

# Two Mountains

For thousands of years people have been fascinated by High places. Mountains, hills Cliffs, tall buildings... Even in London as thousands of people pay £25 to go to the top of the Shard! Think of the many high-rise cities there are around the world... Hong Kong, New York, London, to name a few...

In the past Many Churches were built on the tops of Hills in times past.

These high places draw people to them because they feel closer to whatever deity it is they worship. They think that being on high gives their worship more effective. It makes them feel more powerful. If you look for the boss of a large corporation... you will usually find it on one of the top floors.

This desire to get higher resulted in some spectacular failures!

**Take Babel for instance**... the Bible tells us that after the flood the people 'moved eastward'... AWAY from God.... When people leave the area of God's blessing & protection, They go to places that cause them problems. They started a massive building project.

*Gen 11:4 (NLT) Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."*

So the city was built in defiance of God's commandment to establish a united front against God by preventing a scattering to fill the land as God had ordered.



They then they decided to build a tower... that would be high enough to avoid being flooded again... they built the Tower of Babel as a monument to their own greatness-to make a name for themselves... basically saying... 'We don't need you God!' rather than obeying God's commandment to be fruitful and multiply. These descendants of Noah had been disobedient to the call of God.

*Gen 11: 7-9 Hybrid Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."*

*In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city.*

It Didn't end well...

Today I want us to look at Two Mountains... the first is...

## Mount Sinai

The people of Israel had been Miraculously delivered by the Lord from slavery in Egypt... Now they were camped beside a mountain... Sinai.

Moses went up this mountain and met with God. It was a fearsome place, surrounded with thick black cloud, glowing with fire, blinding flashes of lightning & terrifying thunder... from which God spoke to Moses. Around the base of the mountain there was a fence to stop people being killed by trying to go up there....

So while God spoke with Moses...giving the Law... over a period of 40 days, the people waited...

*Exodus 32 15-19 NiRV        Moses turned and went down the mountain. He had the two tablets of the covenant in his hands. Words were written on both sides of the tablets, front and back. The tablets were the work of God. The words had been written by God. They had been carved on the tablets.*

**Joshua heard the noise** of the people shouting. So he said to Moses, "It sounds like war in the camp." Moses replied, "It's not the sound of winning. It's not the sound of losing. It's the sound of singing that I hear."

*As Moses approached the camp, he saw the calf. He also saw the people dancing. So he*



*burned with anger. He threw the tablets out of his hands. **They broke into pieces** at the foot of the mountain.*



*He said to Aaron, "What did these people do to you? How did they make you lead them into such terrible sin?" "Please don't be angry," Aaron answered. "You know how these people like to do what is evil. They said to me, 'Make us a god that will lead us. This fellow Moses brought us up out of Egypt. But we don't know what has happened to him.'*

*"So I told them, 'Anyone who has any gold jewelry, take it off.' They gave me the gold. I threw it into the fire. And out came this calf!"*



Moses Pleads for the people asking God to forgive their Sin. God promises to only punish those who had sinned against Him. Moses & the people leave there as an angel leads them...GOD sent a plague on the people because of the calf they and Aaron had made.

It didn't end well...

Sinai and the Law are both concerned with Judgement... people lived under the law which governed every aspect of life... basically the Law made you aware of how you had broken it! So, there were sacrifices for all sorts of Sins & wrong-doing of every kind.. The Alternative was the Wrath & judgement of God... and nobody wanted that.

*Hebrews 10:31 (ERV) It is a terrible thing to face punishment from the living God.*



