

What is the significance of Mount Tabor in the Bible?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Mount-Tabor.html>

Mount Tabor is a dome-shaped mountain in the Jezreel Valley situated 6 miles east of Nazareth and 11 miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee. Rising less than 2,000 feet above sea level, Mount Tabor appears loftier than it actually is in the otherwise flat Jezreel Valley. Visible all the way to Jerusalem, Mount Tabor was a familiar landmark to Jesus and the disciples, who would have seen it often during their travels around Galilee.

Mount Tabor played a prominent role in Israel's history, marking a boundary between the tribes of Issachar (Joshua 19:22), Naphtali (Joshua 19:34), and Zebulun (Joshua 19:12). The Via Maris, an ancient international trade highway, passed near Mount Tabor and made use of the point as a navigational tool on its route from Megiddo in Israel toward Damascus in Syria.

Even though Mount Tabor is not as tall as the neighboring Mount Hermon, Psalm 89:12 compares the two peaks, and Jeremiah links Tabor's prominence with that of Mount Carmel: "‘As surely as I live,’ declares the King, whose name is the LORD Almighty, ‘one will come who is like Tabor among the mountains, like Carmel by the sea’" (Jeremiah 46:18).

In the book of Judges, Deborah summoned Barak to gather an army from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun at Mount Tabor. From there the Israelites marched down to defeat Sisera, commander of the Canaanite army from Hazor (Judges 4:1-24). A little later in Judges, Gideon avenged the death of his brothers by executing the Midianite kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, who had slain Gideon's brothers on Mount Tabor (Judges 8:18-21). Mount Tabor was also identified in the Old Testament as one of the high places where Israel's rulers had set up altars for the worship of false gods (Hosea 5:1).

Since the fourth century, tradition has recognized Mount Tabor as the place of Jesus Christ's transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9). At the time of the transfiguration, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of a high mountain to pray. The three disciples fell asleep, and when they awoke, they were astonished to see Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah. The Lord's face was transformed, shining like the sun, and His clothes dazzled with light.

The actual "high mountain" where the transfiguration took place is not specified in the New Testament accounts. Scholars who question the traditional assignment of Mount Tabor argue that Mount Hermon is the highest peak in the area and fits better with the events just before and after the transfiguration.

Queen Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine the Great, was convinced that Mount Tabor was the site of Christ's transfiguration. In AD 326, Helena built the first church on the mountain. Other shrines and monasteries were erected; however, all were destroyed in the twelfth century by Saladin, Sultan of Egypt and Syria. Today a nineteenth-century Greek Orthodox monastery and an early twentieth-century Roman Catholic church attract pilgrims from around the world to the top of Mount Tabor.