

THE LIMITED USE OF “ZION” BY NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

Overview. This paper will examine the infrequent use in the New Testament of a vibrant tradition about Mount Zion in the Hebrew scriptures. After an overview of the Old Testament background (i.e., origin and meaning of Zion, first use in the Hebrew Bible, later uses and developments in the Psalms and the prophetic writings), the seven occurrences by writers of the New Testament will be looked at. First, there is use from Zechariah by the gospels of Matthew (21.4-5) and John (12.14-15) about the humility of the Messianic King as he comes to Mount Zion (i.e., Jerusalem). Next, there is use from Isaiah by Paul in Romans (9.33; 11.26) and by Peter (2.6 of his first letter) about the Lord’s laying a “cornerstone” in Mount Zion (i.e., Jerusalem) that becomes an important marker for distinction–division or deliverance—and a new covenant. Then, there is the independent interpretation by the writer of the book of Hebrews (12.22) who identifies Mount Zion as “heavenly Jerusalem” and contrasts the mountain of darkness and gloom (i.e., Mount Sinai) with the mountain of “joyful assembly” and “the church of the firstborn” (i.e., the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem). Finally, there is the apocalyptic vision of glory and judgment by John in the book of Revelation (14.1) of “the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion” with the 144,000 who had “his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.” After a look at these seven passages about Mount Zion in the New Testament, which represent perhaps a “canonical crescendo” from humility of the King, to the work of the King in bringing about deliverance for his people through a new covenant, to final glorification and judgment of the King, reasons for why the New Testament does not make greater use of “Zion” will be proposed.

Introduction. The word “Zion” occurs 210 times in the English Bible, and this includes 167 uses in the Old Testament, 36 uses in the Apocrypha, and only seven uses by writers in the New Testament.¹ In the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Bible,² the Zion tradition is mentioned only four times in the Former Prophets (once in Samuel and three times in Kings) but 102 times in the Latter Prophets (54 in Isaiah, 17 in Jeremiah, and 31 in The Twelve—seven from Joel, nine from Micah, nine from Zechariah, and two each from Amos, Obadiah, and Zephaniah). In the eleven books of the Writings, Zion appears mainly in the Psalms (42 times) and in Lamentations (16 times), with only one occurrence in Song of Songs and two instances in Chronicles. Thus, of the 167 occurrences of Zion in the Hebrew scriptures, 154 of these (or 92 percent) come from Isaiah, Jeremiah (including Lamentation), the Psalms, and Joel, Micah, and Zechariah.³

In the writings of the New Testament, while “Zion” is used by several authors, the paucity of seven total references is somewhat surprising, since the New Testament mentions Jerusalem by name 146 times (cf. 651 times for the Old Testament and 204 times for the Apocrypha).⁴ The more persistent use of the name of the Holy City, however, does not appear to translate into any controlling theme about Mount Zion. Paul (in Romans) and John (in his gospel and Revelation) each refer to Zion only two times, and Matthew, Peter, and the writer of Hebrews each make reference to Zion only once. Peter and Paul both use Isaiah as the basis for their comments on Zion, and Matthew and John, in their gospels, use the prophet Zechariah for their interpretation of the Zion tradition. With the prevalence of information about the Zion tradition coming from the Latter Prophets (especially Isaiah) and the Psalms, writings that New Testament writers quote often,⁵ it appears that there might be selective use of or reevaluation of (e.g., to a status of lesser importance) the Zion heritage by the early disciples of Jesus.

Zion Begins. The word “Zion,” from the Hebrew *tsiyon* and the Greek *Sion*, occurs for the first time in the Hebrew scriptures as “the stronghold of Zion” that David defeated and took from the Jebusites (2 Samuel 5.7; cf. 1 Chronicles 11.5).⁶ The Jebusites, a non-Semitic people, were descendants of Canaan who had migrated to this area during the early second millennium. After David captured their citadel, they possibly were assimilated or forced into slavery and over time lost their ethnic identity. The ancient town of Jebus and its “zion” thus became the location for David’s royal residence and his center for administration of the tribes of Israel—“the city of David.”⁷ This wise decision by David “both eliminated a Canaanite enclave from the center of the land and gained a capital from which he could rule the national state. . . . Jerusalem, centrally located between the two sections [i.e., the northern and southern tribes of Israel] and within the territory of none of the tribes, offered an excellent compromise.”⁸

Soon thereafter, David dealt the final blow to the Philistine army (2 Samuel 5.17-25; but cf. 8.1) and judiciously transferred the Ark of the Covenant from Kirjath-jearim to his new capital city of Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6.1ff.). David well understood both the political and the spiritual power of Israel’s ancient institutions and symbols. With great fanfare and celebration, the Ark of the Covenant was installed on Zion, though not without serious setback, and there it stayed until Solomon transferred the “Ark of God”⁹ from “the city of David, which is Zion” to his new temple (see 1 Kings 8.1; 2 Chronicles 5.2).¹⁰

David, who built a house or palace for himself soon after taking the Jebusite stronghold (2 Samuel 5.11; 7.1), apparently had been prohibited by a prophetic oracle from erecting a more permanent dwelling for the Lord. John Bright explains:

Although the Ark seems to have been housed in a permanent structure at Shiloh (1 Samuel 1.9; 3.3), there persisted, especially in prophetic circles, a tenacious recollection

of the originally portable nature of the Ark shrine, together with the feeling that the erection of a permanent temple under royal patronage would constitute a dangerous break with tradition. It is probable that Nathan and those like-minded had hoped that the new shrine would be but the reactivation and perpetuation of the old tribal center, and they did not wish to see it replaced by a dynastic sanctuary in the Canaanite manner in which the king would play a dominant role. David was either sympathetic with this feeling or, more likely, felt it wise to give in to it. The project was, therefore, deferred.¹¹

This objection subsided with the accession of Solomon to Israel's throne. In the fourth year of his rule, Solomon began in earnest to build a temple for the Lord as well as his royal palace (see 1 Kings 5–7; cf. 2 Chronicles 2.1–5.1). Then, as David had sanctioned the divine origin of his rule over Israel with the presence of the Ark in Zion, so Solomon moved the Ark of the Covenant to the newly completed temple (1 Kings 8–9; 2 Chronicles 5.2–7.22).

The geographical precision in the text for the movement of the Ark indicates the growth of Jerusalem during David's reign and its further expansion to higher elevation (i.e., toward the north) under Solomon.¹² Solomon directed the key leaders of Israel "to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion" (1 Kings 8.1; 2 Chronicles 5.2). David's men had conquered Jebus which was situated on a narrow ridge (cf. the Ophel ridge)¹³ southeast of today's Old City. Solomon enlarged the city toward the north and built his temple on the area of an old threshing floor that David bought from Araunah the Jebusite (see 2 Samuel 24.18-25). Once the new temple had been dedicated, Zion—the designation for the city of David and now for the city of King Solomon—simply progressed with the Ark of God that was securely established in its new resting place. The hill to the north on which the temple stood "became known as Mount Zion." And, in the period of the United Monarchy, "Zion may even refer to the temple vicinity or more generally to Jerusalem itself."¹⁴

Celebration of Zion, Its King, and The Lord. *The Psalms.* Although the individual psalms in the Five Books of the Psalms—Israel’s ancient and classic praisebook—come from and refer to a lengthy period of time, some of the earliest pieces in the collections probably derive from the early days of Solomon’s temple or even from the days of King David.¹⁵ That the leaders of Israel’s liturgical resources referred so often to “Zion, my holy hill” or “Mount Zion” or “daughter Zion” or simply “Zion” is no surprise.¹⁶ Very early the connection was made between Mount Zion, the Lord God who dwelt in the temple there, and Israel’s king whom the Lord installed there.¹⁷ It was quite natural, therefore, to connect Zion, the locale of the central temple apparatus, to Zion’s king and to Zion’s God. By the dynamics of the power of place, “Zion” represented or stood for the presence of the Lord God in the midst of his people through the sanctuary of the nation’s sacerdotal activities as well as the sanctuary (i.e., royal palace) of the nation’s political activities. As D. C. T. Sheriffs observes:

The walled citadel of the kingdom of David, its geographical, political, and economic capital, was at the same time the site where God lived in his ‘house’. In the story of salvation, this small acropolis called Zion occupies a prominent position because it made visible God’s covenant commitment to live among his people, and to be Father to the Davidic dynasty.¹⁸

Consequently, Mount Zion, the Lord’s presence, the divine king, the covenant people—the ideas seem to cross over, to blend, or to merge into the other, which makes it difficult sometimes to define precisely what “Zion” refers to in certain texts.

Similarly, the name itself seems to be infused in the liturgical corpus of the Psalms that spans so many generations of the Lord’s people. While no one in modern times has defined a specific type or classification of psalm called “the Zion Psalm,”¹⁹ mention of Zion in the Psalter appears to be spread evenly throughout the whole collection.²⁰ And the themes that relate to Zion

are comprehensive.²¹ The first reference, a Royal Psalm, where the King takes center stage, proclaims, “I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill” (2.6; cf. 110.2). The last occurrence, a Hymn of Triumph, declares, “Let Israel be glad in its Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King” (149.2).²² From start to finish for God’s people, it is the Lord who “dwells in Zion” (9.11), and “out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth” (50.2). “His holy mountain, beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King” (48.1b-2). “In Judah God is known, his name is great in Israel. His abode has been established in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion” (76.1-2). Thus, “the God of gods will be seen in Zion” (84.7), because “the Lord is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples” (99.2). “For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation” (132.13).

Zion, like Judah, is preeminent and worthy of God’s love due to the judgments of the Lord. “On the holy mount stands the city he founded; the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob” (87.2). “He chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loves” (78.68). For this reason, “Zion hears and is glad, and the towns of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O God” (97.8; cf. 48.11). “Happy are those whose strength is in [the Lord], in whose heart are the highways to Zion” (84.5), but “may all who hate Zion be put to shame and turned backward” (129.5). Therefore, the psalmist exhorts, “Walk about Zion, go all around it, count its towers, consider well its ramparts; go through its citadels, that you may tell the next generation that this is God, and God forever and ever. He will be our guide forever” (48.12-14).²³

In days and times of trouble, Mount Zion emanates strength, stability, and deliverance. “May [the Lord] send you help from the sanctuary, and give you support from Zion” (20.2). “O that deliverance from Israel would come from Zion! When the Lord restores the fortunes of his

people, Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad” (14.7; cf. 53.6). “For God will save Zion and rebuild the cities of Judah; and his servants shall live there and possess it” (69.35). During the difficult period of Israel’s humiliation, the Lord is called on to “do good to Zion in your good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem” (51.18) and to “remember your congregation, which you acquired long ago, which you redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage. Remember Mount Zion, where you came to dwell” (74.2; cf. 137.1, 3). And this prayer for the Lord’s help is one of optimism and not of despair.

You, O Lord, are enthroned forever; your name endures to all generations. You will have compassion on Zion, for it is time to favor it; the appointed time has come. . . . For the Lord will build up Zion; he will appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer. . . . So that the name of the Lord may be declared in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem (102.12, 13, 16, 21).

Because it was belief beyond belief, “when the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,” the psalmist admits, “we were like those who dream” (126.1). For this rescue and many others, he rightly extols, “Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion; and to you shall vows be performed” (65.1). And, “those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever” (125.1).

So the cantor leads: “The Lord bless you from Zion. May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life” (128.5).

The congregation responds: “Blessed be the Lord from Zion, he who resides in Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!” (135.21).

The cantor sings: “May the Lord, maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion” (134.3).

The congregation responds: “The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!” (146.10).

And the cantor shouts: “Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!” (147.12).

And the congregation cries out: “Let Israel be glad in its Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King” (149.2).²⁴

These profuse and lavish connections between Zion (i.e., Jerusalem, the city of David), its Creator or Lord, its earthly king, and the people of God are by no means accidental. In Israel's "Psalmbook" or Psalter, the imagery consistently and intentionally calls out for the Lord God and Zion itself to be glorified and praised. But this makes it challenging to understand why the followers of Jesus in the first century do not make greater use of "Zion" in their writings when they quote or allude to any of the Zion psalms. The disciples who wrote gospels about Jesus and letters to his churches were Jewish (except for Luke), and they were intimately aware of and fond of Jerusalem (e.g., Mark 13.1; Luke 21.5). They quote from the Psalms more than any other writing of the Hebrew scriptures,²⁵ and they quote from Psalms where the heightened, symbolic name for the Holy City—Zion—is highlighted.²⁶ But they rarely refer to Zion by name when they quote or allude to a particular psalm.

