

What is the significance of Mount Horeb in the Bible?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/mount-Horeb.html>

Mount Horeb in the Bible is another name for Mount Sinai, the mountain where the Hebrew people entered into a covenant with God after escaping from bondage in Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:2; 1 Kings 8:9; 2 Chronicles 5:10). Mount Horeb is also the place where Moses received the Ten Commandments and the laws, rules, and instructions for the people before continuing on their journey through the desert toward the Promised Land (Exodus 33:6; Malachi 4:4). “The mountain of God” is another name in the Bible for Mount Horeb or Mount Sinai (Exodus 3:1; 4:27; 18:5).

Horeb comes from a Hebrew term meaning “desert.” Most of the events that the book of Exodus describes as happening at Mount Sinai are located at Mount Horeb in the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy uses the name Horeb exclusively for the mountain of God except in one verse, Deuteronomy 33:2. However, this mention of Sinai could refer to the wilderness of Sinai rather than the mountain.

Before the exodus, while Moses was tending the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro, he came one day to the slopes of Mount Horeb. There he caught sight of a bush that was on fire but not burning up. As Moses investigated the phenomenon, God spoke to him from the flames. Calling him by name, the Lord told Moses to go to Pharaoh and deliver the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 3:1-12).

After the exodus, as the people wandered in the desert, they suffered from thirst and began to complain to Moses about having no water. The Lord commanded Moses to strike the rock at Horeb to obtain water to drink (Exodus 17:1-7).

In Exodus 19–20, the Israelites camped at the base of Mount Horeb while Moses went up the mountain to receive instructions from God. The people were told that from the mountain they would receive the commandments of God, and even hear the Lord's voice. After three days of preparation, God would come down in the sight of all the people. Moses set boundaries on where they could go, and under penalty of death, they were prohibited from even touching the mountain. On the third day, amid thunder, lightning, and trumpet blasts, a thick cloud of smoke engulfed the mountain as God descended on it. Then Moses brought down the Ten Commandments and all the instructions of the law.

The book of Deuteronomy reiterates that on Mount Horeb God made a covenant with the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 5:2) and handed down the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:6–21). Also, while camped at Mount Horeb, the people made a golden idol in the shape of a calf to worship, provoking God's wrath (Deuteronomy 9:13–29; Psalm 106:19).

From Mount Horeb, the Israelites set out toward Kadesh-barnea, an eleven-day journey (Deuteronomy 1:2, 19). Much later, the prophet Elijah fled to Mount Horeb because of Jezebel's wrath (1 Kings 19:1–8). There he stayed in a cave and had an extraordinary encounter with God, who spoke to him not in the windstorm, earthquake, or fire, but in a gentle whisper. On Horeb God also instructed Elijah to anoint Hazael as king over Syria and Jehu over Israel, and He named Elisha as the prophet to succeed Elijah (1 Kings 19:9–21).