

Series Title: 'Experiencing God in the Mountains

Subtitle: 'Renewing our hope in the LORD amidst the highs and lows of life'

Primary Aim: *The Bible includes a number of mountain top experiences: indeed it seems that mountains are places where God often meets with His people in the Bible. We are going to use a selection of these encounters as a framework to think about how we renew our hope in the Lord amidst the highs and lows of life. Our journey will take us to the place of calling, testing and victory. We will think about how we hear God and experience His presence, power and glory before concluding with the ultimate mountain experience on Mount Zion. We will also wrestle with the following: (1) How do I and should I expect to experience God? (2) Why does it feel as if other people experience God but I don't? (3) What are the characteristics and consequences of a genuine experience of God? (4) What holds us back from experiencing God more in our lives?*

1. God of the Mountains: Introduction

Passage: Psalm 121, Isaiah 40:28-31

Blurb: Introducing our theme for the week of "Experiencing God in the Mountains" and how that weaves its way through scripture and in particular through some of the mountain-top experiences people have with God throughout. We will set some expectations for the week ahead.

2. Mount Horeb: Called by God

Passages: Exodus 3-4

Blurb: Moses encounters God at the burning bush on Mount Horeb and is confronted by God's call for his life and the challenge of whether he will obey.

3. Mount Moriah: Tested by God

Passages: Genesis 22 & Hebrews 11:17-19

Blurb: Abraham has to weigh up how to obey God's command and God's promise when He commands him to sacrifice his son Isaac, and, apparently, the promise which is to be delivered through his son and future generations for the salvation of the world.

4. Mount Carmel: God's Victory and His still small voice

Passages: 1 Kings 17:1-19:18

Blurb: The prophet Elijah is alone on Mount Carmel and challenges the prophets of Baal to a test to see whose God was real and who would have the victory. This scene of victory contrasts well with the gentle whisper God speaks with shortly afterwards.

5. Mount Sinai: The Power and Glory of God

Passages: Exodus 32-34 & 2 Corinthians 3

Blurb: Moses encounters the power of God on Mount Sinai where God gives Israel the law. Meanwhile Israel rebel against God and Moses has to intercede for them. Moses needs assurance that God would continue to go with them and as a result experiences a glimpse of the glory of God.

6. Mount of Transfiguration and Mount of Olives: God's Presence, Power and Purposes

Passages: Matthew 17:1-13 & 26:31-46

Blurb: Jesus experiences the Father in different ways on mountains and notably on the Mount of transfiguration and the Mount of Olives (Gethsemane). We see a glimpse in the first of the deep relationship between Father and Son and the challenge of 'obedience even to death' in the second.

7. Mount Zion: God's Dwelling Place

Passages: Isaiah 65 & Hebrews 12

Blurb: The Ultimate mountain-top experience lies ahead of us on Mount Zion, 'the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem'. This mountain top experience will not be one of fear (like Sinai) but one of joy.