

Moriah

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Mori'ah (Heb. *Moriyah'*, מוֹרְיָה, [Ch 3:1](#); and מוֹרְיָה, [Ge 22:2](#); as to the etymology, Gesenius remarks [*Thesaur. Heb.* Page 819] that the sacred writers themselves derive it from מָרָה, *to see*, and understand it as for מָרָה אֵיחָה, *chosen or shown by .ehovah*, but the form may be readily made as the part. fem. of מָרָה, *to be bitter*, i.e., *obstinate*, and thus signifying the *resisting*, i.q. *castle*; comp. Fuller, *Miscell.* 2:14; Sept. in Genesis ὑψηλός, Vulg. *visio*; in Chron. Ἀμωρία v.r. Ἀμωρία, Vulg. *Moria*), one of the hills of Jerusalem, on which the Temple was built by Solomon, on the spot that had been occupied by the threshing-floor of Oman the Jebusite ([2Ch 3:1](#)). *SEE TEMPLE*. The name seldom occurs (not even in [1Ki 6:1](#)), being usually included in that of Zion, to the north-east of which it lay, and from which it was separated by the valley of Tyropceon (Josephus, *Ant.* 8:3, 9; *War*, 5:4, 1; see Robinson, *Researches*, 1:393, 413, 416). *SEE JERUSALEM*. The land of Moriah, whither Abraham went to offer up Isaac ([Ge 22:2](#)), is generally supposed to denote the same place, and may at least be conceived as describing the surrounding district (comp. Josephus, τὸ Μώριον, *Ant.* 1:13, 1). The Jews themselves believe that the altar of burnt-offerings in the Temple stood upon the very site of the altar on which the patriarch purposed to sacrifice his son (see Michaelis, *Suppl.* 5:1551; Janisch, in Hamelsveld, 2:39 sq.; Bleek, in the *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* [1831], page 530 sq.; comp. Hengstenberg, *Pentat.* 2:195 sq.; Ewald, *Israel. Gesch.* 1:358; 3:35). The force

of the tradition is impaired by the mythic addition that here also Abel offered his first sacrifice, and Noah his thank-offering (Munster, Fagius, and Grotius, ad loc.). The following disquisition treats of certain disputed points. *SEE ABRAHAM*. Before considering the geographical and other difficulties in the way of this identification, it is desirable to investigate the derivation of the word מֹרִיָּה. Various etymologies supplied by Jews all proceed on the supposition of the identity of the Moriah of Genesis with that on which the Temple was built. The oldest, that of Onkelos and Gerundensis, was that it was derived from מור, *myrrh*, as in Song 4:6, "I will go to the mountains of myrrh." Fuller (in *llsc. Sacra*, 2:15) maintains that the הַמֹּר of Canticles was an abbreviation of הַמֹּרִיָּה, and referred to the holy mount where the great king had just erected his Temple. Rabbi Solomon supposes it to be derived from הוראה, *instruction*, because thence the word of the Lord went forth into all Israel. Kalisch (*Comment. on Genesis* ad 22:2) approaches this interpretation by saying that it springs in all probability from מְרִיאָה, "Jehovah is my instructor," from יָרָה, the root of the great derivative תִּוְרָה. Jonathan derives it from מוֹרָא, fear or reverence, and imagines that the word was used anticipatory of the worship and fear of God there solemnized (Lightfoot, *Opera, Descriptio Templi*, 1:553). Fuller (*Misc. Sacra*, ii, 15) maintains that the word represents an abbreviation of מוֹרְאָה אֵיָּה, *conspicietur Jehovah*, because there eventually the Son of God would appear in human flesh. Knobel insists that it is a compound of מְרָאָה (a dual form of רָאָה, *to see*) and יָה; and Hengstenberg (*Dissert. on Genesis of Pentateuch*, 2:159-163, Clark's transl.), Kurtz (*Old Covenant*, 1:272), Gesenius (*Thesaurus*, p. 819), Fiirst (*Lex.*), all agree as to the presence in the word of the elements of the name of Jehovah. Vatke, Vater, Van Bohlen, the early opponents of the genuineness of