Zion Destroyed, Lost, But Restored by the Lord God. In the Latter Prophets (i.e., two of the so-called "major" prophets and six of The Twelve), the Zion tradition stays vibrant and remains a pertinent theme for the security and good fortune of God's covenant people.²⁷ But as a result of Israel's stubborn rebellion against the Lord God and the nation's apostasy, Zion is destroyed by the Assyrian and Babylonian world powers, is lost, but eventually is restored. Unlike seers in much of the ancient Near East who support the imperial ideology, the Hebrew prophets more often speak out against prevailing cultural trends in Israel and Judah. Sheriffs suggests that "the prophecies about Zion in national and political terms are best read as counteractive, contextualized theology affirming the kingship of Israel's God in Zion against all counterclaims."²⁸ And as God's representatives for such "a countercultural movement," the Hebrew prophets "tended to cluster around periods of great turmoil."²⁹ For example, among

those who mention “Zion” in their writings, Amos, Isaiah, Micah, and possibly Joel³⁰ confront the Assyrian crisis (i.e., 760-700 BC; the fall of Samaria and the siege of Jerusalem); Zephaniah and Jeremiah (including the book of Lamentations) encounter the Babylonian crisis (i.e., 650-580 BC; the fall of Judah and Jerusalem); and Obadiah and Zechariah speak to the Persian crisis (i.e., 650-580; time of exile and the return to Jerusalem).³¹

Joel. In their focus on the six major predictive themes of the prophetic books,³² these Latter Prophets echo the sentiments of Israel’s singers and supplicants in their thoughts about “Zion.” According to Joel, who foretells to Judah (ca. 840 BC) the coming “day of the Lord” (1.15; 2.1, 11, 31; 3.14), the Lord not only dwells in Zion, his holy mountain (3.17, 21), “the Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shake” (3.16; cf. Amos 1.2). The Lord roars like a lion from his domain because of the approaching calamity (i.e., a terrible locust plague) that will accompany the day of the Lord. So Joel exhorts the land’s inhabitants and the elders: “Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near” (2.1; cf. 2.15). But the Lord in his judgments is merciful and “jealous for his land” and will have “pity on his people” (3.18). In this, “children of Zion” can “be glad and rejoice” (3.23). Indeed, “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls” (3.23, 32).

Zephaniah. Compare Zephaniah, who spoke to Judah as well, except at a later time and in a much different circumstance (ca. 625 BC), and also foresaw the catastrophic “day of the Lord” (1.7, 8, 14, 18; 2.2, 3). The seer, whose name signifies “the Lord hides or protects,”

sternly and unequivocally rebukes the nations (2.4-15) and his own people of “the city” (i.e., Jerusalem; 3.1-13). However, Zephaniah calls on “Zion” not with reference to its destruction but, in a more positive vein, with a call to rejoice (3.14-20; see below) by those who “seek refuge in the name of the Lord—the remnant of Israel” (3.12-13).³³

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!
The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.
The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.
On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.
The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.
I will remove disaster from you
so that you will not bear reproach for it.
I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.
And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.
At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,
says the Lord.

Micah. Similarly, Micah, in his “word of the Lord” (1.1; ca. 735 BC) to both Israel and Judah (i.e., Samaria and Jerusalem), highlights the Lord’s gracious restoration of “Zion” and its remnant (4.1-13).³⁴ The prophet predicts a time when “the mountain of the Lord’s house” will be “the highest of the mountains,” and peoples of “many nations” will flow or stream to it. They will say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that

he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.”³⁵ And the reason for this confluence to the Lord’s mountain is this: “For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” The Lord himself arbitrates “between strong nations far away” and turns them from violence to nonviolence (i.e., disarmament) and will gather and assemble together the maimed and the weak (i.e., “those who have been driven away” and “those who were cast off”). He will make them “a remnant” and “a strong nation,” so that “the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion now and forevermore. And you, O tower of the flock, hill of daughter Zion, to you it shall come, the former dominion shall come, the sovereignty of daughter Jerusalem.”³⁶

But this marvelous restoration of “Zion” and its sovereignty, as stated by the Lord God through his prophet Micah, would not come easy. For “daughter Zion,” it would come with great pain—“like a woman in labor.” It would come with displacement—“you shall go forth from the city and camp in the open country.” It would come with removal to a foreign land—“you shall go to Babylon.” And it would come with the taunts and jeers of “nations . . . assembled against you, saying, ‘Let her be profaned, and let our eyes gaze upon [i.e., with malicious pleasure³⁷] Zion.’” Micah already in his message had warned of God’s displeasure with the people of Jerusalem and Judah. In his lament (1.8-16), the prophet also castigates the city of Lachish for their reliance on steeds and chariots (i.e., their own might or power).³⁸ “It was the beginning of sin to daughter Zion,” Micah chides, “for in you were found the transgressions of Israel.” And he soundly rebukes the “rulers of the house of Jacob and chiefs of the house of Israel” (3.1-12), because they “abhor justice and pervert all equity” and “build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wrong.” Because of the evils of the rulers of the Lord’s people, the devastating end result

would be that “Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height” (cf. Jeremiah 26.18).

This is the travail through which “Zion” must go to be rescued (i.e., from Babylon) and to be redeemed (i.e., “from the hands of your enemies”; 4.10). And to bring home his point about the necessary trepidation to be experienced by Israel in this cleansing or purification, Micah likens the disciplinary work of the Lord to the threshing of grain which was done in ancient times by beating the husks with a heavy wooden flail. “Arise and thresh, O daughter Zion, for I will make your horn iron and your hoofs bronze.” But in this case, it would be the Lord’s chosen ones (i.e., those who “walk in the name of the Lord our God”; 4.5) who would rise up with strength and hardness (i.e., “iron . . . bronze”) and “beat in pieces many peoples” in order to “devote” (Hebrew *cherem*) their ill-gotten gain and wealth to the Lord (4.13). Micah, like Zephaniah and Joel, sees clearly the process of destruction but the Lord’s restoration for the beloved Zion.

Jeremiah. In the writings of the two major prophets—Isaiah and Jeremiah—who call upon “Zion” in reference to Jerusalem, the prophetic themes of Zion’s glory, its destruction, and its eventual restoration remain persistent. But each major prophet gives “Zion” emotive and evocative shades of meaning that convey each seer’s particular mood or sensitivities in response to the circumstance or situation he was confronting.³⁹ In “the weeping prophet” Jeremiah, who foretold and personally experienced the doom of Judah and Jerusalem (from ca. 625 to 585 BC), we hear “a sound of wailing . . . from Zion” (9.19) and “a cry as of a woman in labor, anguish as of one bringing forth her first child, the cry of daughter Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands, ‘Woe is me! I am fainting before killers!’” (4.31). We listen to painful cries of “poor

people from far and wide in the land: ‘Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King not in her?’ (8.19).

And we cannot help but hear the people’s plea to the Lord for mercy: “Have you completely rejected Judah? Does your heart loathe Zion? Why have you struck us down so that there is no healing for us? We look for peace, but find no good; for a time of healing, but there is terror instead” (14.19).

Certainly there is a glimmer of hope, though, from the prophet who seems depressed and full of gloom. Vengeance surely will come on “Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea . . . for all the wrong that they have done in Zion” (51.24; cf. 51.35). Jeremiah predicts that “fugitives and refugees from the land of Babylon are coming to declare in Zion the vengeance of the Lord our God, vengeance for his temple” (50.28; cf. 51.10). And, through his prophet, the Lord speaks, “For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal . . . because they have called you an outcast: ‘It is Zion; no one cares for her!’” (30.17). But the Lord cares, and the Lord promises to restore his people. Once again, there will be “a day when sentinels will call in the hill country of Ephraim: ‘Come, let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God’” (31.6). Thus says the Lord, “They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord” (31.12). Thus says the Lord, “They shall ask the way to Zion, with faces turned toward it” (50.5).

Jeremiah, in all this, feels deeply and grieves deeply, and his angst reveals itself in his graphic language about “Zion.” In his book of Lamentations about the people of Judah, the prophet acknowledges, “The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to the festivals; all her gates are desolate, her priests groan; her young girls grieve, and her lot is bitter” (1.4). “Zion stretches out her hands,” he sobs, “but there is no one to comfort her” (1.17). Sadly, he relates, “He has

broken down his booth like a garden, he has destroyed his tabernacle; the Lord has abolished in Zion festival and sabbath” (2.6). Shocked, he confesses, “Women are raped in Zion, virgins in the towns of Judah” (5.11). And, sick in his heart and with eyes that have grown dim, he knows that it is “because of Mount Zion, which lies desolate; jackals prowl over it” (5.18). Jeremiah understood, like few others, that “the Lord gave full vent to his wrath; he poured out his hot anger, and kindled a fire in Zion that consumed its foundations” (4.11).

It is the passionate Jeremiah who gives voice to “daughter Zion”—the tender and endearing metaphor for the city, the land, and its people that is used by the prophet for half of the sixteen references to “Zion” in the book of Lamentations.⁴⁰ Jeremiah’s contention is with the Lord who “in his anger has humiliated daughter Zion” (2.1). The Lord “has bent his bow like an enemy . . . he has killed all in whom we took pride in the tent of daughter Zion; he has poured out his fury like fire” (2.4). He “determined to lay in ruins the wall of daughter Zion; he stretched the line; he did not withhold his hand from destroying; he caused rampart and wall to lament; they languish together” (2.8). They languish, because “the Lord has made her suffer for the multitude of her transgressions. . . . From daughter Zion has departed all her majesty. Her princes have become like stags that find no pasture; they fled without strength before the pursuer” (1.5-6).

The “elders of daughter Zion” sit in silence and sackcloth, and the “young girls of Jerusalem” lay their heads to the ground in sorrow (2.10). Even the “precious children of Zion,” a phrase used only here in the Hebrew scriptures, are “worth their weight in gold—how they are reckoned as earthen pots, the work of a potter’s hands!” (4.2).⁴¹ The prophet cannot hold up under the burden. He questions, “What can I say for you, to what compare you, O daughter

Jerusalem? To what can I liken you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter Zion? For vast as the sea is your ruin; who can heal you?” (2.13). He wails and exclaims, “Cry aloud to the Lord! O wall of daughter Zion! Let tears stream down like a torrent day and night! Give yourself no rest, your eyes no respite!” (2.18). But though the prophet is tormented and laments the devastation of his beloved Zion, he is unable completely to exclude the possibility of renewal and restoration. Even in the Lamentations, there is hope against hope, for when “the punishment of your iniquity, O daughter Zion, is accomplished, he will keep you in exile no longer” (4.22; cf. 3.23-33; but also 5.1-22).

Isaiah. If Jeremiah seems to be the most emotional of the Latter Prophets who talk about “Zion” in their writings, Isaiah perhaps is the most prolific and no less impassioned. Isaiah refers to Zion about 54 times⁴² which is more than any other writing in the Old Testament (and fairly evenly spread between the two halves commonly identified; i.e., 33 times in chapters 1-39 and 21 times [twelve times in 40-55 and nine times in 56-66] in chapters 40-66).⁴³ Isaiah also refers to “Jerusalem” 53 times, to “Israel” 95 times, and to “Judah” 31 times.⁴⁴ This prevalence of Zion and Jerusalem in the oracles of Isaiah simply could be due to the sheer abundance of material produced by Isaiah and his school, a direct result of the lengthy career of the prophet (i.e., ca. 740 to 680 BC or about sixty years). “The book,” therefore, “is a collection of oracles, prophecies, and reports; but the common theme is the message of salvation.” This is appropriate, since the namesake for these utterances means “the Lord saves” or “salvation of the Lord.”⁴⁵

The language used by Isaiah is intense and spirited, as it addresses a variety of contexts and situations to which he speaks (e.g., the destruction and fall of both Samaria and Jerusalem, their restoration, and the coming Messiah). As John Court suggests, “There is a political aspect

to the book in the consideration of oppression by a foreign power; it is to be expected that only a remnant will survive, but the hope of a return from exile enlarges and defines this concept. The kingship of David and the focus of Mount Zion are important aspects of the divine plan and purpose, but God's plan is seen to embrace all nations."⁴⁶ In this respect, the sentiments of the prophet, that reflect the glory as well as the sorrows of "royal Zion" (12.6) and "the Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (60.14), call attention to "Mount Zion" (eight times), "daughter Zion" (six times), "daughters of Zion" (three times), "mount of daughter Zion" (10.32; 16.1), "virgin daughter Zion" (37.22) and "captive daughter Zion" (52.2).

