

The Doctrine of Zion

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Preface: In Psalm 110:2, we have our first actual reference to the proper noun *Zion* and it is important to understand what this noun refers to, when it comes to interpreting Psalm 110:2. It is an important word to understand, as it occurs 161 times in Scripture (38 times in the psalms, 47 times in Isaiah and 15 times in Lamentations), even though this is a rather late addition (we do not find this proper noun until the time of David). As one author put it, if the word *hope* occurs only 154 times in Scripture, then we should pay attention to the fact that Zion occurs even more often.

Introduction:

1. Hebrew: Tsîyyôwn (צִיּוֹן) [pronounced *tzee-YOHN*], which means *dry, parched ground* (in the Hebrew), and is transliterated *Zion*. ZPEB suggests that it means *to protect*, from the ancient Semitic root word *tzîyn* (צִיַן), which I could not confirm that with BDB or with Gesenius. ISBE and ZPEB suggest a whole host of additional possible meanings, e.g., *structure, ridge, citadel, brook*.¹ However, since this was probably a name which was given by the Jebusites, its actual meaning has probably been lost to us, and is highly unlikely to be found in the Hebrew language. Strong's #6726 BDB #851.
2. Mistaken occurrences:
 - a. Zion is not the proper noun that we find in Deut. 4:48; that is the noun *Sion*. In the English, this looks quite similar to Zion, but it is a very different word in the Hebrew (which we covered in Deut. 4:48). *Sion* only occurs in Deut. 4:48. Strong's #7865 BDB #763. To make things more interesting, the Greeks transliterated *Zion* as *Siôn*; and *Sion* as *Sêôn*.
3. One explanation:²
 - a. The name Zion was originally used for the mountain on which Jerusalem was built. The name first appears in the story of David's capture of Jerusalem, which was called the stronghold of Zion.
 - b. Later the name was also used for the part of the slope on which the temple was situated. Zion was supposedly the dwelling place of God.
 - c. Mount Zion is the highest point in the city of Jerusalem, equally as high as the Temple Mount, is the Western Hill. This is the summit and western slope of the ridge just to the east of the Tyropean Valley and the Lower City.
 - d. This area is the Upper City, known today as Mount Zion. In Jesus's day, this section of the city was populated by the wealthy and ruling classes. The people who lived in this section were Hellenistic. They were supportive of the Roman government, primarily because they benefitted from it.

¹ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 1063. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; Vol. IV; p. 3150. These additional meanings are primarily Arabic roots.

² Taken from <http://www.crystalinks.com/mountzion.html>. This is somehow related to www.Bibarch.com; however, I could go from www.crystalinks.com to www.Bibarch.com, but not back.

- e. Herod's Palace was located in this section, at the very top of the hill. Covering about five acres, this elegant structure boasted two huge wings, and could accommodate hundreds of guests. It was Herod's main palace in all the land, and it featured fountains, gardens, groves of trees, huge porches, and banquet halls. Its beauty rivaled that of another architectural masterpiece built by Herod, the Temple itself.



When Herod died his palace became the home of the Roman government in Jerusalem.

4. Theories as to the usage of Zion in Scripture:

- a. We can say with great confidence that Zion was the name for Jerus or at least some portion of Jerusalem prior to the time of David (400 years prior).
- b. Vincent suggests that Zion was used for the fortress in Jerusalem rather than for the ground that it stood on.³ ISBE goes into great detail as to the exact location of Zion⁴ in Jerusalem, citing specific archeological evidence; however, I don't know that this is important for us to know, as we are more interested in the spiritual significance of Zion. I think it can be agreed upon that Zion originally was a portion of Jerusalem, possibly the southeast hill (although ISBE suggests that the location it designated moved from east Jerusalem to the SE hill); or possibly a citadel. In any case, its exact location is not as important as its spiritual usage in Scripture.
- c. However, it is suggested that Solomon expanded the city of Jerusalem to include Mount Moriah (to the north of Jerusalem), where he placed the Temple of God in 958 B.C.,⁵ and that is the proper location designated by Zion. This would help to explain why the Ark was taken *out of the city of David, which is Zion* (I Kings 8:1 II Chron. 5:2) but also indicates that Zion *moved*, so to speak it may have first referred to the southeast part of town where the Ark was, and then to the Temple, where the Ark was moved to. The reason this physical location is important, is that it more closely associates Zion with that which is spiritual. Given the way the Zion is used in Scripture, this seems to be the most likely scenario.
- d. Other theories/usages: Zion is a synonym for Jerusalem. We find a mention of the *mountains* of Zion in Psalm 133:3.
- e. Zion is spiritual Jerusalem.



