

What is the significance of Mount Hermon in the Bible?

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

Mount Hermon (or “sacred mountain”) is the highest mountain in ancient Israel, boasting majestic, snowcapped peaks rising just over 9,000 feet above the sea. Mount Hermon may have been the site of Jesus Christ’s transfiguration.

Known today by its Arabic name, Jabal el-Shaiykh, meaning “snowy mountain,” Mount Hermon’s three distinct peaks are covered with snow most of the year. In Bible times, Mount Hermon was also called Sirion by the Sidonians and Senir by the Amorites (Deuteronomy 3:9; Psalm 29:6). These two names mean “breastplate,” likely referring to the mountain’s rounded, snow-topped crests that gleam in the sunlight.

Visible from great distances, the mountain range is nearly 30 miles in length and about 15 miles wide. Mount Hermon is located at the northeastern boundary of Israel, on the border between Syria and Lebanon. Along with melting snow and the abundant rainfall on Mount Hermon, large springs at the base of the mountain form the main headwaters of the Jordan River.

Mount Hermon was significant in the Bible for a few reasons. Mount Hermon marked the northern limits of the Promised Land conquered by Joshua (Deuteronomy 3:8; Joshua 11:17; 12:1; 13:5). Mount Hermon also formed the northern boundary of the territory inherited by the half-tribe of Manasseh as well as the northern border of Israel in general (1 Chronicles 5:23).

Mount Hermon has always been considered a sacred mountain. Worshipers from the earliest

of times were drawn to its isolated heights. Several ruins of ancient sanctuaries have been found on Mount Hermon's peaks and slopes and at its base. Judges 3:3 calls the mountain Baal Hermon, meaning "Lord of Hermon" (see also 1 Chronicles 5:23). Some of the psalms praise Mount Hermon for its loftiness and majesty (Psalm 42:6; 89:11-12).

King David compared God's people living together in unity to the dew of Mount Hermon falling on Mount Zion (Psalm 133:1-3). This illustration is fitting, since the slopes of Mount Hermon, in the north, receive profuse amounts of dew. Mount Zion, in the south, is much drier. David compared the refreshing dew of Hermon to the blessings of unity in Israel, from north to south. Harmony among God's people is life-giving. Mount Hermon is also noted for its wildlife in the Bible (Song of Solomon 4:8).

Some scholars believe Mount Hermon was the site of Jesus' transfiguration, a supernatural event in which Christ appeared in His true glory as the Son of God, revealing His identity as Messiah and fulfilling the law and the prophets (Matthew 17:1-8; see also 2 Peter 1:16-18). At the transfiguration, Peter, James, and John—the members of Jesus' inner circle—were eyewitnesses to the Lord's preexistent glory.

Both the accounts of Matthew and Mark specify that Jesus led Peter, James, and John up a "high mountain." The traditional site for the Mount of Transfiguration is Mount Tabor. However, Matthew's gospel places events leading up to the transfiguration in the district of Caesarea Philippi, making Mount Hermon the closer site. Also, in those days, the summit of Mount Tabor was inhabited and surrounded by a wall, according to the historian Josephus. On the other hand, Mount Hermon afforded privacy and seclusion "where they were all alone" (Mark 9:2).