

## Mt Arbel

### Names (also known as)

Sentinel of the Kinneret.

### Etymology

*Arb* from the root arab = to lie in wait, to ambush, trickery.

*El* = God.

### Location/Description

Mt Arbel is a mountain of sheer rock cliffs on the western side of the Sea of Galilee. It is a very prominent landmark overlooking the Sea of Galilee, able to be seen from almost any spot on the lake. There are four villages on the mountain: Kfar Zeitim, Arbel, Kfar Hittim and Mitzpa.



### Scriptural references

Mt. Arbel is never specifically mentioned in the Bible.

#### Old Testament

The name Betharbel occurs once in Hosea 10:14 (referencing events of 726 BC). Strong gives its meaning as “the house of God’s ambush.”

### Famous characters

Jesus Christ and his apostles; Mary Magdalene.

### Brief history

The caves along its cliffs gave some refuge to people throughout the centuries. Josephus offers an account of Arbela: “These caves were in mountains that were exceeding abrupt...with certain entrances into the caves...with all their families about them. The king (Herod) caused certain chests to be made in order to destroy them, and to be hung down by an engine from the top of the mountains...these chests were filled with armed men, who had long hooks which they might pull out such as resisted them, and then tumble them down, and kill them by so doing.”\*



### Scriptural importance

From the top of Mt. Arbel one can view the places where Jesus spent most of his ministry around the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Some have speculated that this may be the mountain where Jesus appointed his disciples to go following his resurrection where he met with them (Matthew 28:16). At the foot of Mt. Arbel is the village of Magdala home of Mary Magdalene.

### Sources:

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Antiquities (\*14.15.6) - Josephus  
Smith’s Bible Dictionary

(Compilers – Ian and Judy Macfarlane)