³ *The New Bible Dictionary*; ed. J. D. Douglas; ©Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1962; ©by W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; p. 615.

⁴ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; Vol. IV; p. 3151.

⁵ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. IV, p. 1063.

- f. Zion is spiritual Israel. That is, all of the believing Jews. In Psalm 126:1 and Jer. 50:5, the captive ones of Zion are brought back into the Land of Promise (after their exile).
 - g. Zion is the place from which God rules over the earth.
 - h. ISBE suggests⁶ that Ophel is identical to Zion, and that it is used by Nehemiah and the writer of Chronicles instead of Zion. The problem here is, slaves were said to stay in Ophel, (Neh. 3:26 11:21), and we would not expect to house slaves at the highest and possibly most secure point of Jerusalem. Furthermore, there appears to be more of a spiritual connotation found in the use of *Zion* which is not implied with the 5 uses of *Ophel*.
 - i. There are places in Scripture where Zion is used in a negative way, which would refer more to the geographical location minus any spiritual connotation (Lam. 2:4 4:22 Amos 6:1 Micah 3:10–12).
 - j. A walled off area on the southeast hill in Jerusalem, or a citadel in Jerusalem. The picture to the right is of this mountain in Jerusalem.⁷ The second picture is the citadel on Mount Zion.⁸
5. I am not going to say that one of these particular interpretations is correct and the others are all wrong. Most of these interpretations are probably correct, depending upon the passage and context.
6. Location of Zion in Scripture: the word *Zion* is not found until the time of David. Then the word seems to disappear in exilic and post-exilic writings (except for the prophet Zechariah). We do not find this word in the books of Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah or in any of the later prophets.

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Old Testament Scriptural references:

1. Samuel, Kings and Chronicles:
 - a. David captures the stronghold of Zion in II Sam. 5:6–9 I Chron. 11:4–5. In these passages, it is identified with Jebus, the city of the Jebusites, also called Jerusalem, also called the City of David. Although some would see these as being synonyms, they probably are not. However, it is possible that Zion might *occasionally* refer to all of Jerusalem. Jebus and Jerusalem are probably synonymous, referring to the entire city. Zion and the City of David are synonymous, probably referring to the fortified portion of Jerusalem (possibly on the southeast hill).
 - b. David, of course, made improvements, and apparently built around this as well (II Sam. 5:9).
 - c. Solomon moves the Ark from the City of David (or Zion) to the newly constructed Temple in I Kings 8:1 II Chron. 5:2. It is suggested that this is Mount Moriah, to the north of Jerusalem; an area annexed to Jerusalem by Solomon. Therefore, the Ark would have been kept in the Stronghold of Zion, the City of David, the fortified section of Jerusalem where David originally lived (after taking the city). However, had the Ark simply been moved from David's compound to anywhere else, this would have fulfilled the means of that verse ([Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion](#)). Whether or not this was the area of the threshing floor of Arauna (II Sam. 24) is up for debate (the chief reason for this supposition is, the Angel of the Lord was found here ready to judge Israel when David had sinned—II Sam. 24:16).⁹
 - d. Some do argue that the Temple was built inside of David's compound, which would of course cause some problems with the interpretation of I Kings 8:1. That is was built outside of David's compound but within the city of Jerusalem, as Solomon had enclosed, is confirmed by: [And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about \(1Kings 3:1\)](#).

⁶ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; Vol. IV; p. 3152.

⁷ Taken from <http://www.crystalinks.com/mountzion.html>.

⁸ Taken from <http://www.israelimages.com/files/12169.htm>.

⁹ This is the theory of Michael Sanders proposed in <http://www.biblemysteries.com/lectures/zion.htm>.