The prophet speaks of "Zion's treasure" (33.6) and "Zion's cause" (34.8), but he mourns that "daughter Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a shelter in a cucumber field, like a besieged city" (1.8) and that "Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation" (64.10). His language for Zion is colorful and picturesque. This is the case for the Lord's controversy with Zion. For example, "the Lord will afflict with scabs the heads of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will lay bare their secret parts" (3.17). This is also the case for the Lord's purification and restoration of Zion, since the Lord will wash away "the filth of the daughters of Zion" and clean "the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning" (4.4). In time, the Lord's controversy with and punishment of Zion will come to an end and will usher in "salvation in Zion" (46.13).

Concerning better days ahead, Isaiah announces, "Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness" (1.27). A time will come when "people in Zion, inhabitants of Jerusalem . . . shall weep no more" (30.19). Truly, "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain

joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (35.10; cf. 51.11). With the “return of the Lord to Zion” (52.8), who “will come to Zion as redeemer” (59.20), the city of God will once again be “Zion, herald of good tidings” (40.9; cf. 41.27). Then, “out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (2.3). And “the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders he will manifest his glory” (24.23).

To be sure, Isaiah is faithful to his calling as the one who witnessed the holy Lord in his temple and who gave testimony to his glory, his majesty, and his divine judgment (see chapter 6).⁴⁷ What is striking, though, is the emphasis in Isaiah about Zion’s “redeemer” (14 of 20 Old Testament occurrences; cf. his 29 uses of “redeem”) and Zion’s “savior” (8 of 15 Old Testament occurrences; cf. his 23 uses of “salvation” and 7 uses of “saved”).⁴⁸ It is little wonder, due to Isaiah’s stress on the Lord’s redemption and salvation of Israel, that he is the favorite Hebrew prophet of the writers of the New Testament. He is quoted more often than any other prophet, and he is mentioned in the New Testament by name twenty-two times.⁴⁹

Zechariah. Zechariah, one of The Twelve, also is a choice prophetic source for New Testament writings and referred to or quoted frequently.⁵⁰ The prophet’s name means “the one who Yahweh (the Lord) remembers,” and he speaks to the Judean exiles (ca. 520 BC) who had returned to their homeland and had great hopes for a reconstructed temple in Zion. The message about “Zion” to Zechariah (see 1.7-17) was mediated through “the angel of the Lord” who had inquired of Yahweh, “O Lord of hosts, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which you have been angry these seventy years?” The Lord’s answer, that Zechariah was to proclaim, was this:

Thus says the Lord of hosts, I am very jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. And I am extremely angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was only a little angry,

they made the disaster worse. Therefore, thus says the Lord, I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion; my house shall be built in it, says the Lord of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. Proclaim further: Thus says the Lord of hosts, My cities shall again overflow with prosperity; the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem” (verses 14-17; cf. 8.2).

Indeed, the captives had been urged, “Up, up! Flee from the land of the north, says the Lord; for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven, says the Lord. Up! Escape to Zion, you that live with daughter Babylon” (2.6). Jerusalem already had been assessed by “a man with a measuring line in his hand” (2.1-2). But there would be no limit to the restored city’s width or length, because Jerusalem would be “inhabited like villages without walls, because of the multitude of people and animals in it. For I will be a wall of fire all around it, says the Lord, and I will be the glory within it” (2.4-5). The returning exiles, therefore, were enjoined to acknowledge that “the Lord of hosts” had sent Zechariah to them (2.9, 11), and they were adjured, “Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! For lo, I will come and dwell in your midst, says the Lord” (2.10).

But Zechariah’s prophetic “word of the Lord” (1.1)⁵¹ goes beyond any rebuilding of an earthly temple or a temporal restoration of Zion (i.e., the return of the Lord to “Zion”; 8.1-17). In apocalyptic fashion, the perceptive seer predicts magnificent “joy and gladness” for Judah and Jerusalem when “many peoples and strong nations” will “seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem” and “entreat the favor of the Lord” (8.18-23).⁵² And this universal transformation will be accomplished for Zion by the Lord through his “Divine Warrior.” In anticipation, the prophet extols, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (9.9). The Divine Warrior (cf. 9.14) comes humbly to Zion, disarms the nations

and commands peace, reestablishes his covenant with his people, and restores scattered Israel (9.1–11.17). “On that day” (i.e., the day of the Lord),⁵³ after Jerusalem is purged (12.1–13.6), the shepherd and associate of the Lord will be stricken and his sheep will be scattered (13.7-9). Then, a great battle between the nations and Jerusalem, with plagues and earth-shattering catastrophic events, will be won by the Lord. And the Lord of hosts, with his heavenly hosts and his reconstituted people, will be victorious and will enjoy complete union and bliss (14.1-21).

Zion Awaits Its King. As in the Psalms, the Latter Prophets of Israel and Judah, such as Zechariah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, communicate a glorious as well as a disastrous history and tradition about Zion and its king. There is much contained in the sacred writings to draw from, but the writers of the New Testament leave most of it untouched.⁵⁴ Certainly, the city of Jerusalem itself, its people, and the nation undergo upheavals and drastic changes after the destruction and deportations by the Babylonians in the early sixth century BC. The postexilic recovery and rebuilding under Nehemiah unquestionably gives shape to Jerusalem, and to hope for Zion, during the Persian, Hellenistic, and Hasmonean periods.⁵⁵ So some sense of the devotion and attachments of the people and its religious leaders to this restored Zion is to be found in the prophecy of Zechariah, possibly in the Psalms, Ezra and Nehemiah in the Writings, and in books of the Apocrypha. But the most significant developments for the Jerusalem of Jesus and his disciples happen in the pre-Herodian and Herodian eras.

During the time of the latter Hasmonean rulers, beginning around 200 BC, William S. LaSor states, “Scholars have generally agreed that . . . Jerusalem was greatly enlarged and many buildings were constructed on the southwest hill. . . . There was much building just before the Herodian period.”⁵⁶ According to Katharina Galor and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, “A significant

change in the city's landscape occurred in the second half of the second century B.C.E., probably as a result of the limited space available on the Southeast Hill. The city expanded . . . beyond the Tyropoeon Valley to include the Southwest Hill."⁵⁷ This expansion of the city to the North (i.e., especially the Temple Mount) and to the West (i.e., across the Central or Tyropoeon Valley) continued under the rule of Herod the Great, Judea's client king under Roman occupation (37-4 BC), and thereafter.⁵⁸ In this period, though, it is difficult to know what connections existed between "Zion" and the various sectors of the growing city.

In his assessment of "Zion" and its use historically to designate both the eastern and the western spurs of the Old City of Jerusalem, Charles W. Wilson says that "Zion is identified with the temple hill" in books of the Apocrypha, Josephus does not mention Zion,⁵⁹ and "the Rabbis, without exception, place the temple on Zion," as do Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome at a later time.⁶⁰ This location of Zion (i.e., the eastern, elevated part of the city) seems to be consistent with the archaeological and historical evidence. But at some point in time, which is not clear, the location of Zion proper changed from the eastern spur to the southernmost and elevated section of the western spur (i.e., the Upper City of the Herodian era as well as the modern-day Mount Zion).⁶¹ Wilson notes, however, "The identification of Zion with the eastern spur satisfies the topographical conditions and the historical evidence until the 4th century A.D." But "from the 4th century onwards Zion is always identified with the south part of the western spur."⁶² This change in the perception and labeling of "Zion" seems to be no earlier than the Byzantine era, perhaps coming from the interpretation given to passages such as Micah 3.12 by the Bordeaux Pilgrim (ca. AD 333),⁶³ so that the earliest followers of Jesus (i.e., writers of the New Testament) would have considered Zion to be the ancient city of David and Solomon and its temple complex.⁶⁴

But because of the lack of substantial evidence, it may be impossible to know for sure whether Jews and Christians in Palestine during the first century AD think of Jerusalem, or any section thereof, as Mount Zion, apart from references in the Hebrew scriptures to the Holy City as Zion. This is not to say that these descendants of Abraham and the Israelites feel no attachment to Zion, or Jerusalem (and its people and nation), as part of their heritage. They do, and they make reference to Zion in their religious writings (if only minimally, as seems to be the case for the New Testament). But it is not the same intensity, the same “theology of place” for Zion that is in the Psalms and the Latter Prophets. A jealous zeal for Zion, a wrathful pursuit of the holy mountain as espoused by the Hebrew prophets, emanates from Old Testament texts and was true for certain Byzantine pilgrims, definitely many of the fanatic and erstwhile bizarre Crusaders, and most recently radical Jewish and Christian Zionists.⁶⁵ Among these there has been an independent attachment to Zion, perhaps an existential obligation to conquer, control, and possess, that does not rely solely on any historical foundation or precedent.

By the Byzantine and Medieval periods, however, the identification of stone-and-mortar or physical Jerusalem as Zion is assumed, since one part of the city (i.e., the Southwest Quadrant) and one of its gates is called Zion (built ca. 1540). And assuredly by the early modern era, the ancient namesake of King David’s royal domain becomes full-blown in a philosophical, theological, and political movement with a hotly disputed quest for a modern return to earthly Zion (i.e., the modern nation state of Israel with the city of Jerusalem as its capital).⁶⁶ For the earliest disciples of Jesus, though, a notable change had occurred that made a rich and vibrant “theology of place” about the Zion (i.e., Jerusalem) of the Hebrew prophets less attractive. As Sheriffs aptly notes:

The New Testament describes Zion in terms which leave behind the ethnic, territorial, and economic framework of David's kingdom. Instead of a physical Temple and acropolis to make visible the reality of God's kingdom, there is Jesus (cf. John 4.20ff.). By entering the new covenant, believers have already joined heavenly worshippers and 'have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God' (Hebrews 12.22; cf. Revelation 14.1). There is no sacred city, shrine, or site on earth which gives access to God's presence as did Old Testament Zion.

Though Paul foresees the national conversion of Jews when 'the deliverer will come from Zion' (Romans 11.26), the New Testament knows nothing of Zion as a rebuilt earthly Temple or world capital, or focus of national ideology. When dispensational theology reads Old Testament Zion eschatology in a literalist manner, it appears to misconstrue its poetic symbolism, its contextual polemic, and its re-interpretation by Jesus and the New Testament. 'The heavenly Jerusalem' and all forms of earthly Zionism are disconnected by the New Testament.⁶⁷

This "spiritualization" of Zion by the New Testament seems to explain the limited use of "Zion" in Old Testament passages that are quoted by writers of the New Testament. But it does not negate the connections, admittedly in a new and different sense, between Zion, Jerusalem as the dwelling place of the Lord, the Davidic king who comes to reign in Zion, and the faithful who come to Zion to experience, as his people, the presence of the Lord. The old Zion themes, even though they are found in just a few texts, remain consistent in the New Testament.

Zion's King Returns, Is Striken, but Overcomes. *Matthew 21.1-11.* Matthew uses Isaiah 62.11 and Zechariah 9.9 in his Zion quotation that gives prophetic legitimacy to what has been called the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.⁶⁸ This triumphal entry concludes the journey of the Messiah to Jerusalem (19.1–20.34) and highlights the Messiah's final week in the Holy City (21.1–28.20). Of the entry, Bengel states:

It is clearly intimated, that the event [in the original, "vectura (*a being carried or borne, a riding*) mysterii plena innuitur"] about to be described was full of mystery. Often had Jesus entered Jerusalem [in infancy (Luke 2.22ff.), in childhood (Luke 2.42ff.), in his Temptation (Matthew 4.5), at the Passover (John 2.23), at the Day of Pentecost (John 5.1), during the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7.10), and now to his Passion]; now, in this his last journey, and at the conclusion of it, he rides for the only time, solemnly taking possession of the Royal City (see chapter 5.35), not only for a few days, but on

account of that kingdom (see Mark 11.10) which he was just about to institute (see Luke 24.47; Matthew 1.33; and the conclusion of Zechariah 9.10).⁶⁹

Matthew tells us that “while Jesus was going up to Jerusalem” (20.17-19; cf. Mark 10.32-34; Luke 18.31-33), he instructs the disciples about what is going to happen, mediates the political aspirations of the sons of Zebedee (20.20-28), and, enroute to Jerusalem at Jericho, heals the two blind men who openly proclaim him as “Lord” and “Son of David” (20.29-33). Thus, Matthew calls our attention to the humble arrival of Jesus in Zion a bit later (21.1-11) and the marvelous acclamation by “a very large crowd”⁷⁰ who shout out:

Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!⁷¹

There is a lot of shouting about the “Son of David” in Matthew’s narrative at this point (e.g., 20.30, 31; 21.9, 15).⁷² And this exuberant approval by the common people who were in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover festival causes turmoil in “the whole city” over the issue of the identity of Jesus (i.e., “Who is this?” in verse 10).⁷³ Matthew indicates without hesitation that the commoners (i.e., “the crowds”) knew the answer, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee” (verse 11).

