

# 32 Mt Nebo

## Names (also known as)

Hebrew: נְבוֹ הָרַר Har Nevo; Arabic: نيبو ج بل  
Jabal Nībū.

## Etymology

The name Nebo possibly comes from a Semitic root which in Hebrew survives as the verb נבט (*naba*), meaning to prophesy.

## Location/Description



Mt. Nebo is an elevated ridge in Jordan, approximately 817 metres (2,680 ft) above sea level, mentioned in the Bible as the place where Moses was granted a view of the Promised Land. The view from the summit provides a panorama of the Holy Land, and to the north, a more limited one of the valley of the River Jordan. The West Bank city of Jericho is usually visible from the summit, as is Jerusalem on a very clear day.

## Scriptural references

### Old Testament

Num. 32:3,38; 33:47; Deut. 32:49; 34:1; 1 Chron. 5:8; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 48:1,22.

## Famous characters

Moses



## Brief history

Israel camped beneath the heights of Nebo in the second last station of the wilderness wandering east of Jordan (Num. 33:47). There are areas large enough, and flat enough to accommodate a very large number of people on the lower slopes of Mount Nebo.



On three occasions Yahweh instructed Moses to ascend the heights of Nebo and view the Land (Num. 27:12; Deut. 3:27; 32:49). This was merciful compensation for the fact that he would not lead Israel across Jordan because he did not hallow Yahweh at Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 20:7-12).

The smiting of the rock (*selah*) with a rod at Kadesh-Barnea completely destroyed the type of Christ as mediator at the end of their wilderness journey. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 10:4 – “and that rock was Christ.” The rock (*tzur*) at Rephidim, struck with a serpent rod in order to bring forth water was a type of the crucifixion of Christ (John 7:37-39). The lofty *selah* (cliff face) at the end of their journey represented Christ in his role as resurrected and immortal High Priest, hence this rock was to be spoken to. Striking it with a rod was in effect (in type) crucifying the son of God afresh. For this, and for not exalting Yahweh alone in the eyes of the people (“must we,” i.e. Moses and Aaron, “bring forth water from this rock”), he was not permitted to take the nation across Jordan.

However, he will ultimately complete that journey and his time on Mt. Nebo inspecting the vista of the Promised Land was in a way the Divine guarantee that one day he would take up an inheritance therein. The fact he died with all his mortal powers intact (Deut. 34:7) is also indicative that there is a future for Moses beyond resurrection.

In Deut. 34, Moses took that last mortal journey and ascended Mount Nebo to view the Land of Israel. After taking in the sight, he died and was interned by angels in an unknown valley location in Moab (Deut. 34:6) to avert the ‘Moses worship’ that has characterized Judaism ever since, and to prevent his tomb from becoming the object of the kind of pilgrimages that are seen in the Islamic faith.



### **Sources:**

Abarim Publications' Biblical names  
2010 “In the steps of the Patriarchs” Tour

(Compilers – Darren Peeler/Jim Cowie)