the Pentateuch, even based a portion of their antagonism on this proof of a later date. Bishop Colenso (*Pentateuch and Joshua*, part 2, chapter 9, 10) labors to demolish the etymology, but without much success. The existence of a proper name *Moriah* would be a proof of the existence of the name and worship of Jehovah before some of the modern documentists would find it at all satisfactory. Hengstenberg states that the word הַמֹּרְיָה is a compound of מָרָא , the Hophal participle of רָאָה , *to see*, and means *that which is shown, or the appearance of Jehovah*. Colenso objects to the sense of the interpretation, and maintains that there is no explanation of the disappearance of the characteristic radical \aleph . Gesenius accounts for the form מֹרְיָה by a combination of the Hophal participle of רָאָה and the *jod-comnpa.ginis* common in derivatives from verbs of the form of לִ8ה . Thus מָרָא , combined with יָה , would suffer the following change, $\text{מֹרְיָה} = \text{מָרָאִי־יָה}$. There is another proper name, derivable from the same root, which has lost its characteristic radical \aleph viz. רוּת , from רֵאוּת , *beautiful to look upon* (Ruth). But whatever may be the precise nature of the contraction, the obvious interpretation of the writer is given in verse 8: יְהוָה יֵרָאָה which is the name given by Abraham to the place where Jehovah *saw* his agony and provided a victim in place of his son. Here it was that the proverb was originated, "In the mountain Jehovah shall be seen." *Moriah* was the name permanently attaching itself to the place, just as קַיִן had been the abbreviation of Eve's exclamation, קָנִיתִי אִישׁ ; and it was used by the narrator 400 years afterwards to describe a district, a *land*, a mountain which had always gone by that name ever since the proverb had first been uttered, amid the very circumstances he was then proceeding to describe. It would be presumptuous to assert to what extent the knowledge and worship of Jehovah was diffused, on the

ground of the mere presence of the name Jehovah ill this proper name; still, there is nothing to shake the conclusion. It is curious that the Sept. translates the הַרְיָמֹהָרָא by εἰς τῆς γῆν ὑψηλὴν; and it also renders by some similar expression the various references to the *oak or plains* of MOREH, near Sichem ([Ge 12:6](#)); where the Hebrew text has הַרְיָמֹהָרָא the Sept. reads τὴν δρῦν τὴν ὑψηλὴν (see also [De 11:30](#)). The translation of Aquila in [Ge 22:2](#) is εἰς τὴν γῆν τὴν καταφανῆ; and Symmachus has εἰς τὴν γῆν τῆς ὀπτασίας, closely resembling the *in terram visionis* of the Vulgate.

Dr. Davidson (in *Introduction to the O.T.* volume 1) conjectures that *Moreh* was the original reading; but neither Kennicott, De Rossi, nor Dr. Davidson himself (in his *Printed Text of the O.T.*) give any diplomatic authority for such a reading. The translations of Aquila and Symmachus may have originated with some reading resembling that in the Samaritan text, הַרְיָמֹהָרָא, and signifying "far seeing" or "conspicuous." But when Josephus wrote (*Ant.* 1:13, 2), it is quite clear that the reading in [Ge 22:2](#) and [2Ch 3:1](#) must have been identical, as he speaks of the place of Abraham's sacrifice as τὸ ὄρος ἐφ' οὗ τὸ ἱερόν Δαβίδης ὁ βασιλεὺς ὕστερον ἰδρύεται. In [2Ch 3:1](#) the Sept. does not attempt to translate the proper name הַרְיָמֹהָרָא but writes ἐν ὄρει τοῦ Ἀμωρία. It is true that there is no reference to the original manifestation of God on this site to the patriarch, and express mention is made of second and additional reasons for this hill being called Moriah (see [1Ch 21:16](#); [1Ch 22:1](#); [2Sa 24:1](#); [2Ch 3:1](#)). This was in perfect harmony with the law of God that forbade the offering of burnt sacrifices in any place which the Lord had not consecrated by his visible manifestation (Hengstenberg, *Diss.* 2:32 sq.). The geographical conditions supplied by the narrative in Genesis are not inconsistent with the Samaritan tradition (see Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, 3:100) that