- e. Conclusion: during this time period, Zion, in historical accounts, referred to a specific piece of geography David had taken and where David had subsequently lived.
2. The Davidic Psalms:
- a. Zion is first mentioned in the clearly Messianic Psalm 2. God has installed His Holy King upon Zion, His holy mountain (v. 6). This Holy King is Jesus Christ for His Millennial reign. This is reasonably a reference to the same fortified hill mentioned in the previous passages. By the way, this may not be a Davidic psalm.
 - b. In Psalm 9, David makes two significant references to Zion: first, as the place where Y^ehowah dwells (v. 11) and secondly, David refers to the daughter of Zion (v. 14). The idea of Zion is moved more toward the spiritual here.
 - c. In Psalm 14:7, David tells us that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion. Here, it is expressed more as a wish or a desire, rather than something which would definitely come true. However, that does not mean that what David prays for here would not come true. We have a similar reference in Psalm 53:6–7.
 - d. David prays for help to come from Zion in Psalm 20:2, which psalm is in general a pray to God for help, deliverance and for answered prayer.
 - e. Praise for God comes from Zion (Psalm 65:1).
 - f. David asks for God to deliver Zion in Psalm 69:35.
 - g. David asks for grace to come to Zion and to Jerusalem (this is during the time that he sinned with Bathsheba—Psalm 51:18).
 - h. Psalm 102 is sandwiched between two psalms of David, but it is not clear whether David wrote this psalm or not. This sounds like a prayer of David as he is pursued by his enemies, which is a common prayer for him. He asks for God to have compassion on Zion, which would indicate that this was written after David took possession of Zion (v. 13). David recognizes that God has built up Zion, meaning that God has blessed where David is (v. 16). David praises God in Zion and Jerusalem (v. 21).
 - i. In Psalm 110:2, our passage, God is said to send His scepter (or tribe) from Zion. Therefore, David apparently attached a spiritual identify to Zion from the beginning.
3. Zion in the psalms of ascent:
- a. Mount Zion is said not to move and to abide forever in Psalm 125:1. The idea here refers more to the unchanging nature of God than anything else.
 - b. The psalmist speaks of men returning from captivity as men of Zion in Psalm 126:1. Zion stands more for spiritual Israel in this passage.
 - c. God is said to bless from Zion. This could be seen as God's spiritual dwelling place. Psalm 128:5
134:3
 - d. Those who hate Zion are condemned by the psalmist in Psalm 129:5.
 - e. God chose Zion for His dwelling place (Psalm 132:13).
 - f. David wrote one of the psalms of ascents, and he speaks of the unity of brothers as being like precious oil coming down the head (in anointing) and as the dew coming down on the mountains of Zion (which indicates that David is referring to a larger area than just the fortified section of Jerusalem). Psalm 133:3
4. Other psalms:
- a. Zion is identified with Jehovah God, and it is called the perfection of beauty in Psalm 50:2.
 - b. Jehovah is called the God of Zion in Psalm 146:10.
 - c. Zion is called upon to praise God in Psalm 147:12. The sons of Zion are said to rejoice in their King in Psalm 149:2.
 - d. In a psalm of Asaph, where it appears that God has rejected Israel, Asaph asks God to recall his congregation which He has purchased to recall Mount Zion, when He has lived.
 - e. God is said to rule above the cherubim, but He is great in Zion (Psalm 99:2).
 - f. Asaph also refers to Zion as being the dwelling place of Jehovah (Psalm 76:2). His blessing is said to come from Zion, and He is said to dwell in Jerusalem (Psalm 135:21).
 - g. Those who are in captivity think back to Zion (Psalm 137:1, 3).