As suggested above, in order to emphasize the activity of the Lord and his followers at Bethphage on the Mount of Olives (verse 1), Matthew brings to the recollection of his hearers (i.e., readers) the words of the prophet Zechariah. Jesus tells “two disciples” to go into the village and fetch a donkey and its colt for him to use as his means of conveyance from Olivet into the city. And, if anyone gives resistance to their apparent pilfering of the animals, he adds, “just say this, ‘The Lord needs them’” (verse 3). To this assertion, Jesus explains, “he will send them immediately.” All this seems prearranged, as it is told by the evangelist, as if Jesus himself

intentionally directs matters “to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet” (verse 4; cf. verse 6).⁷⁴

Matthew prefaces the Zechariah prediction with a quote from Isaiah 62.11–“Tell the daughter of Zion”—in which Isaiah combines the coming of Israel’s Savior to Zion with universal recognition (i.e., “the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth”) of the Lord’s saving work (i.e., “his reward . . . and his recompense”).⁷⁵ Zechariah’s oracle (Zechariah 9.1–11.17) also connects Zion, Jerusalem, and the coming of Israel’s King or Savior:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!
Lo, your king comes to you . . .

The prophet spotlights the initial arrival of the Lord’s divine warrior, not as one who wages war and brings about destruction (although that will come later), but as a “triumphant and victorious” king who is “humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”⁷⁶ In his coming, this king will “command peace to the nations” and “his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth” (Zechariah 9.9-10).

Matthew simply echos the two prophets, and possibly Jesus himself,⁷⁷ in tying together his themes. Throughout his narrative, Matthew stresses the connections between Jesus of Nazareth (i.e., the one whom they have learned to call “Lord”), the Son of David or God’s anointed one—the Christ or Messiah, and the king who comes or returns to Israel.⁷⁸ That Jesus is this king who comes to lead God’s people (i.e., daughter of Zion) is accentuated by the fact that he comes humbly or meekly by riding a lowly beast of burden into the city.

It was common in the ancient Near East for a king to ride a mule (i.e., 1 Kings 1.33), but [in Zechariah 9.9] the reference is to a common donkey. Although Akkadian texts do evidence a king riding a donkey, it is by no means a royal mount. The word translated ‘colt’ in the New International Version refers to the same animal that is the

mount for the sons of judges in Judges 10.3. Using a donkey for a mount is more likely to be connected to humility rather than royalty.⁷⁹

And this gentle, lowly attribute of the king who comes to Zion seems to be the main emphasis of the seer and of Matthew as well. David Hill notes that Matthew's citation of Zechariah 9.9, with its omission of "just and salvific is he" (NETS), puts "the emphasis where [he] desires it to fall—on the Messiah's humility."⁸⁰ Alan Hugh McNeile concurs and remarks, "The words *dikaios kai sodzon* are omitted [by Matthew], the passage being made to refer to the single fact of the riding on the donkey. In Zechariah, it is the animal of peace, in contrast with the chariot, the horse, and the battle bow, and the 'meekness' of the king is shewn in his use of it."⁸¹ This connection, too, is no accident; it is in fulfillment of the prophetic word. Jesus the humble king comes to Zion, according to the words of the prophet, to command peace. But very soon, as Matthew will relate, he will be stricken but will overcome (see Matthew 26.31-32; cf. Zechariah 13.7).

John 12.12-19. John also reminds his hearers (i.e., readers) of the prophecy of Zechariah and the Zion legacy in his account of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The apostle places his portrayal of the festive procession, a condensed version compared to the synoptic gospels, at the transition between what has been called his "Book of Signs" (i.e., the work of Jesus in the world, 1.19–12.50) and his "Book of Glory" (i.e., the return of Jesus to the Father, 13.1–20.31).⁸² For this final visit to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration, John elucidates the Lord as the resurrection and the life (see 11.25-27) and uses the works and the words of Jesus as preparation for his Passion and his return to the Father.⁸³

Note the following sequence: Lazarus of Bethany, the friend of Jesus and brother of Mary and Martha, dies (11.1-16); Jesus goes to Bethany in Judea and raises Lazarus from the

dead (11.17-44); the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem plot to kill Jesus (11.45-57); Jesus enjoys a dinner in Bethany at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and Mary anoints Jesus for his burial (12.1-7); the chief priests in Jerusalem plot to kill Lazarus (12.8-11); Jesus enters Jerusalem, and the crowd who saw the resurrection of Lazarus go to greet Jesus and to testify about him, to the displeasure of the Pharisees (12.12-19); Greeks who were in Jerusalem to worship want to meet Jesus, and Jesus defers as he focuses on his hour of glorification (12.20-26); Jesus is troubled and expresses concern over his hour of glory, and heaven responds and affirms his glory, and the people misunderstand (12.27-36a); Jesus departs and goes into seclusion on the eve of his glorification that has become the cause of unbelief and division as foretold by the prophet Isaiah (12.36b-43); Jesus cries out and acknowledges that his works and his words are from the Father to whom he now will return (12.44-50).⁸⁴

John's section about the Lord's triumphal entrance of Zion is preceded with the work of Jesus in calling Lazarus from the dead (11.1–12.11) and is followed by the words of Jesus about his hour of glory (12.20-50).⁸⁵ The unifying thread seems to be the various reactions of the Jewish leaders (i.e., chief priests, Pharisees) in Jerusalem and the "crowd" or "great crowd" that had gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover festival.⁸⁶ The pivotal issue was the resurrection of Lazarus, and this is the immediate setting for John's narrative about the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem (12.9-11, 12-13, 17-19 below).

When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. It was also because they heard that he

had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him. The Pharisees then said to one another, “You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!”

So John clearly sets his use of Zechariah in the context of the Messiah’s return to Zion and eventually to the Father and the overall conflict between belief and unbelief (which also includes the doubts and uncertainties of the disciples). This corresponds with the apostle’s main theme (i.e., Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of the Father) and his guiding purpose for writing—“that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name” (20.31). John does not belabor the point about the entry of “the King of Israel” into Zion nor does he mention the directive of the Lord and the work of the disciples in the acquisition of the donkey. In a quick, matter-of-fact way, John describes the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem with two passages of scripture, Psalm 119.25-26 and Zechariah 9.9. He writes (12.12-16 below):

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees⁸⁷ and went out to meet him, shouting,

“Hosanna!
Blessed is the one who comes
in the name of the Lord—
the King of Israel!”

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written:

“Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion.
Look, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.⁸⁸

John, like Matthew, combines the themes of Zion, the coming king of Israel, and the Messiah with his reference to the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.⁸⁹ And he, like Matthew, explores

the issue of the identity of Jesus in the larger context (e.g., “Son of God” in 11.4, 27; cf. 10.22ff.; “I am . . .” in 11.25; “Son of Man” in 12.23, 34).⁹⁰ John uses his sources from the Old Testament selectively, and he quotes freely.⁹¹ But that is of little consequence. Even though he does not emphasize the royalty of Jesus as “Son of David” as does Matthew,⁹² John nevertheless remains faithful to the prophetic theme of the exaltation of the Lord’s chosen king who comes humbly to Zion to bring peace, to gather together the remnant from scattered Israel (cf. 11.52; 12.20, 24), and to establish his universal dominion. To do this, as John proceeds to show, the king first will be stricken, his sheep will be scattered, and he will overcome.

God’s “Stone” and “Rock” Set in Zion to Rescue the Nations and the Remnant of Israel.
Romans 9.33 and 11.26-27. In his letter to the Christians at Rome (see 1.7; 16.1ff.), the apostle Paul refers twice to “Zion” with Old Testament quotations close to the beginning and near the ending of his section about God’s treatment of Israel (chapters 9–11). These two references are Paul’s only use of “Zion” in all of his letters.⁹³ In *Romans*, Paul superbly illuminates the gospel concerning the Son of God, who was “descended from David according to the flesh,” and the righteousness of God therein (see 1.1-17). In a straightforward manner in chapters 9 through 11, Paul addresses the perceived problem of God’s righteousness in his treatment of Israel, his chosen people, who failed to receive God’s promises due to unbelief.⁹⁴ Donald Guthrie suggests that in *Romans* “Paul deals with the fundamental Christian principle of ‘righteousness’ as contrasted with the Jewish approach, and then discusses the problem of Israel’s failure and her relationship to the universal Christian Church.”⁹⁵ The crux of the matter for Paul is that Israel’s failure is due to rejection of God’s sovereign plan (9.1-29); Israel’s failure is due to rejection of God’s righteousness through faith (9.30–10.21); and Israel’s failure is not necessarily a rejection

of Israel (11.1-36).⁹⁶ In these chapters, Paul tackles this important issue candidly and with passion, but his argument is packed with difficulties of interpretation.⁹⁷

Paul had spent considerable time with much anguish and limited success in evangelistic efforts to present the good news about Jesus to fellow descendants of Israel.⁹⁸ God had called the former persecutor of the disciples of Jesus and had appointed him to be “an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel” (Acts 9.15).⁹⁹ As the apostle to the Gentiles (1.5; 11.13; cf. Galatians 2.8; 1 Timothy 2.7), Paul adopted the missionary strategy of proclaiming God’s good news about Jesus “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (1.16).¹⁰⁰ This put the Christian apostle, who was “a Hebrew born of Hebrews” (Philippians 3.5),¹⁰¹ in a predicament, since he often had to abandon efforts to convince his fellow Jews and turn to the Gentiles. At the beginning of chapter 9 about God’s election of Israel, Paul explains his distress in this way:

I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Paul cherished dearly his ethnic heritage as a descendent from Abraham and would gladly be “cut off from Christ” in order to win over his “kindred according to the flesh.”¹⁰² But from the outset in this section of his letter (9.6ff.), Paul consistently makes a distinction between Israel “according to the flesh” and the “true descendants” of Abraham. He writes, “For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel.” And he asserts, “It is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants.” He reminds his hearers (i.e., readers) that in the matter of “God’s purpose of election” of Israel, God loved Jacob but hated

Esau. The Lord spoke to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” The Lord also spoke to Pharaoh, “I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.” Throughout this delicate argument about God’s election and choosing, Paul quotes scripture after scripture to justify the sovereignty of God, especially with regard to the remnant of Israel and the Gentiles.¹⁰³

The bottom line for Paul is that Israel was unable to attain the righteousness of God through the Law, but the Gentiles were able to attain God’s righteousness through faith.¹⁰⁴ He writes in 9.30-33:¹⁰⁵

What then are we to say? Gentiles, who did not strive for righteousness, have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith; but Israel, who did strive for the righteousness that is based on the law, did not succeed in fulfilling that law. Why not? Because they did not strive for it on the basis of faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written,

“See, I am laying in Zion a stone
that will make people stumble,
a rock that will make them fall,
and whoever believes in him
will not be put to shame.”

Paul here does not identify “the stumbling stone” which elsewhere in the New Testament refers to Jesus (Matthew 21.42; Acts 4.11; 1 Peter 2.6-8).¹⁰⁶ But he does continue his argument about “the righteousness that comes from God” that is based on faith in Jesus as Lord (e.g., 10.6–13). So he affirms, “For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes” (10.4).¹⁰⁷ From this, it seems clear that Paul refers to Christ, or the Messiah, as “the stumbling stone” that was set in Zion by the Lord himself.¹⁰⁸ And this is the theme for the next section where Paul explains Israel’s rejection as “a disobedient and contrary people” (10.14-

21). The “stone” or “rock” that Israel refused to accept allowed “the word of Christ” to go out “to all the earth” and “to the ends of the world.” In this manner, the Lord provoked Israel to jealousy and revealed himself to those “who did not seek” him and to those “who did not ask” for him (i.e., the Gentiles).

