

What is Zionism?

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

What is Zionism, or maybe a better question to ask is what Zion is? The first thing to know is there is both a natural and spiritual aspect to God's Kingdom. Let us look at the natural first. Mount Zion, called Mount Moriah in the Bible, is a ridge system located in Jerusalem. Situated east of Mount Zion is the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives is where Jesus ascended to heaven and is the place where He is prophesied to return. The Kidron Valley separates these two north-south ridgelines.

The middle section of the Mount Zion ridgeline is a saddleback that is about 741 meters above sea level (Figure 1). This area was called the threshing floor of Arunah. King David purchased it and eventually became the site of the first and second Temples. About 600 meters above sea level, South of this saddleback is a place that was called Salem or City of Peace. It was also called Ophel and the City of David (Figure 2).

The peak of the ridge system further north, at 777 meters above sea level, is the place called Golgotha. Here, it is believed that Abraham offered his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice. And two thousand years later, in the exact location, our heavenly Father would give His Son, Yeshua, as an offering for the sins of the world. Therefore, Mount Zion represents more than Jerusalem. It inclusively represents the City of the King, the place of the Temple and its priestly services, and the location of God's sacrifice itself. In other words, Zion represents the Kingdom of God (Figure 3).

The modern form of Zionism is the political movement that led to the creation of the current State of Israel. Its general definition means "the national campaign for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel." The term *Zionism* was coined in 1890 by Nathan Birnbaum and initiated by Theodor Herzl in 1896.ⁱ

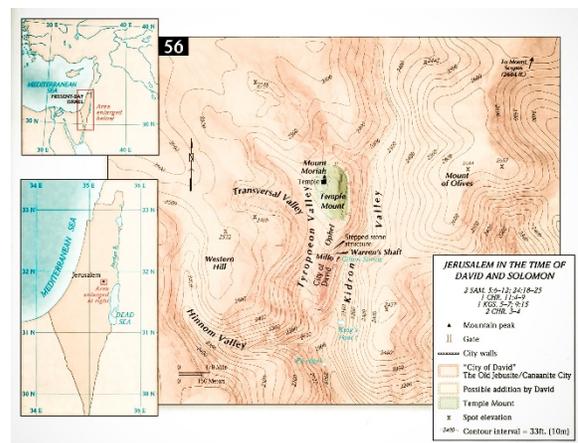


Figure 1 - Jerusalem in the time of David and Solomon (Holman Bible Atlas)

The movement has done more for the Jewish people than anything else in our modern history. However, it sadly has also splintered us.

On one side are those who see the re-establishment of Israel as God’s divine intervention, fulfilling the prophecy that God would one day return the captives of His people to the land promised to Abraham.ⁱⁱ On the other side, many of whom are within the Orthodox communities, view the forced creation of the State of Israel in contradiction to the Talmudic and Midrashic writings that suggest the Messiah Himself would be the one to gather Israel from the nations.ⁱⁱⁱ

The State of Israel today is a secular, parliamentary democracy created by a political system that infused aspects of the ancient Greek democratic political system and socialism, which originated out of the French Revolution. The country is recognized primarily as the Jewish homeland. However, it is not exclusively Jewish. There are Arabs, Bedouin, Druze, Samaritans, Muslims, Copts, Armenians, Circassians, Baha’i, and Christians that are Israeli citizens. Many of these equally serve in parliament and the military. The national anthem of Israel (*HaTikvah*—the Hope), while it speaks of the hope in returning to the land of Israel, is surprisingly absent of any mention of God as her King.^{iv}

Israel today is not the God-centered religious theocracy that He established through Moses, where the priests, the sons of Aaron, would rule in the name of God. Israel’s restoration does not presume that God did not either divinely allow or orchestrate her rebirth. It merely affirms that Israel is not yet under Yeshua’s Kingship, hence, the Bible’s reference to the future restoration of The Kingdom.

Up to this point, we have been looking at Zion and the natural aspects of God’s Kingdom. Let us now look at scripture to gain a complete spiritual understanding of Zion and how it correlates to God’s earthly Kingdom:

1. Zion is called the place of God’s dwelling. It is written, *“In Salem also is His tabernacle, And His dwelling place in Zion” (Psalm 76:2, NKJV).*^v *“For the LORD has chosen Zion; He*



Figure 2 - City of David (Holman Bible Atlas)

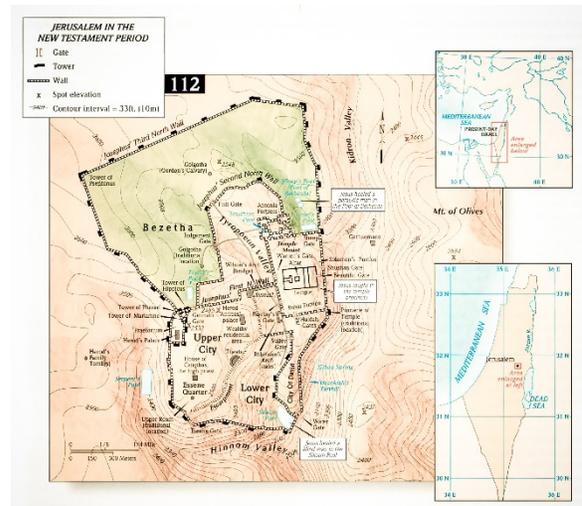


Figure 3 - Jerusalem in the New Testament Period (Holman Bible Atlas)

has desired it for His dwelling place: This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it" (Psalm 132:13-14).