- h. God chose the tribe of Judah and Mount Zion, which He loves (Psalm 78:68). In fact, God is said to love the gates of Zion more than any other dwelling place in Judah (Psalm 87:2).
 - i. Zion is associated with the daughters of Judah in Psalm 97:8. When all are called upon to worship God, the psalmist adds, [Zion heard this and was glad and the daughters of Judah have rejoiced because of Your judgments, O Jehovah.](#)
 - j. Psalm 48 deals with the Millennium, and Mount Zion is said to be the city of the Great King and it is said to be in the far north (v. 2). In this psalm, we have a reference to the *daughters of Judah* (v. 11). Zion also seems to be a much larger area in this psalm, as one is to count her towers, ramparts and palaces (vv. 12–13).
 - k. We have another Millennial psalm believers appear before God in Zion (Psalm 84:7).
 - l. In Psalm 87:5–6, we have many people being born in Zion, and that God establishes Zion.
5. Solomon mentions the daughters of Zion in SOS 3:11.
6. Isaiah, more than any other writer of :Scripture, made reference to Zion:
- a. We have a parallelism between Zion and Jerusalem in many places in the book of Isaiah:
 - i. Isa. 2:3b: [For the Law will go forth from Zion and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.](#)
 - ii. Isa. 4:4:3–4: [And it shall be, he who is left in Zion, and he who remains in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even everyone who is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from its midst by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.](#)
 - iii. God completes His work on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem in Isa. 10:12 (this is the judgment against Sennacherib of Assyria).
 - iv. God shakes His fist against [the daughter of Zion and the hill of Jerusalem](#) (Isa. 10:32).
 - v. Isa. 24:23: [Then the moon shall blush, and the sun shall be ashamed, when Jehovah of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, and gloriously before His elders.](#)
 - vi. Isa. 31:9: [And he shall pass over to his stronghold for fear, and his rulers shall be afraid of the banner, says Jehovah, whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem.](#)
 - vii. Isa. 33:20: [Look on Zion, the city of our holy meetings; your eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet home, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of its stakes shall ever be removed, nor shall any of its cords be broken.](#)
 - viii. Isa. 37:22 (II Kings 19:21): [This is the word which Jehovah has spoken concerning him: The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you and laughed you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head behind you.](#) The context here was the threat of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. That these believers would be a part but not all of Israel is more clear in II Kings 19:30–31, where they are identified with the remnant of Judah.
 - ix. Isa. 40:9: [Go up for yourself on the high mountain, bringer of good tidings to Zion. Lift up your voice with strength, O you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem; lift up, do not be afraid. Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"](#)
 - x. Isa. 41:27: [I first shall say to Zion, Behold! Behold them! And I will give to Jerusalem one who bears good news.](#)
 - xi. Isa. 52:1: [Awake! Awake! Put on your strength, Zion; put on your beautiful robes, O Jerusalem, the holy city. For never again shall come to you uncircumcised and unclean ones.](#)
 - xii. Isa. 52:2: [Shake yourself from the dust; rise up! Sit, Jerusalem! Free yourself from your neckbands, O captive daughter of Zion.](#)
 - xiii. Isa. 62:1: [For Zion's sake I will not be silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until its righteousness goes out as brightness, and her salvation as a burning lamp.](#)
 - xiv. Isa. 64:10: [Your holy cities are a wilderness; Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem is a ruin.](#)
 - b. Isaiah also speaks many times of the daughter of Zion:
 - i. Isaiah speaks of national discipline for Israel, and speaks of the daughter of Zion as being left with poor living conditions in Isa. 1:8. In the same context, Zion is spoken of as a city which has become corrupted, but which God will redeem (Isa. 1:21–28).
 - ii. They are also mentioned in Isa. 4:3–4 10:12 16:1 37:22
 - iii. God promises salvation to the daughter of Zion in Isa. 62:11.

- iv. We may understand the use of the phrase *daughter of Zion* to refer to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Whether the reference is negative or positive would depend upon the context.
- v. Throughout Isaiah, God speaks about the superficiality of the women of Zion and how they would be judged in Isa. 3:13–26. Here, we are speaking specifically of the women of Jerusalem as opposed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in general. When we find the noun used in the plural, this refers to the actual women of Jerusalem. However, it can also refer to the cities or suburbs which belong to a city, as the Hebrew word for *daughters* and *villages* (or, *towns*) is the same (compare Num. 33:42 Joshua 15:16–17, 45, 47).
- c. It is important to note that God would rule from Zion. Isaiah mentions this in Isa. 2:3 and David in Psalm 110:2.
- d. Isaiah also speaks of God is living on Mount Zion in Isa. 8:18. Mount Zion is called the place of the name of Jehovah of the armies in Isa. 18:7. This is in complete agreement with Psalm 2:6 110:2.
- e. God tells those in Zion not to lose faith simply because of Assyria's military strikes (Isa. 10:24).
- f. Isaiah reminds the dwellers of Zion that the Holy One of Israel lives in their midst. Isa. 12:6
- g. Jehovah is the founder of Zion in Isa. 14:32.
- h. Isaiah speaks of Zion in connection with the coming of Jesus Christ in Isa. 28:16: [Therefore so says the Lord Jehovah, "Behold, I place in Zion a Stone for a foundation, a tried Stone, a precious Cornerstone, a sure Foundation; he who believes shall not hurry."](#)
- i. God will hear the cries of His people in Zion (Isa. 30:19 61:3).
- j. God has filled Zion with justice and righteousness (Isa. 33:5).
- k. God will judge the sinners of Zion (Isa. 33:14).
- l. God will avenge Zion against those who seek to destroy her (Isa. 34:8).
- m. God's ransomed ones will return to Zion in celebration (Isa. 35:10 51:11).
- n. God promises salvation for Zion and glory for Israel in Isa. 46:13 even though Zion will feel as though God has abandoned her (Isa. 49:14). The people of Zion are the Lord's people (Isa. 51:16) and He will come to Zion (Isa. 59:20).
- o. That Zion could also stand for all of Israel is seen in Isa 51:3: [For Jehovah shall comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Jehovah. Joy and gladness shall be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.](#) Zion could not simply be a hill in Jerusalem and be spoken of as having desert and wilderness areas.
- p. Isa. 52:7–8: [How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, making peace heard; who brings good news, making salvation heard; who says to Zion, Your God reigns! The voice of Your watchmen shall lift up! They lift up the voice together; they sing aloud. For they shall see eye to eye, when Jehovah shall bring again Zion.](#)
- q. Isa. 60:14: [Also the sons of your afflictors shall come bowing to you; and all your despisers will bow down at the soles of your feet. And they will call you, The city of Jehovah, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.](#) Here, Zion is almost the same as Jerusalem; however, we would consider it to be spiritual Jerusalem.
- r. The things spoken of by Isaiah would not suddenly come true overnight; even Zion travailed first and then brought forth sons (Isa. 66:8).
- s. Passages from Isaiah not covered: Isa. 4:5 29:8 31:4
- 7. Zion in the writings of Jeremiah:
 - a. Jeremiah warns against an attack upon Judah and tells the people to raise up a flag in Zion (Jer. 4:6).
 - b. Like Isaiah, Jeremiah mentions the daughters of Zion in several passages:
 - i. Jer. 4:31: [For I have heard a voice as of a woman in labor, the anguish as one bearing her first child, the voice of Zion's daughter, gasping and spreading her hands, saying, Woe to me now! For my soul faints because of murderers.](#)
 - ii. Jer. 6:2: [I will destroy the daughter of Zion, the beautiful and tender one.](#)
 - iii. Jer. 6:23: [They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel and have no mercy; their voice roars like the sea; and they ride on horses, set in order like a man for war against you, O daughter of Zion.](#)
 - iv. Lam. 1:6: [And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty has departed. Her rulers have become like bucks: they find no pasture, and they have gone without strength before the pursuer.](#)