Paul does not dwell on other connections between “Zion” and “Jerusalem”¹⁰⁹ or traditions about Zion, except that the Messiah (i.e., the Christ) has become “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense” (9.33; ESV). This is the cause of Israel’s failure or fall, and it is the reason for the inclusion of the Gentiles as “children of the living God” along with the remnant of Israel (9.26, 27; cf. 11.5). But while the apostle does not emphasize Jesus as “Son of David” who comes as king to Zion,¹¹⁰ surely the idea of the Lord’s righteous king is in Paul’s mind here as he identifies Jesus as “Lord” and “Christ.”¹¹¹ Furthermore, the apostle does stress to the Romans the gracious and mysterious (see 11.33-36) work of the Lord in bringing “out of Zion” (11.26) the Deliverer for both Gentiles and Israel. He continues to unfold his argument—layer by layer and scripture by scripture—in order to communicate his conclusion in chapter 11, that is, in spite of disobedience and rejection, “all Israel will be saved” (11.26).¹¹²

Paul opens the last section of his argument (i.e., chapter 11), as he did chapter 9, with deep personal feeling for Israel.¹¹³ He asks, “Has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.” He makes a comparison with Elijah the prophet who felt alone and deserted by God, because Israel had killed God’s prophets and had demolished God’s altars. Elijah had to be reminded by “the divine reply”¹¹⁴ that there was a remnant (i.e., “seven thousand”) who had not forsaken the Lord. Paul extrapolates, “So too at the

present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.”¹¹⁵ “What then?” Paul continues. “Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened.” But Paul reasons that “the stumbling” of Israel (11.9, 11, 12), rather than produce a complete and irrevocable fall, brought about a marvelous benefit for the world and the Gentiles. He writes:

So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their stumbling salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now if their stumbling means riches for the world, and if their defeat means riches for Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

Paul then proceeds to speak to the Gentiles at Rome, lest they should become arrogant and fall like Israel, and uses two analogies to illustrate this—the first fruits of the dough offering and the root of the olive tree (11.16-24).¹¹⁶ Both represent Israel and both are holy. So, Paul reasons, “The whole batch is holy, and . . . the branches are holy.” The apostle next expands on the olive tree analogy and warns the Gentiles not to boast. They were grafted into the tree, because “natural branches” (i.e., Israel) had been broken off. This happened due to “their unbelief” and also could happen to the Gentiles who “stand only through faith.” He cautions:

So do not become proud, but stand in awe. For if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps he will not spare you. Note then the kindness and severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness toward you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

But all this, in the marvelous working of God, seems to be conditional in the thinking of Paul.

The Gentiles are now part of the tree “only through faith” and only if they “continue in [God’s] kindness.” And “those of Israel, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.” But, knowing he has pressed his analogy a bit too far, Paul clarifies, “For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary

to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.”

For Paul, as he brings to completion this section of his letter about Israel’s rejection, this is all a mystery, this “hardening . . . upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.”¹¹⁷ “And so,” he acknowledges, “all Israel will be saved.”

As it is written,
“Out of Zion will come the Deliverer;
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob.”
“And this is my covenant with them,
when I take away their sins.”

On this passage, Matthew Black comments:

In his usual style Paul sums up with a concluding Scriptural quotation, or combined quotation, Isaiah 59.20-21 (Psalm 14.7), 27.9 (Jeremiah 31.33-34), which recalls the prophecy of the coming out of Zion of *the* Deliverer, to remove—turn away back—his impieties from Jacob; it recalls also the ancient covenant promise of forgiveness.

The first part of the prophecy (‘out of Zion will come the Deliverer’) seems to refer to the saving of Israel at the Parousia, Zion being understood to mean the ‘heavenly Jerusalem’ (cf. Galatians 4.26). The prophecy may be understood, however, from the point of view of the prophet, to refer to the coming ‘out of Israel’ of the Christ and to the redemptive ‘work’ of Christ on behalf of Israel—achieving her forgiveness and inclusion in the ‘New Covenant’.

The Septuagint reads ‘on account of Zion’, the Hebrew ‘and a Redeemer shall come *to* Zion’. The Pauline ‘variant’ may come from Psalm 13.7, 52.7 (Septuagint), ‘O that deliverance (salvation) for Israel would come out of Zion’. Paul may have changed the preposition in the interests of his soteriology. Isaiah had promised that the Messiah would come *out of* Zion and bring salvation to Israel. ‘Zion’ would then most probably signify the ‘City of David’.¹¹⁸

The combining of Old Testament passages is not unusual for Paul.¹¹⁹ But when the apostle quotes the scriptures and calls up the Zion tradition about the Deliverer as proof that “all Israel will be saved,” it is hard to know for sure if the apostle still is making distinction, as he did earlier, between Israel “according to the flesh” and the “true descendants” of Abraham. It may be

that Paul is speaking of fleshly Israel and spiritual Israel, since he does not qualify “Israel” in this context.¹²⁰ But then he seems to refer to fleshly Israel and argues, concerning the gospel “they are enemies of God for your sake,” but concerning election “they are beloved, for the sake of their ancestors; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”

Perhaps here, in these concluding remarks, we hear Paul’s heartfelt sorrow once again, and we get a glimpse of a bit of ambivalence concerning his own argument about Israel in the flesh to whom he belongs by birth and heritage. After all, Paul is human; he did not know fully the outcome of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus and whether or not his own people would accept Jesus as the Messiah, as he did.¹²¹ And, we might surmise, that the apostle wanted above all else for his own people to become followers of “the Way” and hold to a fervent belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus (cf. 10.7, 9; 11.15). In 11.30-31, Paul accordingly highlights what must be viewed as a paradox about the disobedience of the Gentiles, who receive mercy because of the disobedience of Israel, who because of the mercy shown to the Gentiles also receive mercy.¹²² Then he makes the most incredible summation, “For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.”¹²³ Such is too wonderful, well beyond human reason, and causes Paul to break into exclamation and praise of God (11.33-36).¹²⁴

So how does Paul make use of “Zion” in his letter to the Romans? He adheres to Old Testament traditions about Jerusalem and the people of God with quotations from the prophet Isaiah and possibly the Psalms. He identifies the Messiah as “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense” (9.33; ESV) that has been set or placed in Zion by the Lord himself. This stone or rock in Zion has been believed, confessed, and has saved Gentiles and a remnant in Israel. He also highlights the Messiah as “Deliverer . . . from Zion” who has banished “ungodliness from Jacob”

and has established a covenant with Israel to “take away their sins” (11.26-27; ESV). In this way, due to the Lord’s work of righteousness in and out of Zion, Paul affirms that “all Israel will be saved.” Paul, in principle, does not add anything new to the Zion tradition, but he no doubt gives it a Messianic interpretation to the benefit of the Gentiles and Israel. And it is of interest that Paul makes use of “Zion” only in this section of his letter where he also conveys his thoughts to the Christians at Rome with deep expressions of emotion for his heritage as an Israelite (9.1-5; 10.1; 11.1).

God’s Chosen and Precious “Stone” or “Rock” Set in Zion to Build A Spiritual House that Is A Royal Priesthood. *1 Peter 2.6.* In his first letter “to the chosen exiles of the dispersion of Pontus, of Galatia, of Cappadocia, of Asia, and of Bithynia” (1.1; NGEI),¹²⁵ the apostle Peter writes to Christians, “destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood” (1.2), whom he considers to be “aliens” or “exiles” in the world (see 2.11). The word he uses for “chosen” is the Greek *eklektos* and means one who is “favored with select status . . . with focus on [the] choice by God, without reference to quality of the entity chosen.”¹²⁶ The word he uses for “exiles” is the Greek *parepidemos* and signifies one who visits in a place “as a resident foreigner . . . [such as] a resident alien or sojourner” (cf. Hebrews 11.13).¹²⁷ And the word that Peter uses for “aliens” is the Greek *paroikos* which designates one who is “foreign [or] an alien resident” (cf. Acts 7.6, 29; Ephesians 2.19).¹²⁸ In light of the trials that Peter’s readers are going through, or will encounter (see 1.6; 3.13-17; 4.12-19; 5.9), the apostle wants to make sure that his fellow believers in Jesus understand that these persecutions are temporary and that they are not alone in their suffering. Peter, therefore, seems to use these words to underscore the truth that followers of Jesus, as the

Lord himself said, “do not belong to the world” (John 15.19; 17.14, 16) and should expect conflict and resistance to their way of life.

For this reason, Peter writes to his fellow exiles and aliens, who are dispersed in various provinces of the Roman empire, to encourage them to stand firm in their faith (see 5.12). After his initial greeting (1.1-2), Peter offers up a prayer of thanksgiving to express “the Christian’s perspective”—to praise for being born anew to a living hope and a heavenly inheritance (1.3-5), to rejoice even though persecuted (1.6-9), and to appreciate God’s preparation for and revelation of this salvation (1.10-12). Then, before his conclusion (5.1-14), as a good minister of the gospel, the apostle exhorts or encourages his hearers (i.e., readers) to be transformed, to exhibit good conduct among the Gentiles, and to endure persecution for the sake of Christ. His section of exhortations (1.13–4.19) could be called “the Christian’s imperative” and outlined as follows:

- A. Exhortations to transformation, 1.13–2.10.
 - 1. Be holy, 1.13-16.
 - 2. Fear or respect, 1.17-21.
 - 3. Love one another, 1.22–2.3.
 - 4. Come and be built, 2.4-10.

- B. Exhortations to good conduct, 2.11–3.12.
 - 1. Abstain from fleshly lusts, 2.11-12.
 - 2. Be submissive, 2.13–3.12.
 - a. Be subject to human authority, 2.13-17.
 - b. Slaves, submit to masters, 2.18-25.
 - c. Wives, submit to husbands, 3.1-7.
 - d. Everyone, submit to one another, 3.8-12.

- C. Exhortations to endure persecution, 3.13–4.19.
 - 1. Suffering for the right reason, 3.13-17.
 - 2. Suffering, a result of cessation from sin, 3.18–4.2.
 - 3. Suffering from living different than the licentious Gentiles, 4.3-11.
 - 4. Suffering as certain and necessary, 4.12-19.

For the purpose of this study, the section to “come and be built” (2.4-10) at the end of Peter’s exhortation to be transformed, which transitions to his next section about good conduct, is of

importance. This is where the apostle makes reference to the Old Testament tradition about Zion.

The apostle's words about being transformed (1.13–2.10) are filled with quotations and allusions from the Old Testament.¹²⁹ In his call for the “obedience children” to be holy, he quotes from Leviticus 11.44, 45 (cf. 19.2; 20.7). “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” In his charge to those who “invoke the Father” during “the time of [their] exile,” he alludes to passages such as Deuteronomy 10.17 and Psalm 89.26 (cf. Isaiah 59.18; 64.8; Jeremiah 3.19; 17.10; 2 Chronicles 19.7; Psalm 28.4; 62.12; Proverb 24.12). “Live in reverent fear . . . [of] the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds.” In his instruction for “those who have purified [their] souls by obedience to the truth” to “love one another deeply from the heart,” he possibly refers to Daniel 6.26 and does quote from Isaiah 40.6-8 and Psalm 34.8. They have “been born anew. . . through the living and enduring word of God.” And in his exhortation for his hearers (i.e., readers) to “come” and “let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ,” he quotes from Isaiah 28.16 and Psalm 118.22 (cf. Isaiah 8.14).¹³⁰ “See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” Peter firmly grounds in the Old Testament his thinking about the work of God the Father through Jesus the Messiah and the redemption and protection of these exiles in the dispersion to whom he writes. This includes his call to come to Zion, a prominent theme in the Old Testament tradition about Zion (e.g., Isaiah 2.3; 35.10; 51.11; 59.20; Jeremiah 31.6; Micah 4.2; cf. Hebrews 12.22).

Some scholars think that Peter here depends on an early Christian collection of Old Testament texts about the “stone” (Greek *lithos*) that the Lord himself uses to build his house in

Zion.¹³¹ If this is the case, it is fitting that Peter uses such, as he was the first proclaimer of good news about Jesus on Pentecost (i.e., Matthew 16.18-19; Acts 1.15; 2.14, 37, 38). This stone, as Peter puts it, is the “cornerstone” or “capstone” (Greek *akrogoniaios*; cf. Ephesians 2.20)¹³² and is “a living stone . . . chosen and precious in God’s sight” that is used to fashion other “living stones . . . into a spiritual house” (2.4-5).¹³³ And the purpose for this vital stonework is God’s construction of “a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (2.5). But, he asserts, the builders rejected this chief stone that was laid for the construction of a new Zion. The Greek word for “reject” is *apodokimadzo* and means to discard or to reject after examination (2.4, 7).¹³⁴ The builders (literally, “the ones building a house or a structure”; cf. Acts 4.11) simply cast God’s chief stone aside to the heap of rubble for later removal and destruction.¹³⁵ For these human builders, this stone would cause a person to stumble or fall. But they themselves tripped over the “stone of stumbling” and the “rock of offense,” since “they disobey the word, as they were destined to do” (2.8).¹³⁶

Nevertheless, God overruled the builders and by the power of his word (“for it stands in scripture” in 2.6) placed his “chosen and precious” stone in Zion. The Greek word for “chosen” is *eklektos* and means to be favored with select status. Of Jesus, who is referred to here in the imagery of a stone in a building, it indicates “God’s exceptional choice” (verses 4, 6; cf. Luke 23.35; John 1.34 in some manuscripts).¹³⁷ The Greek word for “precious” is *entimos* which means distinguished, important (“of status”) or valuable, precious (“of worth”).¹³⁸ Peter uses this expression—“chosen and precious”—twice to highlight Jesus the Messiah as the stone that the builders rejected but the one whom God and his hearers (i.e., readers) have accepted.¹³⁹ And while he does not specifically state that Jesus is the king who comes to Zion (as do Matthew and

John), he implies such in his lavish epithets for the “living stones” who “come to him, a living stone” to be built into “a spiritual house” (2.4).

