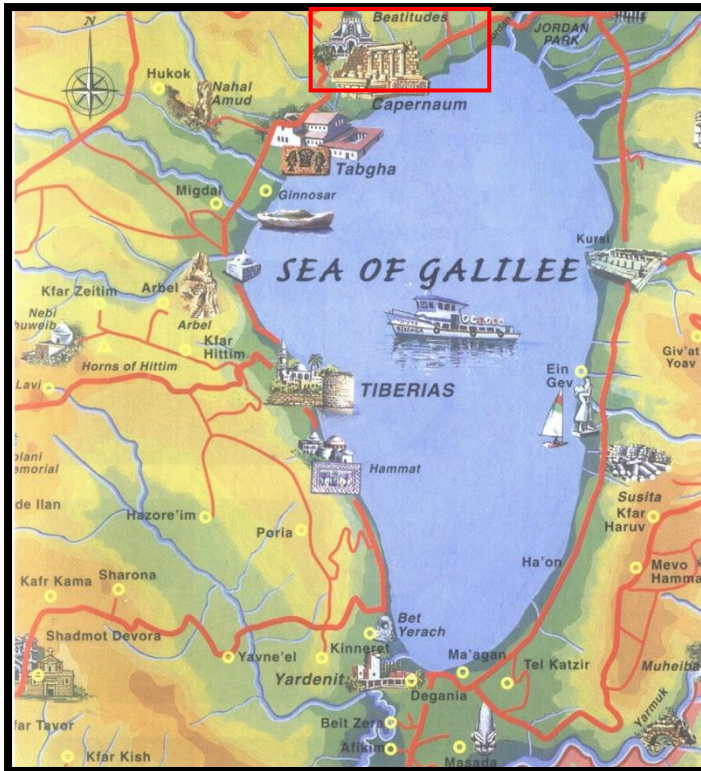
In the years preceding Jesus' arrival, the city had been undergoing a major transformation. Herod the Great's plans for the city included not just the vastly expanded Temple area. There were:

- An expanded Antonia Fortress for the Roman garrison overlooking the Temple (named in honour of Mark Anthony).
- A palace for Herod himself (on the western side of the city).
- New bathhouse over Siloam's Pool.

2.13 MOUNT OF BEATITUDES

The **Mount of Beatitudes** (Hebrew: *Har HaOsher* הר האושר) is a hill in northern Israel where Jesus is believed to have delivered the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12, Luke 6:20-26).

The traditional location for the Mount of Beatitudes is on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, between Capernaum and Gennesaret (Ginosar). Its highest point is 58 meters (190 ft) below sea level, which is approximately 155 meters (509 ft) above the surface of the lake. The actual location of the Sermon on the Mount is not certain, but the present site (also known as Mount Eremos) has been commemorated for more than 1600 years. The site is very near Tabgha. Other suggested locations have included the nearby Mount Arbel, or even the Horns of Hattin.



The site, though beautiful in itself, bears a special feeling of spirituality. There are many good views of the Sea of Galilee and its surroundings, but the vista from this place is among the most magnificent.



A Byzantine church was erected lower down the slope from the current site in the 4th century, and it was used until the 7th century. Remains of a cistern and a monastery are still visible. The current Roman Catholic Franciscan chapel was built in 1937-38 following plans by Italian architect Antonio Barluzzi. It is now used as an Italian convent.

Pope John Paul II celebrated a Mass at this site in March 2000. The Jesus Trail pilgrimage route connects the Mount to other sites from the life of Jesus.



One odd thing about this church is the inscription on the sanctuary, which informs you that the entire project was built by Mussolini in 1937. The church is open daily from 8:30am to noon and 2:30pm until 5pm.



The mount of Beatitudes is where it is told Jesus gave His Sermon on the Mount, which we find in Matthew 5:1-12 and Luke 6:20-26.