- v. Lam. 2:1: How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger! He cast down the beauty of Israel from the heavens to the earth and remembered not His footstool in the day of His anger.
- vi. Lam. 2:4: He has bent His bow like an enemy; He stood with His right hand like an adversary, and killed all who were desirable to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion. He poured out His fury like fire.
- vii. Lam. 2:8: Jehovah purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion; He has stretched out a line; He has not withdrawn His hand from swallowing, and He made rampart and wall lament; they languish together.
- viii. Lam. 2:10: The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground and are silent; they send up dust on their heads; they gird on sackcloth. The virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground.
- ix. Lam. 2:18: Their heart cried to Jehovah. O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a torrent day and night; give yourself no rest. Let not the daughter of your eye cease.
- x. Lam. 4:22: The punishment of your iniquity is fulfilled, O daughter of Zion; He will exile you no more. He will visit your iniquity, O daughter of Edom; He will expose your sins.
- xi. You will note in these passages, the daughter of Zion is spoken of in a negative way, in connection with judgment. The *sons of Zion*, by way of contrast, are those who have believed in Jesus Christ and have advanced spiritually: Lam. 4:2: The precious sons of Zion are weighed against pure gold; how they are counted as earthen vessels, the work of a potter's hand!
- c. Jeremiah also has a couple parallels between Zion and Jerusalem:
 - i. Lam. 2:13: What can I testify for you? What thing shall I compare to you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I equal to you, so that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For your break is great like the sea! Who can heal you?
- d. Jeremiah also speaks of God as ruling from Zion: Jer. 8:19 31:6
- e. God hears the weeping of despair from Zion in Jer. 9:19.
- f. Zion is spoken of as becoming desolate and lacking in any spiritual dynamics (Lam. 1:4 2:6).
- g. The people of Judah call out to God asking if He loathes Zion in Jer. 14:19. Lam. 1:17
- h. Zion receives God's judgment in Lam. 4:11, 22 5:11, 18.
- i. God will heal Zion (Jer. 30:17) and Zion will be restored as a spiritual center (Jer. 31:6, 12 50:5). Vengeance will be had (Jer. 50:28 51:24, 35). God vindicates His people (Jer. 51:10).
- j. Passages not covered: Jer. 3:14
- 8. Other prophets also mention Zion.
 - a. Some prophets parallel Zion and Jerusalem:
 - i. Micah, like Isaiah, parallels Zion and Jerusalem in Jer. 27:18: Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, So says Jehovah of Hosts: Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house like the high places of a forest. Joel also warns of impending judgement (Joel 2:1).
 - ii. Amos 1:2: And he said, Jehovah will roar from Zion and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall dry up.
 - iii. Micah 3:10: They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.
 - iv. Micah 3:12: Therefore, on account of you, Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house into high places of the forest.
 - v. Micah 4:2: And many nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for the Law shall go forth out of Zion, and the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.
 - vi. Zep. 3:16: In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear not! Do not let not your hands droop, Zion. Note, Jerusalem and Zion are taken as being synonymous here.
 - vii. Zech. 1:14: So the angel who talked with me said to me, Cry out, saying, So says Jehovah of Hosts: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