They are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (2.9). Like the stone who is chosen, they are a select race (Greek *genos*). Like the one who is both king and priest, they are both royal and priestly (Greek *basileion hierateuma*).¹⁴⁰ Like he who is holy, they have been formed into a holy nation (Greek *ethnos hagion*), a people for God’s possession, in order to proclaim the virtues (Greek *aretas*)¹⁴¹ of the one who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. Keener aptly notes:

Roughly half this verse is a direct quotation of Exodus 19.6, implying that all Christians, including Gentile Christians, share in God’s covenant with Israel. Jewish people on the Passover described their deliverance from Egypt as a call “from darkness into great light” (Mishnah *Pesahim* 10.5). Old Testament prophets taught that God had redeemed his people for his praise (e.g., Isaiah 60.21; 61.3; Jeremiah 13.11). [In verse 10], Peter cites Hosea 1.10 and 2.23, which reverse God’s earlier verdict against Israel (Hosea 1.6, 8-9), promising the restoration of God’s people in the end time. Like Paul, Peter believes that Gentiles converted to Israel’s true faith, the message of Jesus, are part of this end-time people of God.¹⁴²

However, in his use of Zion and the Old Testament prophecies about God’s restoration of Israel, Peter does not refer to “Israel” directly (as does Paul). The apostle moves away from earthly or this-worldly thinking about Zion. He points out to his fellow exiles and strangers, who are scattered across the Roman Empire, the “spiritual” (Greek *pneumatikos*; 2.5) nature of their calling to a new life in Jesus the Messiah.¹⁴³ In this, we see continuity with but radical departure from the Old Testament Zion tradition. To this point, the comments by Ernest Best are appropriate. He writes:

The first Christians would have held, not only that their faith was continuous with that of the saints of the Old Testament (indeed one of the objects of [1 Peter] 2.4-10 is to remind readers that they belong to the same people of God), but also that there was a radical discontinuity in Jesus Christ; not merely is a new meaning given to the Old

Testament when viewed through Jesus Christ but in him God has created something new, the redemption of mankind. . . . As we go through verses 6-10 we see that the writer moves from a kind of confirmation by direct quotation (verse 6) to the advancing of his argument by the use of Old Testament words and phrases which take on a meaning they did not always have in the Old Testament.¹⁴⁴

Exactly how we label or categorize this “new meaning” placed on Old Testament concepts about Zion may be a matter of debate, but the shift in understanding occurred with the life and work of Jesus that compelled his followers to call him Messiah and Lord (e.g., Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Messiah; Matthew 16.13-20; Mark 8.27-30; Luke 9.18-21; John 6.67-71).

Believers in Christ, Who Is Superior as High Priest and Son of God, Called to Hold Fast to Mount Zion, the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem. *Hebrews 12.22.* In his extended homily,¹⁴⁵ the writer of the book of Hebrews, like Peter, echoes the Old Covenant theme of coming to or going up to Mount Zion.¹⁴⁶ But he gives more than an invitation and emphasizes that his hearers (i.e., readers) already have come to Mount Zion.¹⁴⁷ This pronouncement, that comes near the conclusion of the letter, provides a fitting climax to his message about the superiority of Christ. As Son of God (see 4.14; 6.6; 7.3; 10.29; cf. 1.5, 8), Jesus¹⁴⁸ is superior to the prophets (1.1-3), to the angels (1.4–2.18), to Moses (3.1–4.13), to Aaron (4.14–10.18), and as “the new and living way” (10.19–12.29). The heart of his sermon and its longest section is the reminder beginning at 4.14-16 that “we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God” who is able “to sympathize with our weaknesses.”¹⁴⁹ The focus here on the supremacy of Jesus, in his role as an eternal priest, “according to the order of Melchizedek” (5.6, 10; 6.20; 7.11, 17), over the temporary levitical priesthood, “according the order of Aaron” (7.11; cf. 5.4; 9.4), seems to support an audience for Hebrews that predominately is Jewish. But it is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to pin down

the precise destination or origin for the letter.¹⁵⁰ Craig Keener highlights this challenge and remarks:

They are apparently under pressure to give up their Christian distinctives (either from the synagogue or from Gentile persecution of Christians). Although the Hellenistic Jewish thought in the letter would fit a number of locations including Corinth and Ephesus, the actual seizure of their property in earlier days (10.34) does not fit Corinth or Ephesus. . . . But 13.23 suggests an audience in the Pauline circle. . . . The early persecution fits Thessalonica and possibly Philippi in Macedonia, although a community in Asia Minor or Syria with more ethnic Jewish representation might fit better. Some have suggested a Roman audience on the basis of 10.32-34 and 13.23-24; the quality of Greek may fit an audience more to the east, but this argument would hardly be decisive. . . . Wherever the readers are located, they resonate with the intensely Greek rhetoric and interpretation of Judaism that come naturally to this author.¹⁵¹

Regardless of this difficulty, it is hard to miss the purpose of the writing. The recipients are in danger of reverting back to their former way of life guided by the “first covenant” or Law of Moses.¹⁵² On this point, Philip Hughes states:

The whole practical thrust of the epistle is to persuade those to whom it is addressed to resist the strong temptation to seek an easing of the hardships attendant on their Christian confession by accommodating it to the regime of the former covenant, which they had professed to leave behind when they were baptized in the name of him who is the Mediator of the new covenant, and which in any case has been rendered obsolete by the advent of Christ and the inauguration of the new and eternal order of priesthood.¹⁵³

To this end, the polished orator makes abundant use of imperatives and directives that are interspersed throughout the homily. He warns: “do not drift away from what we have heard” (2.1); “do not harden your hearts” (3.8, 15; 4.7); “do not abandon your confidence” (10.35); “do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord” (12.5); “do not refuse the one who is speaking” (12.25); “do not neglect to do good” (13.16). He encourages: “take care” (3.13; 4.1), “hold fast” (4.14; 10.23), and “hold firm” (3.6, 14). He includes himself in the exhortation: “let us” (4.1, 11, 14, 16; 6.1; 10.22, 23, 24; 12.1, 28; 13.13, 15) and “we must” (2.1; 4.13). He invites his fellow

believers in Jesus to think or to “consider” (3.1; 10.24; 12.3; 13.7), to persevere or to “endure” (12.7; cf. 6.15; 10.32; 12.2, 3, 20; 13.13), and to strive for or “pursue peace . . . and holiness” (12.14). He calls on the community of believers to “exhort one another every day” (3.13), to “provoke one another to love and good deeds” (10.24), and to “encourage one another . . . as you see the Day approaching” (10.25; NIV). And he provides assurance—“we have” (see 2.1; 3.14; 4.14, 15; 5.11; 6.19; 8.1; 10.10, 19, 21; 13.10, 14, 18)—that the way of Jesus, the mediator (i.e., 8.6; 9.15; 12.24; cf. Galatians 3.19-20; 1 Timothy 2.5) of a new, better, and eternal covenant (13.20), is the proper way to follow.

It is in the last extended section about “the new and living way” (10.19–12.29),¹⁵⁴ prior to the final exhortations in chapter 13, that the preacher draws the attention of his listeners to Mount Zion. After a call to “keep on keeping on” or to persevere (10.19-39), he gives numerous Old Covenant examples of perseverance and discusses the meaning of faith (11.1-3), the examples of Abel, Enoch, and Noah (11.4-7), the faith of Abraham (11.8-22), the faith of Moses (11.23-28), and the faith of other Israelite heroes (11.29-40).¹⁵⁵ Next, he lifts up the supreme example of faith—that of “Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (12.1-13).¹⁵⁶ He builds on the example of Jesus to encourage his listeners to “endure trials for the sake of [God’s] discipline,” just as Jesus “for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross.”¹⁵⁷ After his splendid exposition on faith, he gives a stern warning about rejecting the grace of God (12.14-17). “See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God,” he cautions, “that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled.” And he punctuates this counsel with the negative example of Esau, “See to it that no one becomes like Esau, an immoral and godless person, who sold his birthright for a single meal.” Then for some reason, he takes up the matter

of Mount Zion (12.18-28). Why does he introduce the Zion tradition here? Was he moved to speak of the Holy Mountain by way of comparison because of his mention in chapter 11 of the many characters of faith both prior to and under the Old Covenant? Or was it the matter of a good homilist using an extemporaneous method to drive home his point?¹⁵⁸

Although it may be oversimplification due to the complexity of the author's argument, the connecting thread to his Zion passage from what goes before and what comes after seems to be his mention of "the city" (Greek *polis*; 11.10, 16; 12.22; 13.12, 14).¹⁵⁹ It was the patriarch Abraham who, by faith, "looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." Indeed, for those who "died in faith without having received the promises . . . strangers and foreigners on the earth . . . seeking a homeland . . . [not] thinking of the land that they had left behind . . . [but desiring] a better country, a heavenly¹⁶⁰ one" (11.13-16), of these, "God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them." Like those full of faith in times past who are "so great a cloud of witnesses" (12.1-2), those who are "looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of . . . faith" already "have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (12.22). And these are urged by the homilist to suffer with Jesus, to "bear the abuse he endured" that is "outside the camp,"¹⁶¹ because "Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood" (13.10-14). This confidence endurance is necessary (see 13.6), since believers in Jesus "here . . . have no lasting city, but . . . are looking for the city that is to come." Thus, the analogy that the author makes about Jerusalem or Zion is that the city is not earthly, as Mount Zion of old, but is heavenly and eternal, that is, built by God and inhabited by God. It is a dwelling or habitation that is anticipated (i.e., "to come" but not yet here or attained).¹⁶² Further, it has little

to do in a beneficial way with that Zion of old (i.e., “here . . . no lasting city”), as both Jesus and his followers have been removed and persecuted “outside the camp” or “outside the gate.”

In his comments on this section of the letter (12.14-29), Harold Attridge calls it “a final warning.”¹⁶³ This concluding word, like the entire epistle, oozes with allusions to the Old Testament.¹⁶⁴ This is true about the mention of Esau in a negative way, and it is true of his mention of Mount Zion in a positive way. Too, there is good reason to think that here he is summing up or closing out his argument, before his final exhortations in chapter 13, by coming back to some of his earlier themes and ideas.¹⁶⁵ But rather than emphasize the role of Jesus as king who comes humbly to Zion (as Matthew and John) or as stone and rock set by God in Zion (as Paul and Peter), Hebrews stresses the other-worldly, transcendence of Mount Zion—it is “the city of the living God”; it is “the heavenly Jerusalem.” It is here, according to the author, that Jesus as high priest “entered into heaven itself [i.e., “not into a sanctuary made with hands”; RSV] . . . to appear in the presence of God on our behalf” (9.24).¹⁶⁶ It is here that Jesus sat, or took his proper place, “at the right hand of God” or “at the right hand of the throne of God” (10.12; 12.2). It is here, in heaven, that Jesus was enthroned next to (i.e., “at the right hand of”) “the Majesty on high” or “the Majesty in the heavens” (1.3, 13; 8.1).¹⁶⁷ And it is here that “of the Son” or “to the Son” (NKJV), God says:

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions (1.8-9; cf. Psalm 45.6-7).¹⁶⁸

All this implies not only the royalty of the great high priest Jesus who enters heavenly Zion but his divinity as well.¹⁶⁹ And while this draws on the Old Testament tradition, it goes well beyond

to a mountain “in heaven” (12.23) that cannot be touched.¹⁷⁰ There is nothing quite comparable in the Old Testament tradition to a heavenly Zion which is what the writer is asserting here.¹⁷¹

Further, the preacher avers for his listeners, in verses 18-21, that they:

have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. (For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death.” Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.”)

