

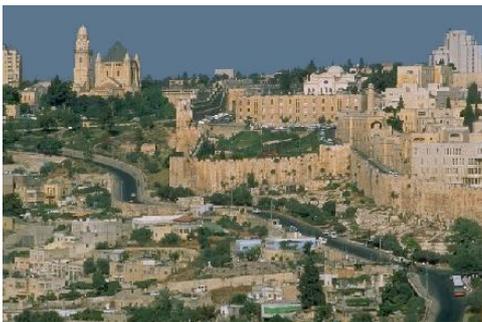
Mount Zion

Hebrews 12

Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to tens of thousands of angels joyfully gathered together,

Hebrews 12:22

Mount Zion was physically the territory of the Jebusites (1Chronicles 11:5) which became “The City of David” or more commonly: Jerusalem (Note 1Kings 8:1). It later became synonymous with the Temple precinct, although



2Chronicles 3:1 says that the Temple was built upon Mount Moriah. This then illustrates that Mount Zion was not necessarily an exact physical place, but actually more of a spiritual place. We read in the Old Testament that Zion was used interchangeably with Jerusalem (Ps. 51:18), the Temple precinct (Psalm 65:1), the presence of God (Psalm 74:2),

Calvary (Isaiah 28:16; 59:20; Joel 2:32), then Heaven (Hebrews 12:22).

1. According to Isaiah 8:18, where does God dwell? (Note Psalm 9:11)
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When the Jews went into captivity they were collectively referred to as the "Daughter of Zion" (refer to Psalm 9:14; Jeremiah 4:31). Interestingly during the time of Judah's apostasy the prophet Ezekiel never once used the expression "Zion" or "Daughter of Zion" in his book.



2. In what way did Micah 4:2 begin to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost?
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Real Zionism

The hope for Jews was that the Messiah would reign from Zion (Jerusalem). Jesus faced this expectation from His own disciples (note Acts 1:6). But what the disciples failed to grasp about Zion was that it wasn't so much a physical locality but a spiritual state. Even today many Jewish people still hold out hope for the Messiah to come and rule in physical Jerusalem (since they have rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah). This was clearly the case at the time Hebrews was written. Jewish Christians were being ridiculed by their Zionist countrymen who pointed out to these first Christians that Jesus could not have been the Christ since He didn't re-establish the rule of God from Zion.

3. According to Galatians 4:26 where does Paul state is the locality of the real Zion (Jerusalem)? In what way is this verse related to the Old Testament expression "the daughter of Zion"?
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The Apostle Paul redefined several key Hebrew concepts in his epistle to the Hebrews. In Galatians 4:26 he reinterprets what Jerusalem or Zion really means. Under the Old Covenant it was the City of David where God chose to dwell temporarily. But under the New Covenant Zion is revealed to be Heaven, the permanent dwelling of God. Under the Old Covenant, Hebrews were referred to as the Daughter of Zion, but under the New Covenant Christians call the Heavenly Jerusalem: *Mother*.

4. What other reinterpretation does Paul seem to make in Galatians 6:16?

The writer to the Hebrews is encouraging his Jewish readers not to be discouraged by their countrymen who appealed to their Zionist hope that the Messiah would once again make Jerusalem the dwelling place of God and that since Jesus Christ did not re-establish the Kingdom of God physically with Jerusalem (Zion) as His base, He surely could not have truly been the Messiah. But the author of Hebrews encourages his Jewish audience to understand that Christianity is not focussed on an earthly city, or even founded on the hope of an earthly rule of the Messiah (Heb. 12:22).

The Zionist belief of the first century Jews who had rejected their Messiah was so fervent that it led to their eventual misguided belief that God would send the Messiah to deliver them from the Roman siege of 66 – 70 AD. This fervent (but misguided) belief led to the tragic death of most of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all of the priests (who were executed by General Titus, prior to him becoming the Co-Emperor).

5. Since this Epistle was written just prior to the siege of 66 - 70AD, how might we understand what the writer was perhaps telling his audience in Hebrews 10:25? That is, which “Day” is the writer referring to?

The Continuation of the Testament

The writer to the Hebrews wanted to counter the accusation that Christianity was a radically new religion divorced from, rather than a divine continuation of the Testament of God. Thus he encourages his readers by telling them that the Old Testament saints who have gone before them are already waiting for them in this City of God, Mount Zion, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to the general assembly of the firstborn (Heb. 12:23).

6. How does Hebrews 12:24 highlight the continuation between the Old and New Covenants?

7. In what way did Hebrews 12:25-29 offer a stern warning to the original Hebrew Christian audience? How should these warnings affect us today?

Someone has said that heaven is spelt: *H O M E*. This is a nice thing for every Christian to remember when we get too attached to this world. The Psalmist said that we are actually *pilgrims* in this world (Psalm 39:12). Unlike Jewish Zionism we do not look for a homeland on earth, but a Heavenly City, the real Mount Zion.

Amen.