- viii. Zech. 1:17: Cry out again, saying, So says Jehovah of Hosts: My cities shall yet be spread abroad through good, and Jehovah shall again overflow with goodness, and Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.
 - ix. Zech. 8:2: So says Jehovah of Hosts: I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. So says Jehovah: I have returned to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a City of Truth, and the mountain of Jehovah of Hosts, the Holy Mountain.
 - x. Zech. 9:9: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, your King comes to you. He is righteous and victorious, meek and riding on an ass, even on a colt, the son of an ass.
- b. Various prophets also mention the daughters of Zion (which, again, refers to the *inhabitants of Jerusalem*):
- i. Micah 1:13: O inhabitant of Lachish, bind the chariot to the stallion; she is the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion, for the sins of Israel were found in you.
 - ii. Micah 4:8–10: And you, O tower of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion, to you it shall happen. And rulers, the chief ones, shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem. Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king among you? Has your counselor perished? For pangs have taken you like one giving birth. Be in pain and deliver, daughter of Zion, like one giving birth. For now you shall go out from the city, and you shall dwell in the field; and you shall go to Babylon. There you shall be snatched back; there Jehovah shall redeem you from the hand of your enemies.
 - iii. Micah 4:13: Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hoofs bronze; and you shall crush many peoples. And I will give their gain to Jehovah, and their wealth to the Lord of the all the earth.
 - iv. Zep. 3:14: Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.
 - v. Zech. 2:7: Ho! O Zion, escape, you who live with the daughter of Babylon.
 - vi. Zech. 2:10: Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion. For lo, I come, and I will dwell in your midst, says Jehovah.
 - vii. Zech. 9:9: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, your King comes to you. He is righteous and victorious, meek and riding on an ass, even on a colt, the son of an ass.
 - viii. Interestingly enough, Zechariah is the only post-exilic (or even exilic) prophet to use the term *Zion*. The three exilic prophets (Daniel, Ezekiel and Obadiah) and the other two post-exilic prophets (Haggai and Malachi) do not use this word.
- c. Amos warns Israel in Amos 6:1.
 - d. Joel implores Zion to consecrate a fast in Joel 2:15.
 - e. Nations will gather around Zion (Micah 4:11).
 - f. God will judge Israel (Zech. 9:13).
 - g. He also speaks of God blessing Zion (Joel 2:23).
 - h. Joel speaks of salvation by calling on the name of the Lord in Joel 2:32.
 - i. God speaks of delivering Zion in Obad. 1:21.
 - j. God is said to come out of Zion, which means He lives in Zion (Joel 3:16–17, 21).
 - k. Restoration will be done for Zion (Micah 4:7).
 - l. Passages skipped: Obad. 1:17.

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New Testament References:

1. Greek word: Sion (Σιών), [pronounced *sigh-OWN*]; it means *dry, parched place*; and is transliterated *Zion*, *Tziyon* or *Sion*. Strong's #4622. Even though *tz* is often rendered with a *z* in the English, it is not so found in the Greek.