This recalls the terrifying descent and presence of the Lord God on Mount Sinai when the ten commandments were given to Moses and the children of Israel (Deuteronomy 4.11-12; 5.22-26; 9.1ff.; Exodus 19.12-13, 16).¹⁷² The contrast to be made with the situation of believers in Jesus who is “the mediator of a new covenant” is plain (12.22-24).¹⁷³ In Jesus, they “have come” to the heavenly dwelling of God—his city, his Zion, his Jerusalem—where there are “innumerable angels in festal gathering” and “the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven” and “the spirits of the righteous made perfect.”¹⁷⁴ They have come to “God the judge of all” and “to Jesus” who by “the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel” has intervened with “a new covenant” between God and sinful humans.¹⁷⁵ As Donald A. Hagner suggests:

In one of the most remarkable passages in the whole book, the author presents a vivid contrast between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, between the essential character of the old and new covenants. In so doing he provides a startling portrait of the readers’ possession in and through Christ. It would be difficult to find a more impressive and moving expression of realized eschatology in the entire New Testament. The author’s purpose is to enlarge the horizons of the readers to enable them to comprehend the true glory of what they participate in as Christian believers. What they are presently tempted to return to, their former Judaism, pales significantly in the comparison (cf. 2 Corinthians 3.4-18). Those who have been to Mount Zion can never contemplate a return to Mount Sinai.¹⁷⁶

Thus, the imperative that Hebrews enjoins upon its hearers (i.e., readers), in verses 25-29, is clear, “Do not refuse the one who is speaking” (i.e., God; cf. 1.1).¹⁷⁷ If they (i.e., the Israelites at Mount Sinai) “did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape [i.e., who have come to the heavenly Mount Zion] if we reject the one who warns from heaven!” And it is all the more vitally important to hear and to heed, since the one whose voice previously “shook the earth . . . now . . . has promised, ‘Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven’” (Haggai 2.6; cf. 1.10-12; Psalm 102.25-27). The writer goes on to explain that “created things” or “what is shaken” will be removed “so that what cannot be shaken” will remain (verse 27).¹⁷⁸ Attridge comments, “*What cannot be shaken* includes the various heavenly realities made accessible by Christ. These include “rest” (4.1-11), the better possession (10.34), and the heavenly city (12.22; 13.14).”¹⁷⁹ These eternal, unshakeable promises of God are, in the concluding words of the author in this section, “a kingdom that cannot be shaken” which followers of Jesus “are receiving” and therefore should “give thanks [and] . . . offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed . . . God is a consuming fire” (verse 28). For Hebrews, Mount Zion is heavenly; Mount Zion is the abode (i.e., city) of “the living God”; Mount Zion is the kingdom that “cannot be shaken.” None of this contravenes the Old Testament tradition about Zion, but it does take the Zion tradition to a new and glorious level.

The Lion of Judah, Who Is the Lamb that Was Slain, Has Conquered and Stands on Mount Zion with His and His Father’s 144,000 Ready for the Hour of His Judgment. *Revelation 14.1.* In his prophetic book of apocalyptic visions,¹⁸⁰ John writes seven short letters “to the seven churches that are in Asia” (1.4; 2.1–3.22) about his “revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave

him to show his servants what must soon take place” (1.1).¹⁸¹ This revelation was mediated through God’s angel for John to write down “all that he saw” (1.2).¹⁸² The words of John’s prophecy also were meant to be read aloud in the churches, so that both “the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy” and “those who hear and who keep what is written in it” would be blessed (1.3).¹⁸³ John here punctuates his beatitude with “for the time is near,”¹⁸⁴ presumably an indication that the time for judgment and the righting of wrongs would come very soon. From the outset, John is very clear concerning the source of his “revelation of Jesus Christ” which is “the word of God” (1.2, 9; 6.9; 19.13; 20.4) which is “the testimony of Jesus Christ” (1.2, 9; 12.17; 19.10; 20.4; 22.16).¹⁸⁵ He writes (1.4-8):

John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Look! He is coming with the clouds;
every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.

So it is to be. Amen.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.¹⁸⁶

John’s message to the churches is from the highest authority. It is from “him who is and who was and who is to come” (1.4, 8; 4.8; cf. Exodus 3.14), “the Almighty” (1.8; 4.8; 15.3; 16.7, 14; 19.6, 15; 21.22), “the Alpha and the Omega” (1.8; 21.6; 22.13),¹⁸⁷ who is “God and Father”

(1.6) of Jesus the Messiah. It is from “Jesus Christ,”¹⁸⁸ “the faithful witness” (1.5; cf. 3.14), “the firstborn of the dead” (1.5; cf. Colossians 1.18), “ruler of the kings of the earth” (1.5; cf. 17.14; 19.16), who “loves us . . . freed us . . . and made us to be a kingdom [and] priests.”¹⁸⁹ And it is from “the seven spirits . . . before his throne” (1.4; cf. 3.1; 4.5; 5.6).¹⁹⁰ The language here makes it difficult to miss John’s point about the sovereign rule over all things of God, Jesus, and the Spirit.¹⁹¹ This would be important for his recipients who were, or soon would be, facing the most difficult circumstances imposed upon them by the political religion of Imperial Rome.¹⁹²

John himself is suffering persecution “on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (1.9). He was “in the spirit on the Lord’s day” (1.10) and writes in response to the heavenly command.¹⁹³ Jesus Christ, through his servant John, wants to exhort and encourage his persecuted people to faithfulness. The book possibly was written during the Neronian persecution of Christians (ca. AD 65) or, more likely, during the persecution of Christians under Domitian (ca. AD 95).¹⁹⁴ Apart from the relatively comprehensible first three chapters (i.e., “what you have seen” in 1.9-20 and “what is” in 2.1–3.22), where in the letters to the churches the beleaguered saints are urged to “conquer” or “overcome,”¹⁹⁵ the remainder of the book (i.e., “what is to take place after this” in chapters 4 through 22) is full of highly figurative and symbolic language and has been interpreted variously by different schools of thought.¹⁹⁶ Unmistakably, though, the book is a revelation of the coming of the “Son of Man”¹⁹⁷ and of judgment on earth that emanates from the heavenly throne (chapters 4 and 5).¹⁹⁸

The judgments, as John describes them, occur with the opening of the seven seals (chapters 6 and 7), the blowing of the seven trumpets (chapters 8–11), and the outpouring of the seven bowls of wrath (chapters 15 and 16). These precede the seer’s narration of concluding

judgment on wicked Babylon (chapters 17–20) and his vision of “a new heaven and a new earth” (chapters 21 and 22). In between the seven trumpets and the seven bowls of wrath is an interlude of visions about the enemies of God and his people and his judgment upon them (chapters 12–14).¹⁹⁹ In this interlude, there is the struggle between the woman, her child, and the dragon that is followed by “war . . . in heaven” that results in the dragon being “thrown down to the earth” where he continues to pursue the woman, her child, and “the rest of her children” (12.1-18). There is the “beast rising out of the sea” whom “the whole earth followed,” and the beast spoke “haughty and blasphemous words” against God in heaven and waged “war on the saints” on earth in order “to conquer them” (13.1-10). There is the “beast that rose out of the earth” that “exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf,” and “performs great signs” and “deceives the inhabitants of the earth” and causes “those who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed” (13.11-18). Then there is the image of “the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion” with his and his Father’s “one hundred forty-four thousand” who are “blameless” and “have been redeemed from the earth” and “sing a new song before the throne” of God (14.1-5). Finally, the interlude concludes with John’s vision of messages of judgment from three angels that are followed by his vision of “one like the Son of Man” who has “a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand” in order to harvest the earth (14.6-20). All in all, it is difficult to know whether John in his grand epic drama intends these portrayals in the interlude (chapters 12–14) as something past, something present, something future, or some combination of chronological arrangement. Time seems to be suspended in these visions.²⁰⁰ But maybe a precise chronological understanding is not necessary, since the main thrust seems to be the

judgment of God's enemies and the victory of the Lamb, who is standing on Mount Zion, and of his people (i.e., the 144,000) who are with him.

This striking vision of victory and judgment, a fitting last use of "Zion" in the canonical New Testament,²⁰¹ echoes the vision of chapters 4 and 5 where John sees the "one seated on the throne" (see 4.2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10)²⁰² in great splendor who is surrounded by four living creatures and by twenty-four elders that sing (4.8, 11):

"Holy, holy, holy,
the Lord God the Almighty,
who was and is and is to come."

"You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created."

Here, John saw "in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals" (5.1ff.). No one was "worthy to open the scroll and break its seals." This caused John to "weep bitterly," but he was encouraged by "one of the elders" who reassured him and told him, "Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."²⁰³ When John wiped away his tears, he looked and saw "between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth." The Lamb "took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne." Then "the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders," who each held "a harp and golden bowls full of incense" [i.e., the prayers of the saints], "fell before the Lamb" and sang "a new song."²⁰⁴

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals,
for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God
saints from every tribe and language and people and nation;
you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God,
and they will reign on earth.”

Then the whole host of heaven—“the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living
creatures and the elders . . . [who] numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands”
along with “every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that
is in them”—respond in full chorus and sing:

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing!”

“To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”²⁰⁵

“Amen!”

This opening vision of glory, honor, and worship of the Lamb in chapters 4 and 5 provides the
setting for the remainder of John’s revelation and especially for his vision of the Lamb and the
144,000 standing on Mount Zion in chapter 14.²⁰⁶

John’s theme of “the Lamb” runs throughout the book from 5.1 onward.²⁰⁷ The Lamb is
“worthy . . . to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and
blessing” (5.12; cf. 5.8, 13; 7.10). The Lamb is the one who is worthy to open the seven seals
(5.5, 7; cf. 6.1; 8.1). This is because “the Lamb that was slaughtered” (5.12; cf. 5.6, 9; 13.8)²⁰⁸
has overcome or conquered and will overcome his enemies (17.14). This Lamb stands among
“the elders” (5.6) and “at the center of the throne” (7.17)²⁰⁹ and “on Mount Zion” (14.1) ready to
execute judgment on “those who worship the beast and its image” (14.9, 11).²¹⁰ They will
receive “the wrath of the Lamb” (6.16) and “the wine of God’s wrath, poured unmixed into the

cup of his anger . . . in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb”

(14.10).²¹¹ But for those who have overcome or conquered and “have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (7.14; cf. 12.11),²¹² the Lamb “will be their

shepherd” (7.17; cf. 14.4),²¹³ and they will be “invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb”

(19.9).²¹⁴ They will come “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” to stand “before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands”²¹⁵

and will cry out “in a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and

to the Lamb!’” (7.9-10; cf. 12.10; 19.1). They “sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and

the song of the Lamb, ‘Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty! Just and true

are your ways, King of the nations!’” (15.3; cf. Jeremiah 10.7). They come to “the marriage of

the Lamb” and become “the bride, the wife of the Lamb” (19.7; 21.9). And the Lord God will

take his people to live where “the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the

twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (21.14). And there is “no temple in the city,

for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” (21.22).²¹⁶ This is “the Lamb” that

John illuminates in his revelation, whom he identifies as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” (5.5) and who stands with his 144,000 on Mount Zion (chapter 14).

This Mount Zion, from where John heard “a voice from heaven” like “many waters” and

“loud thunder,” is depicted as the very throneroom of God (i.e., where he lives, where he rules,

and from whence he executes judgment). The kingly Lion/Lamb from Judah and David is

“standing on Mount Zion”²¹⁷ with the 144,000 (i.e., either the full compliment of God’s people or

perhaps those martyred for their devotion to the Lamb).²¹⁸ They are sealed with the name of the

Lamb and his Father “written on their foreheads,”²¹⁹ and they are ready to do battle against the

enemies of God and his people.²²⁰ With the accompaniment of “harpists playing on their harps” (cf. 5.8; 15.2), they “sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders” (cf. chapters 4 and 5). Only they (i.e., the 144,000) “could learn that song.” They “have been redeemed from the earth”;²²¹ they “have not defiled themselves with women . . . they are virgins”;²²² they have “in their mouth no lie . . . they are blameless”;²²³ they “follow the Lamb wherever he goes.” And those who stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, John says, have been “purchased from men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb” (14.4; NGEI).²²⁴ They sing, and they wait and watch as judgment is meted out “on the earth.”²²⁵

First, John sees an angel “flying in midheaven”²²⁶ with “an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation and tribe and language and people.”²²⁷ This angel, “in a loud voice,” cries out, “Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”²²⁸ Then, John sees a second angel who followed the first and proclaims, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”²²⁹ Next, John sees a third angel who followed the first and the second and “with a loud voice” cries out:

“Those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands, they will also drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image and for anyone who receives the mark of its name.”

This ominous angelic message about God’s wrath and judgment gives John pause, and he writes, “Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus.” And then a “voice from heaven”²³⁰ confirms the interpretation of

the seer and commands, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord.”

