

WHO and WHAT IS ZION? quotes

1 Zion or Sion was literally a mountain or hill of Jerus (see Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, Hebrew word #6726 & Greek word #4622). The word "Zion" is derived from the Hebrew words #6725 & #5329, and signifies a conspicuous eminent monument, or guiding pillar, or permanent capital, that glitters from afar. The peak of Mount Zion is 772 meters or 2,533 feet and thus stands out in that area.

The first Biblical reference to Zion occurs during the time of King David, when he searched for a new capital city for the united kingdom of Israel. David found a suitable city and then captured it from the Jebusites. This city was named Jebus, and was actually a castle or strong hold which was built upon the north side of this mountain or hill of Zion. After David captured this fortress upon Zion, he then renamed it Jerusalem—the city of David (see 2 Samuel 5:6-9; 1 Chronicles 11:4-7).

2 King David was not satisfied that God should dwell in a humble Sanctuary, and so he, along with Solomon his son, looked for a more suitable place to erect a magnificent temple to the God of heaven. Just east of Mount Zion, through a once deep valley called Tyropean, was a distinctly separate mountain called Moriah. This was the same mountain that where Abraham had offered up Isaac (Genesis 22:1-18); where Jacob had his vision of the ladder reaching to heaven (Genesis 28:10-22); and where the flames of the altar that David built had turned aside the sword of the destroying angel (1 Chronicles 21:14-28). It was upon this mountain that king Solomon, after the death of his father David, built the great stone Temple and Sanctuary to God (2 Chronicles 3:1).

The actual meaning of the word "Moriah" is derived from the Hebrew words #4179, 7200 & 3050, and signifies that this hill or mountain will be looked upon and seen of the eternal Lord God. The elevation of the bedrock outcropping where the Temple was built upon Mount Moriah was 741 meters or 2,431 feet. This made the Temple about 30 meters or 100 feet lower in height than Mount Zion to the West, and thus when one came to worship at the Temple they could not help but see Mount Zion in the distance.

The original walls of the city of Jerusalem were enlarged to include Mount Moriah. Thus the city of David, the strong hold of Zion, which was Jerusalem, was no longer built just upon the mountain of Zion, but now was also built upon the mountain of Moriah where the Temple was located. Also, the once deep Tyropean valley which separated Mount Zion and Mount Moriah became filled in with debris as the years went by.

3 The Bible clearly declares that Zion and Jerusalem—including the Temple are not one in the same, but are distinct!

“For the people shall dwell in Zion **at** Jerusalem...” Isaiah 30:19.

“...Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem **and for Zion** with a great jealousy.” Zechariah 1:14.

Zion is at Jerusalem, but is not Jerusalem or the Temple itself. God is jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion, again revealing that they are not one in the same but are separate.

“Awake, awake; put on thy strength O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city...” Isaiah 52:1.

“In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: **and to Zion**, Let not thine hands be slack.” Zephaniah 3:16.

“...the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, **and** shall yet choose Jerusalem.” Zechariah 1:17.

“For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, **and** for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest...” Isaiah 62:1.

“Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, **and** will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem...” Zechariah 8:3.

“To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, **and** his praise in Jerusalem.” Psalms 102:21.

4 Before the stone Temple was built, the ark, along with the presence of God, was found within the most holy place of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. This humble tent Sanctuary was built completely and only by those whom God had inspired to carry out His commands (Exodus 36:1-4). But why?

“And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. Exodus 25:8.

David later brought this tent Sanctuary within the original city of Jerusalem which was on Mount Zion (2 Samuel 6:12-19; 1 Chronicles 15-16). And this continued to be the dwelling place of God while king David ruled on the throne.

After David’s death, king Solomon built a stone Temple. This Temple was not built completely and only by those whom God had inspired, but it was built in union with the heathen (2 Chronicles 2:7-14; 1 Kings 7:13-40). When this magnificent stone Temple was completed, the ark, along with the presence of God, was taken away from Mount Zion, moved eastward out of the Jerusalem—the city of David, and was now found on Mount Moriah within the most holy place of the stone structure (1 Kings 8:1-11).

“Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the Lord was finished...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 Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is [on] Zion**....And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord into his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.” 2 Chronicles 5:1-2, 7.

God did consent to the request of Solomon to dwell in this new stone structure built for His glory, but only upon condition of obedience (1 Kings 9:1-9; 2 Chronicles 7:1-3, 12-22).

5 This shows that God dwelt in two different types of Sanctuaries: one was humble, while the other was magnificent; one was built only by God's inspired people, while the other was built in union with the heathen; one was established on Mount Zion, while the other was established on Mount Moriah; and one was due to His desire, while the other was because of His consent upon obedience. Which one of these two do you think was God's special and favorite dwelling place: Mount Zion or the stone Temple at Jerusalem?

"For the Lord has chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." Psalms 132:12-14.

"Sing praises to the Lord which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings." Psalms 9:11.

"In Salem [Jerusalem] also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in [Mount] Zion." Psalms 76:2.

"But he chose the tribe of Judah, [wherein is] the mount Zion which he loved." Psalms 78:68.

"The Lord is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people." Psalms 99:2.

6 Now after the death of king David, did God change His mind, and now favored Mount Moriah more than Mount Zion?

"Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." Isaiah 8:18.

"So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain..." Joel 3:17.