2.14 MOUNT OF TEMPTATION (QARANTAL)

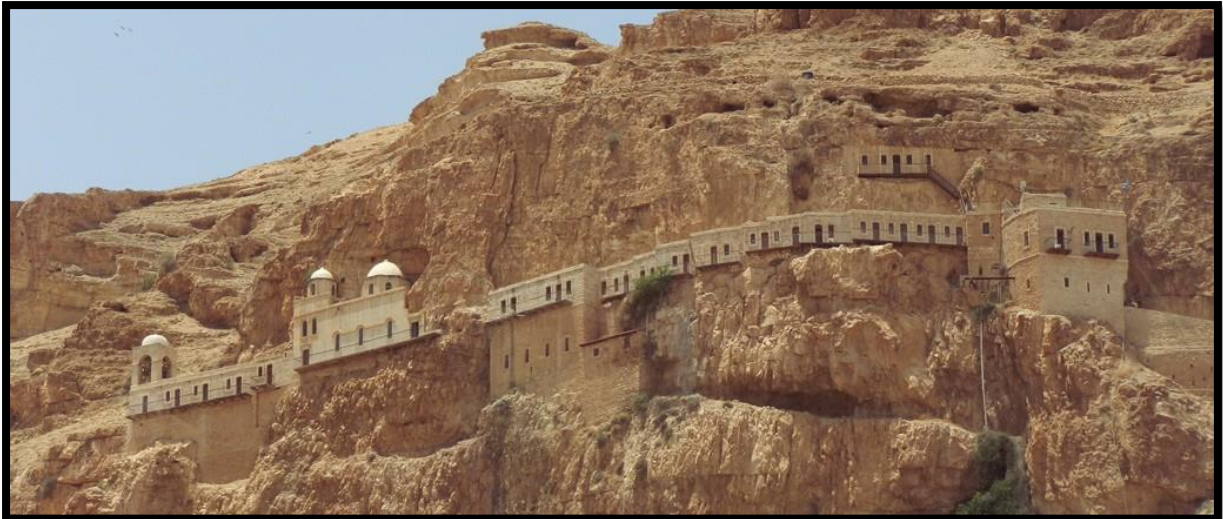


Mount of Temptation in 1910.

The Mount of Temptation is said to be the hill in the Judean Desert where Jesus was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:8). The exact location is unknown and impossible to determine. It is generally identified with **Mount Quarantania**, Arabic name: **Jabal al-Qarantal**, a mountain approximately 366 meters (1,201 ft) high, towering from the northwest over the town of Jericho in the West Bank. According to the public domain *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1907-1914), Quarantania is "a limestone peak on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho".

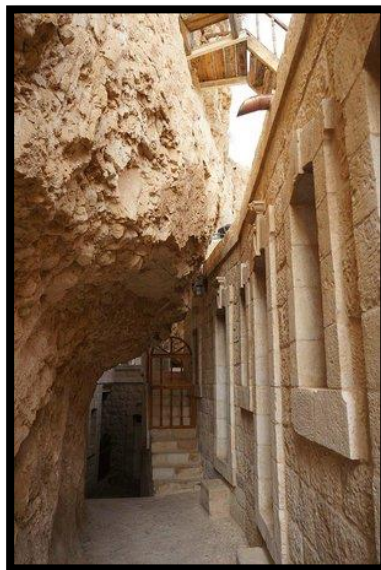


In 1850 A.D. a Greek Orthodox monastery was built on the side of the Mount of Temptation. Halfway up to the top of the mount is the Greek Orthodox Monastery of the Temptation or "**Deir al-Qarantal**" in Arabic.



Above Qarantal, on top of the cliff, is a modern wall that sits on the ruins of the Hasmonean (later Herodian) fortress **Dok** or **Duq** (1 Macc 16:15), mentioned in the First Book of Maccabees, which appears as "**Dagon**" in Josephus' "Antiquities of the Jews" (Ant., XIII, viii, 1; BJ, I, ii, 3). The modern wall was built at the end of the 19th century when the Greek Orthodox hoped to raise another monastery on the top of the mount but ran out of money.

In 1998 an Austrian-Swiss company built a 1,300 meters (4,300 ft)-long cable car from Jericho's Tell es-Sultan, the mound where the prehistorical and biblical towns once stood, to the level of the monastery, in preparation for the year 2000 when large numbers of tourists were expected.



Here are some pathways long the wall.



3 THE MEANING OF MOUNTAINS

High Places

Deuteronomy 12:2 (NKJV) “You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall disposes’ served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.”

In those times the Canaanites would build their temples on high places, believing that their gods lived on the mountain tops. These temples would be seen as gateways between the earth and heaven.

View from on High

Different perspective than the view from the valley.

Experience all four seasons in one day

As you travel up a mountain, and reside on the mountain, you can experience the following all in one day:

- Blistering winds
- Sunshine
- Heat with no wind
- No wind
- Rain
- Fog and cloud

Corner Stone

Matthew 21:2-44

- God is referred to a rock or a stone.
 - Deuteronomy 32:4 & 18 & 30-31
 - Psalm 18:2 & 31 & 46
 - 1 Corinthians 10:4
- A stone is also a messianic title.
 - 1 Corinthians 10:4
- To Israel, Jesus was a stumbling stone.
 - Isaiah 8:14-15
 - Romans 9:32-33
 - 1 Corinthians 1:23
- Israel rejected the Messiah, but in His death and resurrection He created the church.
- To the church, Jesus is the foundation stone, the head of the corner.
 - Ephesians 2:20-22
 - 1 Peter 2:4-5
- At the end of the age, Jesus will come as the smiting stone, destroy Gentile kingdoms, and establish His own glorious kingdom.
 - Daniel 2:34
- Mountains are governments in the prophetic.

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