2. The first time we find Zion in the New Testament is in fulfillment of an Old Testament prophesy.
 - a. Jesus is about to make His triumphal ride into Jerusalem on an ass, as a king into his city, and he asks his disciple to fetch him a donkey. **All this was done so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your King comes to you, meek, and sitting on an ass, even a colt the foal of an ass." And the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them (Matt. 21:4–6)..** We find this again in John 12:14–16: **And finding an ass colt, Jesus sat on it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King comes sitting on the foal of an ass." But His disciples did not know these things at the first. But when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him..** It is very rare for there to be a remembrance of Jesus in only one of the synoptic gospels and the book of John. We do find this NIV Study Bible Mark 11:1–7 and Luke 19:28–34, but without the Old Testament quotation. I don't know about the *Fear not*, as it is not found with any of the Zion passages. We have *fear not* and Zion found together only in Isa. 10:24 31:9 Zeph. 3:16 (**In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear not! Zion, do not be weak**). There is no reason that we should believe that Jesus quoted only contiguous passages in Scripture; and there is no reason that we should assume that the Apostles recorded the entire quotation.
 - b. This is fulfilled by Zech. 9:9: **Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, your King comes to you. He is righteous and victorious, meek and riding on an ass, even on a colt, the son of an ass.**
 - c. What would help to explain that slight differences is, Jesus probably first quoted from Zephaniah and then from Zechariah: **"In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear not! Zion, do not be weak. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, your King comes to you. He is righteous and victorious, meek and riding on an ass, even on a colt, the son of an ass."** What we have it what the disciples remember, which is not necessarily word for word or complete, but it is still accurate. In fact, even John tells us in thi context, **But His disciples did not know these things at the first. But when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him** (John 12:16). So his disciples did not always understand fully what was going on; therefore, their understanding was more complete when they sat down to record these events.
3. When speaking of Jesus Christ as being both the cornerstone of the faith as well as being a stumbling stone to the Jews, Paul wrote: **Behold, I lay in Zion a Stumbling-stone and a Rock-of-offense, and everyone believing on Him shall not be put to shame** (Rom. 8:33).
 - a. Paul was quoting Isa. 28:16: **This is what the Almighty LORD says: I am going to lay a rock in Zion, a rock that has been tested, a precious cornerstone, a solid foundation. Whoever believes in him will not worry.**
 - b. But he also inserted Isa. 8:14: **And He shall be a sanctuary for you, but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of falling to both the houses of Israel, for a trap and for a snare to the people of Jerusalem.**
 - c. Notice how Paul wove these two verses together to make a point.
4. Paul again in Romans writes: **In this way Israel as a whole will be saved, as Scripture says, The Savior will come from Zion. He will remove godlessness from Jacob** (Rom. 11:26).
 - a. Paul is quoting Isa. 59:20: **"Then a Savior will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from rebellion," declares the LORD.**
 - b. He is apparently also quoting Isa. 27:9a: **By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged...** (or a similar passage).
5. We have a very interesting passage in Heb. 12:22–24: **But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are written in Heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.**
 - a. The context for this passage is that Moses went to a mountain from which he received the Law, and there was blazing fire, darkness and whirlwinds. Even the Jews did not want to hear God speak, and they asked that God speak only to Moses. This was a mountain of judgment, a mountain from which

God gave the Law which condemned all mankind. However, under the New Covenant, man approached Mount Zion, the city of the Living God.

- b. It is also for you to note that we have the same Old Testament comparison of Zion and Jerusalem. Here, Mount Zion is the heavenly Jerusalem.
6. Peter more properly quotes Isa. 28:16 in Peter 2:6: Therefore also it is contained in the Scripture: "**Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner Stone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him shall never be ashamed.**" Peter does not add anything or change anything in this verse.
7. The final mention of Zion is in the book of Revelation. **And I looked, and lo, the Lamb stood on Mount Zion. And with Him were a hundred and forty-four thousands, having His Father's name written in their foreheads** (Rev. 14:1). This is likely a literal mountain, the Mount of Olives, where Jesus lights down upon. However, bear in mind that this portion of Revelation is a vision that John had.

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Conclusion: Zion essentially has several meanings:

1. It refers simply to a hill in Jerusalem, or to a particular area in Jerusalem.
2. Since Zion can stand for a specific physical place in Judah, then it can also stand for the collection of unbelievers as well. They are in that particular place, but they lack a relationship to God.
3. Zion can also refer to spiritual Jerusalem; that is, to the believers in Jerusalem. This is more common than the usage above.
4. As Jerusalem is the capital city of Judah, Zion also stands for all of the believers in Israel.
5. Zion also is used for the dwelling place of God. Since God is omniscient, this would be essentially an anthropomorphism. God is not confined to one place; however, it may appear as though He is functioning from one place.
6. Zion stands for the restoration of Israel to the land (Psalm 14:7 53:6 Isa. 28:16 Zeph. 3:14)
7. One web site gave probably the simplest explanation for Zion: *The actual name "Zion," probably means "citadel," and was first applied to the stronghold of the Jebusites captured by David. This stronghold was afterward called the City of David (2 Sam. 5:7). Later, the term was applied to the Temple Mount and then expanded to include the whole city of Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:21). Finally, the term was even applied to the people of Israel (Isa. 51:16).*¹⁰
8. Today, we have the term *Zionism*, which refers to the return of the Jews to the land. Even though there are really no spiritual dynamics in this, still, there will be Jews in the Land during the last days. This does not mean, however, that we are in the last days.
9. Knowing these various meanings of Zion allows us to easily understand the use of Zion in its context.

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Addendum: Zion today: As you see in the pictures, there is a structure there today; it might be helpful to some to know what is there.¹¹

¹⁰ Written by Jim Gerris taken from http://www.churchisraelforum.com/what_happened_to_zion.htm.

¹¹ These points are quoted directly from Jacqueline Schaalje and they, along with final two images of the "Tower of David," were taken from <http://www.jewishmag.com/29MAG/david/david.htm>. Much more history and information can be found at this website.