Gerizin was the scene of the sacrifice, and that the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, from their neighborhood to *Mores*, a spot well known to Abraham, were the mountains in the land of Moriah (Colenso, part 2, chapter 10). They have led dean Stanley (*Syr. and Pal.* page 250 sq.; *Hist. of Jewish Church*, 1:48, 49) to decide on Gerizim as the scene of the event. His arguments are weighty, but not conclusive.

⇒ **Bible concordance for MORIAH.**

(1.) The distance from Beersheba to the plain of Sharon, from which Gerizim might be seen "afar off," corresponds with the two-days' journey of Abraham; while the third day, which would be occupied by the great event, would be sufficient for the journey to the summit and the return. The same thing, however, may be said with greater certainty of Jerusalem itself.

(2.) Stanley objects that there is no spot from which the "place" where the sacrifice was to be offered could be seen from "afar off;" that the hill of Moriah is not visible at all until the traveller *is close upon it*, at the southern edge of the valley of Hinnom, from whence he looks down upon it, as on a lower eminence. Now the narrative informs us that Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the *place* of which the Lord had spoken to him. That "place" was the אֶרֶץ הַמֹּרְיָה, as Gesenius translates it, the land about Moriah, just as אֶרֶץ הָעֵי is the land about Ai. It is very possible to see from the ridge *Mar Elias* the heights about Jerusalem, if not the hill of Moriah itself; and we are expressly told that Abraham did not see the place until he was fairly within a walk of the spot, and could leave the young men and the ass while he and Isaac proceeded, personally laden with the materials for the sacrifice.

(3.) A formidable difficulty urged by others is that the fortress of Zion must at that time have been occupied by the king of the Jebusites, some forerunner of Adonizedek, or by

Melchizedek himself, and therefore Abraham must have prepared to perform this awful sacrifice under the walls of the city. To obviate the great apparent improbability of this, it may be said that sometimes the outside of fenced cities — where a deep ravine runs between the wall and the suburb — is often one of the loneliest spots in the world. The name *Moriah* is unquestionably given by the chronicler to the Temple hill, but this passage is a solitary one. The more ordinary name, even for the entire city of Jerusalem and for the holy mountain, is *Mount Zion*, and various psalms and prophecies speak of the dwelling-place of Jehovah under this old and honored name. It cannot be true that any writer of the time of Solomon composed the narrative of Abraham's sacrifice to do honor to the Temple hill, as was suggested by De Wette; for, if that had been his intention, he would have called it *Zion*, and not *Moriah*. Great stress has been laid by bishop Colenso and by the writer in Smith's *Dictionary*, 2:423, on the absence of other reference besides that of the chronicler to the name of *Moriah* as the site of the Temple hill, and also on the impropriety of associating the name and career of Abraham so vitally with Jerusalem. In the same article, however, Jerusalem is spoken of as the city of Melchizedek. For the shape of *Moriah*, its relations with Bezetha and Acra, the bridge that connected it with Zion across the valley of the Tyropoeon,' *SEE JERUSALEM*. Notwithstanding the various and variously motivated endeavors to disturb the old Hebrew tradition, it has not been proved necessary to deny the identification of the two sites; nor to denounce the old etymology; nor to cease perceiving the interesting link of connection supplied by it between the sacrifice of Isaac, the vision of God's judgment and mercy, the erection of the Temple, and the offering up of God's only-begotten Son. *SEE SOLOMON*.