## Thankfully there is another Mountain... Mount Zion

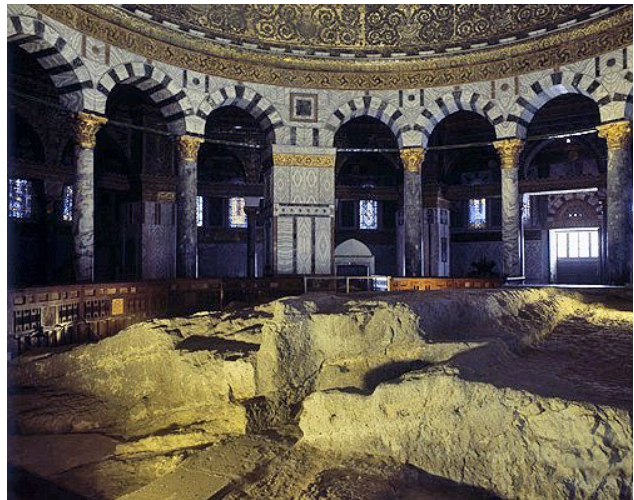
Mount Zion is the name for a collection of hills that form what we now call Jerusalem.

One of them is **Mount Moriah** where Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac. We are familiar with The Boys question.. 'Where is the Lamb?'

*Gen 22:8 (NirV) Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." The two of them walked on together.*

In the Bible the word here for Lamb is *Hebrew... šeh*. a small animal or Lamb. When Abraham turned after he was stopped by the angel of the Lord from sacrificing his son he saw a Ram.. which is *'ayil*,

So, instead of providing a young lamb, a *šeh*, God provided a full-grown ram, an *'ayil*, for the sacrifice. Thus, one can say that God provided a sacrifice much greater than Abraham expected... one that also signified Atonement.. Forgiveness & Thanksgiving.



When King David captured the city he built his fortress & palace on the Hill of Zion...

later the Ark Of The Covenant was brought there too. He put the ark of God on Mount Zion and it's like God says... This is my mountain, and where my ark... my presence is, This is My dwelling place... here the priests would sprinkle



the blood of their sacrifices... And God, who dwelt between the wings of the angels on the top of the ark of the Covenant... would receive the blood of the sacrifice.... Sprinkled on The Mercy Seat.

The mercy seat was the place the high priests sprinkled blood for the sins of the people.. But the the people were still separated from God's presence... not by a Fence as they were at Sinai... but by the veil in the temple which only the high priests were allowed to enter ...

and even then it was only once a year... But this Once a year was a picture of what was about to happen. Once for all...

It was on another hill nearby mount Zion.. that that things came to a head... we call it **Golgotha** which means “place of the skull”, the Latin for skull is (*calvaria* or *Calvariæ Locus*)

Golgotha was the Highest point of Mount Moriah



The Romans had excavated this area of the mountain and exposed the sheer face of the mountain, using the dirt to build Fort Antonia. They used this high area of Mt Calvary like a stage... so everyone would see the crucifixions from the city below and be terrified of rebelling against their rule.



Enter John the Baptist *John 1:29 (NLT)* ...John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

It was on Calvary that **Jesus was Crucified...**

*Heb 7:27 ERV & MSG He is not like those other priests. They had to offer sacrifices every day, first for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus doesn't need to do that. He offered only one sacrifice for all time. He offered himself. He bypassed the sacrifices consisting of goat and calf blood, instead using his own blood as the price to set us free once and for all.*

*At the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*

It was at this point that the veil of the Temple was torn in two... From the Top Down God has The Fence was down... there is no longer any separation between man & God.

*Lk 23:46 ESV Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.*

The price was Paid. The Sacrifice complete... The Blood was on the Mercy seat.



For those who put their trust in Jesus there is Mercy, Forgiveness & Grace because

*Heb 12:18-19 Hybrid You have not come to a place like Mount Sinai that can be seen and touched. Which was burning with fire and covered with darkness, gloom, and storms. There is no sound of a trumpet or a voice speaking words like those they heard. When they heard the voice, they begged never to hear another word.*

Mount Sinai is a mountain of Judgement & Law... God is not approachable at Sinai... You march up to God with your law keeping & works and you will find Sinai belching fire right back at you.

God is approachable at Zion... but you can approach Him on the terms of grace, forgiveness. By Faith in the Blood of Jesus Christ. The Lamb of God. You can approach Him at Zion because there He stands ready to forgive. And so He says, "Come to Zion." And when we come to Christ we come to a spiritual Zion, a place of grace. God is approachable.

Two Mountains... One of Judgement & Death .... One of Grace & Life.