

46 Mt Scopus

Names (also known as)

Probably the Nob of 1 Sam. 21

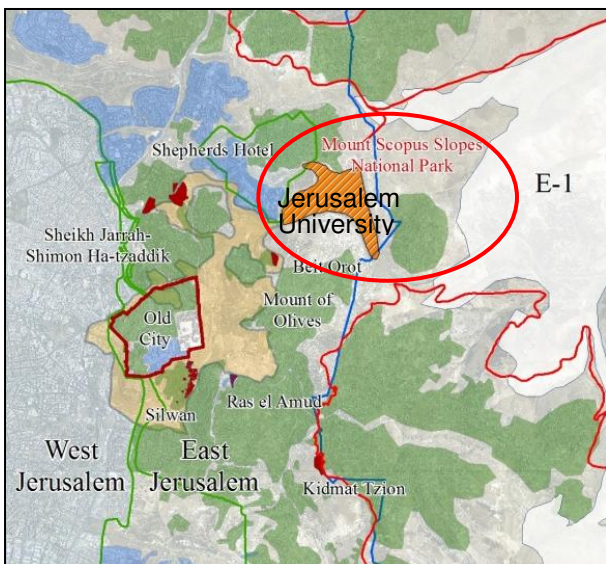
Etymology

Nob - Hebrew = high place, from a root word meaning to bear fruit.

Modern Hebrew - *Har Hatsofim* - mount of observation.

Mount Scopus - modern (Gk. *skopeo* - to watch). Josephus in Wars V. 2,3,67 calls the mount "scopes" - Greek: one who looks out.

Location/Description



Mt Scopus is a mountain (elevation 2,710 feet or 826 meters above sea level) in northeast Jerusalem.

The valley between Mount Scopus and the old city is the Kidron Valley. Trees are absent to the east of mount Scopus and so it forms a botanical demarcation between the Judean hills and the Judean wilderness.

It is thought that it is the site of the ancient town of Nob where the tabernacle spent some time.

Scriptural references to Nob

Old Testament

1 Sam. 21:1; 22:9,11,19 (the account of David partaking of the shewbread and Doeg slaughtering the priests); Neh. 11:32; Isa. 10:32.

Famous characters

Ahimelech, David, Doeg, Abiathar



Biblical history of Nob

Nob is the place where the tabernacle stood under Ahimelech, the high priest of Saul's day. The remarkable story of David's men sharing the replaced shewbread happened here (1 Sam. 21). Christ provides commentary in Mark 2:25-28 on the significance of this event.

The shewbread ("bread of the faces" or "presence") was replaced every Sabbath with "hot bread" (1 Sam. 21:6) on which frankincense was placed (Lev. 24:5-9). It was remarkably preserved for the seventh day (Millennium) when a fellowship meal was enjoyed with the consumption of "hallowed bread" (1 Sam. 21:5) by Aaron and his sons in the presence of Yahweh himself. The bread was "taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting (*ohlam* – hidden period) covenant" (Lev. 24:8).

This whole scene is a grand picture of things to come - the fulfilment of a statute of the covenant regarding the Ohlam (Lev. 24:9). From these events Christ could say that the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27), and it clearly pointed to a time when all the faithful would eat bread with their High Priest in the Kingdom.

With such a wonderful backdrop, tragedy should be absent. However, Doeg ("fearful") an Edomite, representing the law in the hands of a spiritually deficient nation, seeing the presence of David at Nob, informs Saul and is authorised to slaughter the priests and all in Nob. Only Abiathar escaped and fled to David carrying the ephod (1 Sam. 23:6). In type this pointed to the crucifixion of the greater high

priest elect that later stood amongst the nation. It was possible that around this time the vicious hand of Doeg extended to Gittaim and Kirjath-jearim the cities of the Gibeonites for which the events of 2 Sam. 21 are recorded.

Nob and the Immanuel prophecies

In the days of Hezekiah, the Assyrians marched rapidly to Nob before the planned assault of the city of Jerusalem (Isa. 10:27-32). Significantly, the plain language of the rapid advance of the Assyrians is interrupted by the cutting down of trees. Then in Isa. 11 there is the re-emergence of a sprout from a stump and a branch from the root of a fallen tree. This is the Divine answer to all of the challenges of the Assyrian (and ultimately for all the problems of the human race).

The Immanuel prophecy presages the emergence of a son of God from the roots or origins of the tree itself - the emergence of David's seed capable of overcoming any challenge. The challenge of the Assyrian shaking the fist against the mount of the daughter of Zion (Isa. 10:32) is answered by the promise "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain" (Isa. 11:9). The Assyrian challenged the holiness and glory of Yahweh. Christ in mortal probation answered the challenge using the weapons of heaven - knowledge and wisdom (Isa. 11:2), smiting with mouth (v.4), faithfulness (v.5). He will do likewise on his return. The sprouting of a tree cut down culminates in the return of a remnant from the lands of Assyria who espouse these virtues (Isa. 11:1).

The Assyrians standing on mount Scopus (Nob) in the days of Hezekiah had taken one step too far! But they were not the last army to do so.

The Babylonians camped here during siege of Jerusalem in the days of Zedekiah.

Titus and Vespasian camped here to oversee the final siege of Jerusalem in AD 70.

The Crusaders camped here in 1099.

The British camped here in 1917.

Each of the above illustrate the favourable position offered to an army by the heights of Nob looking down over Jerusalem as is implied in Isa. 10:32.

It is fitting then that Gog will camp here in the future and be destroyed like the Assyrian of old by the “root of Jesse” (Isa. 11:10).

Mount Scopus in modern times

At the northern point of the mount there is the Commonwealth War Cemetery (2,472 Christian and Jewish soldiers died in British service in WW1. The 1,000 Arab and Hindu dead were buried in south Jerusalem near Government House).

A Hebrew university was suggested by Prof. H Schapira (Hedielberg) in 1897 and land was purchased from the London owner, Lady Gray Hill. Its construction began in 1918 with the support of notables such as Lord Rothschild and Chaim Wieszmann. The facility was opened by Lord Balfour on 1 April 1925.



The Hebrew University campus and tower on Mount Scopus from the south

At the ceasefire in the War of Independence in 1949 there were two locations on Mount Scopus held by Jewish soldiers deep within Jordanian territory that were harassed until the capture of Jerusalem in 1967. The Armistice arrangements were for free access, but the Jordanians reneged on these terms and allowed only a bi-weekly change of guards. Today, Mount Scopus lies within the municipal boundaries of the city of Jerusalem and there is freedom of access to the Hebrew University and the National Park.

Sources:

R Ulian; Frommers Israel pg. 210

Shengold Jewish encyclopaedia pg. 112

Abraham Milgram; Jerusalem Curiosities pg. 295

(Compilers – Peter Boon/Jim Cowie)