

Mounts Of The Bible

Introduction. Many times in the Bible, one sees geographical places which represent deeper concepts. For example, when you hear the words, "Sodom and Gomorrah," you would probably think of immorality.

We are going to consider significant mountains in the Bible and their deeper meanings. Throughout the Bible, mountains have symbolized continuance, stability, and protection. The events which took place on these mountains all teach valuable lessons and are very important to the teachings which we hold dear to us.

I. ***Moriah -- The Mount Of Obedience***

- A. The "land of Moriah" was a general area that included the hills on which Solomon later built his temple in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 3:1). David purchased this land from Ornan the Jebusite, who used it as a threshing floor (1 Chronicles 21:15-22:1).
- B. This mount is very significant in the trial of Abraham's obedience (Genesis 22:1-13). This test of obedience was a sign of great faith (Hebrews 11:17-19).
 1. In vs. 17, Abraham "offered" up Isaac. Even though he did not physically kill him, the demands of this sacrifice was met in the eyes of God and Abraham.
 2. In vs. 18, Abraham knew that all the hopes and promises were centered in Isaac, but Abraham was willing to leave it all up to God.
 3. In vs. 19, Abraham considered (calculated, reasoned) that God was able to bring Isaac back. In Abraham's eyes, Isaac was as good as dead.
- C. This "mount of obedience" was the shining evidence of good faith in God (James 2:21-24). The completion of the sacrifice perfected Abraham's faith in the promises of God.

II. ***Sinai -- The Mount Of Power***

- A. Mt. Sinai is located in the Sinai peninsula which is a triangular-shaped wedge of land lying between the two gulfs of the Red Sea. A vast rocky mass almost fills the peninsula, with an individual peak, also called Horeb, where the Israelites arrived in the third month after leaving Egypt (Exodus 19:1).
- B. Although several mountains have been identified as possibilities, there are only two serious contenders -- Jebel Serbal (6,791 feet) in central Sinai and Jebel Musa (7,500 feet) in southern Sinai. One

of a cluster of three peaks, Jebel Musa has a broad plain at its base, where the Israelites may have camped.

- C. This was the location of God's giving of the Law to the Israelites. In fact, all of the legislation from Exodus 20 to Numbers 10 was enacted on or at the foot of Mt. Sinai.
- D. The mountain was a very terrifying sight (Exodus 19:16-25). It symbolized darkness and destruction (Hebrews 12:18-21). The NIV states that when Moses saw it, he said, "I am trembling with fear."
- E. During the Old Covenant, God was represented as One who could not be approached freely. Mount Sinai was a mount which had no access to the common Israelite (Exodus 19:12-13). It demonstrated God's power to a rebellious and sinful people.

III. ***Nebo -- The Mount Of Severity***

- A. Mt. Nebo is a peak of the Abarim Mountains, across the Jordan from Jericho in the land of Moab. Its elevation is over 4,000 feet above the Dead Sea, and from this unobstructed vantage point one can enjoy a magnificent and almost unparalleled view of the entire land of Canaan.
- B. Moses rendered great service to God (Hebrews 11:24-28). The one great sin that stands out in most people's mind was the sin at Kadesh (Numbers 20:1-12). On top of Mount Nebo, we see how God punished Moses for this sin (Deuteronomy 34:1-6).
- C. We must never forget the severity of God (Romans 11:22). Severity does not come because God is mean, but because of our disobedience. We have every indication that Moses was considered just in the sight of God, but forgiveness does not always carry with it the alleviation of the consequences of sin.

IV. ***Carmel -- The Mount Of Victory***

- A. The Carmel range of mountains is fifteen miles long, with its southern boundary in the Bay of Acre, near the modern city of Haifa. The foothills flow into the Plain of Esdraelon. The highest point is 1,810 feet, with a promontory thrusting into the Mediterranean Sea, opposite the Sea of Galilee. The mountains collect heavy dew, remaining green throughout the year which is unusual for Palestine.
- B. The Canaanites built shrines to pagan weather deities on Carmel. Therefore, it was an appropriate site for a confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal.
- C. In 1 Kings 18:1-46, four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal tried in vain to induce a response from their gods. When Elisha prayed to

God, God rained down fire and consumed the altar thereby causing all at the mountain to fall down and worship God.

