

72 Mt. Tabor

Names (also known as)

Hebrew - Har Tavor; Arabic - Jabal Aṭ-ṭur, Jebel et-Tur.

Etymology

Strong's H8396 תָּבוֹר *tābôr* - from a root H8406 - to be fragile; hence broken. BDB = “mound”.

Location/Description



Tabor is a mountain in the plain of Esdraelon rising abruptly and insulated except for a narrow ridge on the west connecting it to the hills of Nazareth.

The mountain is a monadnock - an isolated hill or small mountain rising abruptly from gently sloping or level surrounding land, and is not volcanic. In spite of its proximity to the Nazareth mountains, it constitutes a separate geological form.

Scriptural references

Old Testament

Josh. 19:22; Jud. 4:6,12,14; 8:18; 1 Sam. 10:3; 1 Chron. 6:77; Ps. 89:12; Jer. 46:18; Hos. 5:1.

Famous Characters

Deborah and Barak
Gideon and his brothers
Zebah and Zalmunna

Brief history

Mt Tabor is mentioned for the first time in Josh. 19:22 as the border of three tribes: Zebulun, Issachar and Naphtali. The mountain's importance stems from its strategic control of the junction of the Galilee's north-south route with the east-west highway of the Jezreel Valley.



In the days of the Second Temple, Mount Tabor was one of the mountain peaks on which it was the custom to light beacons in order to inform the northern villages of Jewish holy days and of beginnings of new months.

Due to its strategic importance, Mount Tabor has often been surmounted by a fortress. Tabor was first occupied by a Seleucid fortress in the 3rd century BC. It was later refortified in 66 AD by Josephus during the First Jewish Revolt, but fell to Roman general Vespasian in 67.

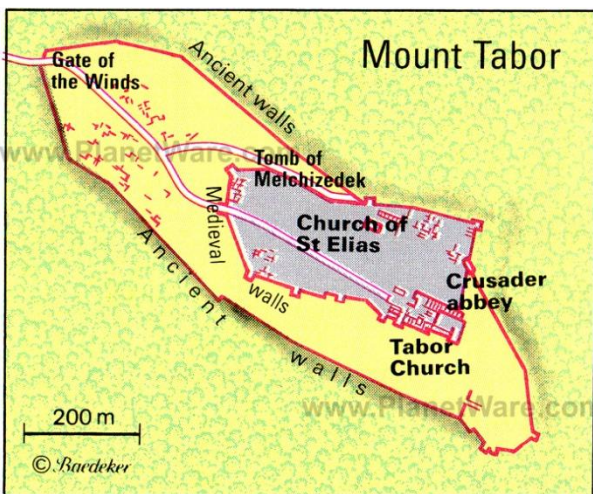


In 348 AD, Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem wrote that he preferred Mt. Tabor to Mt. Hermon as the site of the Transfiguration, and by the end of the 4th century there was a church on the

site. By 570, three Byzantine churches are recorded as standing on Mt. Tabor, or perhaps one large church with chapels dedicated to Christ, Moses and Elijah.

In 1255, it was granted to the Hospitallers, but in 1263, Baybars destroyed the church and the mountain became a royal hunting park for the Mamluks.

In 1799, during the time of Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition to the land of Israel, in the valley between mount Tabor and the Hill of Moreh a battle was fought between a French force of about 3,000 soldiers under Napoleon and general Jean Baptiste Kléber against a Mamluk force of about 20,000 soldiers.



During the 1948 Arab–Israeli War members from the Arab Al-Sabehi tribe participated in the army of the Arab Liberation Army and killed seven members of the village Beit Keshet. In May 1948 the Golani Brigade occupied Mount Tabor. Most members of the tribe were forced out to Syria and to the Kingdom of Jordan, except for one stream of the tribe, the clan of Shibli, whose members refused to leave their land. After the war their village was established and was admitted as a tourist village by the Israeli government. The locals are famous for being hospitable and very friendly to visitors.

The triumph of Deborah and Barak

In Judges 4, Deborah the prophetess summoned Barak from Kadesh-Naphtali and gave him God's command, "Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun" (Jud. 4:6). With Deborah beside him on Tabor, Barak and his men descended weaponless from the mountain as a mighty storm brewed behind

them. Yahweh fought from heaven in this way and the Israelites vanquished Sisera and the Canaanites with their 900 chariots of iron which proved useless in the mud of the Jezreel valley.

Judges 4 sets forth in a beautiful type the way God intended to fulfill His covenant of Gen. 3:15.

Judges 4 cameo of Gen. 3:15

- ❖ **Jabin** – Type of the serpent (carnal mind).
- ❖ **Sisera** – Type of the seed of the serpent.
- ❖ **Deborah** – Representative of the Divine mind – “the woman”.
- ❖ **Barak** – Type of Christ – seed of the woman.
- ❖ **10,000 men** – Type of Christ's disciples.
- ❖ **Heber** – Type of Judas Iscariot the betrayer.
- ❖ **Jael** – Representative of the Divine mind in Christ – the Divine element in the Atonement.

Whereas Deborah represents the Divine mind in the work of the Atonement, it is Barak who represents Christ in the grand scheme of redemption.

Barak – Type of Christ

- ❖ His name signifies “glittering” or “a flashing sword” (from the sun shining on a moving blade) – symbol of the word of God in action – Heb. 4:12. Christ was the word made flesh – John 1:14.
- ❖ Son of **Abinoam** – “Father of graciousness”
- ❖ **Revealed as type of Christ** – Jud. 5:12 is quoted in Ps. 68:18 – cited Eph. 4:8.
- ❖ **Kedesh-Naphtali** – “The sanctuary of my wrestling”. City of refuge (Josh. 20:7), 20 miles (32 kms) from Nazareth (Christ in preparation for mission).

Tabor plays its part in this type too. Its meaning of “fragile” represents the position Christ found himself in when he approached Jerusalem for the last time. Crucifixion awaited him and the nails that pinned him to the tree were foreshadowed in the tent peg of Jael driven through the crushed head of Sisera. As then, the power of the serpent was broken, but only for one man.

Sources:

Wikipedia
Christ in the Judges study series

(Compilers – Ron Leadbetter/Jim Cowie)