1. The Citadel of Jerusalem is better known as the Tower of David. Nowadays the fort is distinguished by its Islamic towers and entrance porch, but the Citadel's history goes back way before that. The Jewish historian Josephus first called the fortress the "Citadel of King David." The name "David's Tower" now refers to the minaret on the South side. To make things confusing the term "David's Tower" used to be reserved in the past for the north-east tower, whose origin is Herodian.
2. The oldest remains of a city wall and stronghold on the site, although not visible to current visitors, lies buried in the bedrock of the underlying hill. They date back to the monarchic period in Israel. King Hezekiah (end of 8th Century BCE) built a wall and towers after the Assyrian invasion of Judah (2 Chronicles 32:5). The wall was 7 meters wide, and constructed of large boulders. This giant wall was damaged during the Babylonian victory over Jerusalem in 587/6 BCE. In subsequent centuries the city shrunk back to the city of David on the eastern hill; consequently there was no need for a defence on the western hill.
3. The situation changed during the Hasmonean period. The city grew and extended to the western hill again. But although the Hasmonean kings already brought this part of the city inside the walls in the late second Century BCE, it was probably Herod who used the site for the first time to build a fort. Herod also erected his famous palace, which stretched to the south of the modern bastion. According to Josephus, Herod's palace was "wondrous beyond words." The palace was enormous and remains have been found where the Armenian garden is presently situated, which borders the south city wall.
4. The location was very suitable for a fort, as it was on the top of a hill, and according to Josephus the hill possessed an additional crest. Herod constructed 3 imposing towers to defend the wall, bastion and palace. They were called after his wife Mariamne, his friend Hippicus and his brother Phasael. It is the last tower which is still standing (the upper part of the tower is Islamic).



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Below are two quotations taken from Barnes' notes. Either of these quotations would be reasonable to use to quickly summarize Zion.

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Zion was the southern hill in the city of Jerusalem. See the notes at Isa. 1:8. It was the highest of the hills on which the city was built. It was made by David the capital of his kingdom, and was hence called the city of David, 2Chron. 5:2. By the poets and prophets it is often put for Jerusalem itself, Isa. 2:3 8:18 10:24 33:14, et al. It did not obtain this distinction until it was taken by David from the Jebusites, 2Sam. 5:5-9; 1Chron. 11:4-8. To that place David removed the ark of the covenant, and there he built an altar to the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, 2Sam. 24:15-25. Zion became thenceforward the metropolis of the king dom, and the name was transferred to the entire city. It is to this that the passage here refers; and the meaning is, that in that

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metropolis or capital God had constituted his Messiah king, or had appointed him to reign over his people. This cannot refer to David himself, for in no proper sense was he constituted or inaugurated king in Jerusalem; that is, there was no such ceremony of inauguration as is referred to here. Zion was called the "holy hill," or "the hill of my holiness" (Hebrew), because it was set apart as the seat of the theocracy, or the residence of God, from the time that David removed the ark there. That became the place where God reigned, and where his worship was celebrated. This must refer to the Messiah, and to the fact that God had set him apart to reign over his people, and thence over all the earth. The truth taught in this passage is, that God will carry forward his own purposes in spite of all the opposition which men can make, and that it is his deliberate design to make his anointed One - the Messiah - King over all.*

Zion, or Sion, was the name of one of the hills on which the city of Jerusalem was built. On this hill formerly stood the city of the Jebusites, and when David took it from them he transferred to it his court, and it was called the city of David, or the holy hill. It was in the southern part of the city. As Zion became the residence of the court, and was the most important part of the city, the name was often used to denote the city itself, and is often applied to the whole of Jerusalem. The phrase 'daughter of Zion' here means Zion itself, or Jerusalem. The name daughter is given to it by a personification in accordance with a common custom in Eastern writers, by which beautiful towns and cities are likened to young females. The name mother is also applied in the same way. Perhaps the custom arose from the fact that when a city was built, towns and villages would spring up round it - and the first would be called the mother-city (hence, the word metropolis). The expression was also employed as an image of beauty, from a fancied resemblance between a beautiful town and a beautiful and well-dressed woman. Thus Psalm 45:13, the phrase daughter of Tyre, means Tyre itself; Psalm 137:8, daughter of Babylon, that is, Babylon; Isa. 37:22, 'The virgin, the daughter of Zion;' Jer. 46:2; Isa. 23:12; Jer. 14:17; Num. 21:23, Num. 21:32, (Hebrew); Judges 11:26.**

* Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 2:6.

**Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Isa. 1:8

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