

What is Zion?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Zion.html>

Psalm 87:2-3 says, “The Lord loves the gates of Zion / more than all the other dwellings of Jacob. / Glorious things are said of you, / city of God.” According to this verse, Zion is synonymous with city of God, and it is a place that God loves. Zion is Jerusalem. Mount Zion is the high hill on which David built a citadel. It is on the southeast side of the city.

The word Zion occurs over 150 times in the Bible. It essentially means “fortification” and has the idea of being “raised up” as a “monument.” Zion is described both as the city of David and the city of God. As the Bible progresses, the word Zion expands in scope and takes on an additional, spiritual meaning.

The first mention of Zion in the Bible is 2 Samuel 5:7: “David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David.” Zion was originally an ancient Jebusite fortress in the city of Jerusalem. After David’s conquest of the fortress, Jerusalem became a possession of Israel. The royal palace was built there, and Zion/Jerusalem became the seat of power in Israel’s kingdom..

When Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, the meaning of Zion expanded further to include the temple area (Psalm 2:6; 48:2, 11-12; 132:13). This is the meaning found in the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:6, “Come, let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God.” In the Old Testament Zion is used as a name for the city of Jerusalem (Isaiah 40:9), the land of Judah (Jeremiah 31:12), and the nation of Israel as a whole (Zechariah 9:13).

The word Zion is also used in a theological or spiritual sense in Scripture. In the Old

Testament Zion refers figuratively to Israel as the people of God (Isaiah 60:14). In the New Testament, Zion refers to God's spiritual kingdom. We have not come to Mount Sinai, says the apostle, but "to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22). Peter, quoting Isaiah 28:16, refers to Christ as the Cornerstone of Zion: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame" (1 Peter 2:6).

Mount Zion as a geographical area is currently the center of much dispute. The Bible is clear that, one day, Zion will be the sole possession of the Lord Jesus, and Zion—the nation and the city—will be restored. "Awake, awake, / Clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; / Clothe yourself in your beautiful garments, / O Jerusalem, the holy city; / For the uncircumcised and the unclean / Will no longer come into you" (Isaiah 52:1). And "the children of your oppressors will come bowing before you; / all who despise you will bow down at your feet / and will call you the City of the LORD, / Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 60:14).