2. Zion is a city, for it is written, *"Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God!" (Psalm 87:3). "And they shall call you The City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 60:14).*
3. Zion is a people. As it is written, *"And of Zion it will be said, This one and that one were born in her; And the Most High Himself shall establish her" (Psalm 87:5). "For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children" (Isaiah 66:8). "For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, Like a woman in birth pangs" (Micah 4:9).*
4. And lastly, Zion is much bigger than just Israel, for it is written, *"The LORD loves the gates of Zion More than all the dwellings of Jacob" (Psalm 87:2).*

Zion is a city and a people, and there are several glimpses of this great city and its people in the Bible. The first was shown to Abraham. It is written, *"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8-10).*

The second picture was shown to the Apostle John, as it is written, *"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:2).*

From all these scriptures, we can conclude with surety that Zion is the church of God, the *kahal*, and *ecclesia*, the great assembly of God's people comprised of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.^{vi} As it is written, *"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation [Yeshua, who is the chief cornerstone^{vii}], A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily [and shall be saved^{viii}]" (Isaiah 28:16).*

While Israel was promised to be the recipient of every blessing and covenant of God, even becoming heirs of the Kingdom, these promises were not exclusively for her. God's ultimate plan was to redeem all of humanity in Christ through the nation of Israel so that the Gentiles would be joined with the Jewish people as one people of God and one new man in Christ. Thus, it is written, *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13).* Therefore, Christ and His Kingdom were a mystery hidden from man and are now being revealed.

Paul spoke on this mystery when he wrote: *"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit"*

(*Ephesians 2:19-22*). Thus, while the nations are grafted in amongst the Jewish people, Israel remains the foundation and center of God's Kingdom. However, the Kingdom is now bigger than just Israel, referred to as the "gates of Jacob."

Zion is the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom includes Israel and the nations grafted into her to become one people of God. Zion is the place that God dwells, both within our hearts and in the future city of Jerusalem and the universal *ecclesia* of God's people.^{ix} Zion is the seat of God's priestly and kingly authority that will forever be established in Jerusalem. It encompasses the whole of Mount Zion, from the City of David, the City of the great King, to the Temple Mount itself, where the Millennial Temple will be constructed.^x

And Zion is the place of God's ultimate sacrifice, Golgotha, where God's people will forever remember what Christ did for us on the cross. Thus, Zion is the entirety of God's Kingdom. Yet, Zion is not exclusively Israel. It is much greater.

While the promise of Zion was reserved for the Jewish people, it has been extended to all nations.^{xi} For this reason, it is paramount that the church understands its relationship with Israel. Therefore, we do not preach half the gospel, meaning that Christ was only crucified for our sin and resurrected to eternal life. Instead, we teach the whole doctrine of the gospel, which is Christ resurrected into a physical body to return to a material earth for establishing His Kingdom in Jerusalem from Mount Zion forever. At that moment in time, the spiritual realm of God will invade this temporal earth, so the two shall become one just as it was in the Garden of Eden. But it will be even greater.

The intimacy of God will be restored with humanity, as it is written, "*For they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them...*" (*Jeremiah 31:34*). All of humanity will walk with God just as Adam walked with Him in the Garden of Eden. This garden will invade the whole earth, and the entire planet will become a Garden of Eden. God's Theocracy and His King, Yeshua, will rule all the nations.^{xii} A picture of this future kingdom was given to King Solomon. Similarly, at that time, the earth was temporarily filled with the knowledge, wisdom, prosperity, provision, and goodness of the Lord.

In Zion, God's people, His children will be like the angels in heaven who reflect God's glory.^{xiii} We will be just like Him, as it is written, "*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is*" (1 *John 3:2*).

Yeshua's perfect nature will be perfectly manifest within and through us. We were given a glimmer of this promise and a deposit of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The early church walked in the power of God's Spirit, with signs and wonders.^{xiv} And we shall do the same, as Yeshua promised: "*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father*" (*John 14:12*).

One day soon, Yeshua will be returning in the clouds with glory and great power.^{xv} And we, His church, will be joined with Him forever, as it is written, *“For the LORD shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory”* (Psalm 102:16). But, until that time, we are to work,^{xvi} sharing the good news of the Kingdom, and inviting all who are willing to dine at the table of the great King.^{xvii}

Let us join hands together, Jew and Gentile as one new man, building the church and the Kingdom of God.^{xviii} Because what we store up in heaven now will become our eternal inheritance. As we read in Daniel, one day, *“The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever”* (Daniel 7:18).

Amen!

ⁱ A Definition of Zionism. Jewish Virtual Library.

ⁱⁱ Psalm 14:7, 53:6, Jeremiah 30:3.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gottheil, Richard. *Zionism*. Jewish Encyclopedia.

^{iv} Wikipedia.

^v All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

^{vi} Revelation 5:9.

^{vii} Psalm 118:22, Matthew 21:42.

^{viii} John 1:12-3, 3:15.

^{ix} 2 Corinthians 6:16.

^x Psalm 48:2, Ezekiel 40-41, Matthew 5:35.

^{xi} Romans 9:3-5, 9:24.

^{xii} Psalm 22:28, Revelation 12:5.

^{xiii} Matthew 22:30, Luke 20:35-36.

^{xiv} Isaiah 8:18.

^{xv} Matthew 13:26.

^{xvi} John 9:4.

^{xvii} Luke 14:15, 22:30.

^{xviii} Matthew 16:18.