- D. The incident on Carmel teaches us that numbers are not everything. God's will in this world will be victorious even if most mankind refuses to follow it (Matthew 7:13-14). We cannot allow ourselves to become disheartened by the hardness of men's hearts.

V. ***Hermon -- The Mount Of Authority***

- A. Mount Hermon is a magnificent mountain, rising to a height of 9,232 feet. It is snow-clad most of the year and has abundant dew descending on it (Psalm 133:3). Mount Hermon, which means "sacred mountain," also forms the northern boundary of the land that Israel took from the Amorites. It was regarded as sacred by the Canaanites who inhabited the land before the Israelites. The snow at Mount Hermon is a major source of the Jordan River, and water from its slopes ultimately flows into the Dead Sea.
- B. This was the scene of our Lord's transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-8. This episode proves to us the question, "To whose authority we must bow?"
- C. In Matthew 17:5, we hear the definitive proof of whose authority is greater (Matthew 28:18). Notice that God did not even consider other pagan religions to be of any consequence. He only recognized the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah).
 - 1. You need to be aware of all the religions out there which pretend to wear the name of Christ, but do not follow His instructions (Matthew 7:21-23).
 - 2. If you are associated with one of these religions, then you need to know that these will be rooted up by the Lord (Matthew 15:13).

VI. ***Olivet -- The Mount Of Hope***

- A. The Mount of Olives is east of the city of Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley. It rises to a height of 2,641 feet. A magnificent view of Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley can be seen from the summit. The mountain received its name from the dense olive groves which grow on it. Although the Mount of Olives is only mentioned once in the Old Testament (Zechariah 14:4), it played a prominent part in the life of our Lord.
- B. The rejection, pain, and agony of the cross was behind Jesus. He has triumphed over sin and the grave. His mission on earth here is complete and He is now ready to return to heaven where He will be glorified with His Father (John 17:13).

- C. On this mount, Jesus gave His promise to the apostles that the kingdom would come with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-12). With this promise and its subsequent fulfillment, those who wish to live with God now have the opportunity to abide with Him in the eternal purpose of His church (Ephesians 3:8-13).
- D. Now we can live in hope as residents of God's "heaven on earth." God's church prepares us for the blessedness and gloriousness of heaven. That is what we truly hope for (Titus 2:13; Hebrews 6:19; 1 Peter 1:3). We look to go home as Jesus did.

VII. ***Zion -- The Mount Of Blessings***

- A. Zion was an ancient Jebusite fortress situated on the southeast hill of Jerusalem at the junction of the Kidron and the Tyropean valleys. The name came to stand not only for the fortress but also for the hill on which the fortress stood. After David captured the fortress, he called Zion the "City of David" (2 Samuel 5:7).
- B. After Solomon built the temple, the name "Zion" was extended to include the temple area. Eventually, Zion was used as a name for Jerusalem, the land of Judah and the people of Israel as a whole. After Zion came to figuratively represent Israel, it was carried into the New Testament and attached to God's spiritual kingdom, the church.
- C. This mount is different. It is not a physical mount like Sinai, but rather a spiritual one (Hebrews 12:22-24). It symbolizes the light and glory of the New Covenant. It was prophesied that Jesus would come out of Zion (Romans 9:33; 11:26).
- D. Notice the glory and triumph associated with this mountain. In Revelation 14:1-3, the 144,000 were with the Lamb singing a new song. This symbolized the security and victorious spirit of rejoicing enjoyed by the church because the Lord is in their midst.

Conclusion. Which mountain do you stand on? Which one will be your stability? Will it be the mount of Christ's authority, the mount of God's power, the mount of hope, or maybe the mount of severity? If you are here and all you have to look forward to is the reliability of God's punishment, then we invite you to change that situation.