And the Spirit adds, “Yes . . . they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them.”²³¹

Finally, John looked and saw “a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like the Son of Man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand!”²³² Then he saw “another angel” with “a sharp sickle” come “out of the temple.” This angel calls out “with a loud voice to the one who sat on the cloud.” The message is clear—it is time to reap the earth. “The hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.” So “the one who sat on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.”²³³ Just like that, with a single swipe of the sickle, the one like the Son of Man gathers the harvest. Then, as if to punctuate the finality of this harvest (i.e., judgment), yet another angel comes “out of the temple in heaven” with “a sharp sickle.” This angel is directed by even another angel—the one “who has authority over fire”—who comes “out from the altar”²³⁴ and “in a loud voice” calls out, “Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.” When this is done, the angel “gathered the vintage of the earth” and “threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God” where the blood was pressed “outside the city” and came out “up to the bridles of the horses, for one thousand six hundred stadia” (14.20; NGEI).²³⁵ With this gruesome sight that portrays the total and irrevocable defeat of God’s enemies, the image of the Lamb with the 144,000 on Mount Zion is complete. The stage is now set for the conclusion of God’s judgment with the seven plagues from “the seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God” (15.1ff.). But there can be no doubt, from the language employed by the seer and by the origin of the activity of the heavenly messengers, that Mount Zion is the otherworldly locale (i.e., the heavenly dwelling place or temple of God and the Lamb) from whence judgment is hurled upon the earth.

So how does John “the Revelator” discern the Zion tradition? To encourage “the endurance of the saints” (14.12; cf. 13.10),²³⁶ he sees the Lamb, who is the Davidic King, who was slaughtered but conquered Death and Hades, standing victoriously with his people on Mount Zion. He depicts the harvesting or reaping of the earth and judgment on the enemies of God and his people (e.g., Babylon, those who worship the beast) from Mount Zion. He indicates that this judgment on the earth is executed by “one like the Son of Man” and is announced and mediated by angelic messengers that come from where God and the Lamb dwell, that is, from Mount Zion (e.g., from heaven, the throne, the temple, the altar). Further, John notes that these antagonists would be destroyed in “the great wine press of the wrath of God” that is “outside the city” (14.20; cf. 3.12; 11.2; 22.15)²³⁷ or outside Mount Zion. As in Hebrews, “the city” is important to John’s reference to Mount Zion. Previously, to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, the one “who has the key of David” (3.7; cf. Isaiah 22.22) spoke through the seer and said:

“I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name” (3.11-12).

Later, in his conclusion, the seer illuminates “the beloved city”²³⁸ that had been attacked by the minions of Satan, Gog and Magog, whom God destroyed (20.7-10; cf. 11.2). The challenge to God and his people by “the great city that is prophetically called Sodom and Egypt” (11.8)²³⁹ had been thwarted. God would now incorporate his people in his own city, that is, on Mount Zion. All along, God had been preparing his people for a city or, more precisely, to be a city which John calls “the holy city, the new Jerusalem.”²⁴⁰ There, in this city (i.e., Mount Zion), God and the Lamb would live with his people forever. John observes:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (21.1-2).²⁴¹

In all this, the seer's vision of Mount Zion is remarkably consistent with the Old Testament tradition and with other writers of the New Testament who refer to Zion. But with the final word in the canonical book of books (see 22.16-21), he takes it to a glorious and heightened climax.

Conclusion. Quoting from Zechariah, Matthew and John tell us about the King who comes in a humble manner (i.e., riding on a donkey) to "daughter of Zion" (i.e., Jerusalem). Matthew explicitly and emphatically states that Jesus is the Messianic King (i.e., "Son of David"). John portrays Jesus as "King of Israel" and emphasizes his identity as "Son of God" and "the resurrection and the life" (but notice his mention of "palm branches" in John 12.13). Both Matthew and John begin "the passion" of Jesus with this triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Here, in Zion, the shepherd will be stricken but will overcome and will gather his people (so Zechariah).

Paul and Peter, who quote from Isaiah and the Psalms, tell us about the work of the Lord who lays a stone or rock of distinction in Zion. It causes some to stumble or fall, if they reject the stone. But it causes others who believe to "be built into a spiritual house" upon the cornerstone and become "God's people" (Peter) and "to not be put to shame" (Paul). Both Paul and Peter identify this stone or rock as Jesus the Messiah. Neither explicitly says that Jesus is the Davidic King, but such is implied. Paul goes on to state that "the Deliverer" who "will banish ungodliness from Jacob" will come "out of Zion." Peter lays stress on the kingly nature of God's work in Zion (i.e., to build "a royal priesthood"). Neither identify Zion as Jerusalem, but such seems to be implied in the notion of a foundation for God's new building. However, for Peter

and Paul, there may be more than the idea of Jerusalem to their concept of Zion (e.g., the inclusion of the Gentiles as well as believing Jews). This broadening of “Zion” in meaning certainly corresponds with the Old Testament themes of Zion concerning God’s work to gather together a remnant, something definitely elaborated by Paul and implied by Peter.

Finally, Hebrews and Revelation take Zion to the heavenly level (i.e., the “city” where God and his Lamb dwell). Through their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, Christians already “have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God.” This is “the heavenly Jerusalem” according to Hebrews. It is where there are “innumerable angels in festal gathering.” It is the place of “the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven.” It is the locale of “the spirits of the righteous made perfect” and of “Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.” This, no doubt, is an eschatological understanding of Zion by the writer of Hebrews. John in Revelation shows us Jesus (i.e., the Lamb) with his 144,000 standing on Mount Zion. John’s understanding of Zion is apocalyptic. But this Lamb is a Lion ready to do battle against the enemies of God and his people and to execute judgment. This judgment, with all its cinematic splendor, comes from heaven and is carried out upon the earth. It would be hard to misconstrue John’s portrayal of Zion as anything but heavenly. Hebrews and Revelation do not state explicitly in their Zion passages that Jesus (the Lamb for John) is the Messianic King (although notice the mention of “palm branches” in Revelation 7.9). But the context of each book overall makes that connection firmly and unmistakably.

As to why the New Testament writers do not make more use of “Zion” in their writings, a few suggestions are in order. First, Jesus does not refer to Zion in the Gospels, but he often mentions Jerusalem.²⁴² Jesus also uses “temple” (Greek *hieros* or *naos*) to refer to his own body,

his own person.²⁴³ Such a reference to the temple in his day (i.e., the Second Temple Period, ca. 516 BC to AD 70) typically was to Herod's temple in Jerusalem, but Jesus changes or advances the meaning of "temple" in relation to himself. This is in perfect accord with the Old Testament connection between Zion and the dwelling place of God (i.e., in his temple), if we accept the assertion of the Gospels that Jesus is "Son of God" or God Incarnate. Concerning Herod's temple, Jesus predicts or prophesies the catastrophic destruction of both the temple and the city of Jerusalem (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). Like Jesus, the earliest followers of Jesus and the people, in the Gospels and Acts, do not refer to Zion. Also, the Jewish religious leaders (e.g., scribes, priests, Pharisees, Sadducees), in the Gospels and Acts, do not refer to Zion. While this is an argument from silence as well as in retrospect (i.e., the narratives were written down after the events), it does seem to indicate a shift in meaning for both "temple" and "Jerusalem" that trends away from material or physical (e.g., this-worldly) understandings of Zion that are basic to the Old Testament tradition.

Second, Jesus himself and his earliest disciples were from Galilee not Judea (John 1.35-51; Matthew 4.18-22; Mark 1.16-20; Luke 5.1-11), and the works and words of Jesus are presented in the Gospels as having occurred first in Galilee (John 2.1-12; cf. Matthew 4.12ff.; Mark 1.14ff.; Luke 4.14ff.). This priority, however, does not negate the important work of John in the wilderness of Judea in preparing the way for Jesus and his ministry (the baptism of Jesus, his temptation, and his early appearances in Judea and Samaria; see Matthew 3.1-4.11; Mark 1.1-13; Luke 3.1-4.13; John 2.13-4.42). But the order of the ministry of Jesus does seem to be first to Galileans, to Judeans, and then to those "outside" (the Gentiles). This may have contributed to the reluctance of the disciples (his eyewitnesses) to put any emphasis on the

emotive and potentially volatile Zion tradition (again, after the fact in their writings) that could be misconstrued as connecting the ministry of Jesus with the establishment of a kingdom in Judea (i.e., the city of Jerusalem or Zion; cf. John 18.36 to the contrary).

Third, the Holy Spirit led the way in guiding the apostles and the early Christians, who were Jewish, to welcome the Gentiles into the family of God. This gathering in of the Gentiles clearly is a chief concern of the author of Acts of Apostles as he develops the mission of Peter, John, Paul, and many others to those “outside” the traditional boundaries—physical and spiritual—of the Zion tradition. It is also relevant to this observation that the author of both the Gospel of Luke and Acts of Apostles abundantly, more than any other New Testament writer, refers to “Jerusalem” but never once mentions “Zion.” There is ample opportunity for the author of Luke–Acts to make the connection between what is happening “on the ground” with believers in Jesus in the years of the Lord’s ministry and after his ascension and what is said about Zion in the Old Testament. But he fails to do so. Perhaps he feels that to do so would contravene the important work of God and his Holy Spirit in the mission to the Gentiles.

Finally, the eschatological interpretation of the Zion tradition by the writer of Hebrews and the apocalyptic vision of Mount Zion by John in the book of Revelation direct those who seek the dwelling place of God and his Christ to look well beyond the old Zion. The true Zion now is a heavenly or other-worldly locale. No doubt, other-worldly spatial concepts, such as “heaven,” may fail fully to satisfy those whose hearts (both body and mind) are geared toward what is discernable by empirical senses. But what is real according to Hebrews is what can be seen by “the eye of faith,” since the present world is but a shadow or a copy of that reality to come (see Hebrews 9.24; 11.1, 3; 12. 18, 27; cf. 2 Corinthians 4.18; 5.7; Romans 8.24).

ENDNOTES

1. Data is compiled by “Bible Gateway” (Peabody, MA: Christianbook, 2019), online at: www.biblegateway.com (accessed Fall/Winter 2019/2020). The numbers include the use of “Zion” in titles of headings in the English translation, mainly from Psalms and Isaiah, that were not in the original compositions. On Psalm titles, see C. Hassell Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2001), 24-30. Scriptures unless indicated otherwise are quoted from *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, General Editor, Wayne A. Meeks (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1989).
2. See Baruch Clinton, “The 24 Books of the Hebrew Bible,” Series: The Basics of Torah, torah.org (Baltimore, MD: Project Genesis, n.d.), online at: <https://torah.org/learnng/basics-primer-torah-bible/> (accessed 15 October 2019).
3. In the Deuterocanonicals or the Apocrypha, the total of 36 uses of “Zion” break down as nineteen by Esdras, eight by Maccabees, five by Sirach, three by Baruch, and one by Judith. NRSV; “Bible Gateway” Online.
4. Authors such as Paul refer to Jerusalem infrequently in light of their abundant use of Old Testament scriptures. Luke, however, mentions Jerusalem the most (62 times in Acts and 32 times in his gospel, almost two-thirds of all uses in the New Testament). Next is John who uses Jerusalem 13 times in his gospel and only four times in Revelation. About equal in their use of Jerusalem are Matthew (12 times), Mark (11 times), and Paul (11 times; 5 in Galatians, 4 in Romans, and 2 in the Corinthian letters). The writer of Hebrews uses Jerusalem once. And there is no mention of Jerusalem by James, Peter, or Jude. Compare New Testament use of other place names from the Old Testament such as “Babylon” (12 times), “Tyre” (12 times), “Sidon” (11 times), and “Samaria” (12 times). Data from NRSV; “Bible Gateway” Online.
Even Old Testament books that frequently refer to Jerusalem rarely mention Zion. The books of the Chronicles name Jerusalem 151 times (i.e., about twenty percent of the 669 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible) but mention Zion only two times (1 Chronicles 11.5; 2 Chronicles 5.2). See John Mark Hicks, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, The College Press NIV Commentary, edited by Terry Briley and Paul Kissling (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2001), 129. But much more is going on thematically than mere citation of a place name. See G. K. Beale, “The Church as the Transformed and Restored Eschatological Israel,” *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2011), 651-749.
5. See “Index of Quotations” in Kurt Aland, et al., editors, *The Greek New Testament*, Second Edition (Stuttgart, West Germany: Wuertemberg Bible Society, 1968), 897-920; “Loci Citati Vel Allegati” in *The Greek-English New Testament: Novum Testamentum Graece, English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway; 2012), 1626-1668; “Appendix Two: Quotations, Allusions, and Parallels to the New Testament,” in Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2005), 342-409.

6. The word *tsiyon* is of uncertain origin, from Arabic or Syriac, perhaps from the root *tsana* that means to protect or to defend (i.e., place of defense, citadel, fortress, stronghold) or from the root *tsaha* that means to be bald (i.e., a sunny place, a sunny mountain). Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, editors, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1951), 851; R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, editors, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Volume 2 (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1980), 764; Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, translator, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (reprint; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 708.

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, translated by James Martin (reprint; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 315, take Zion to be from the Hebrew *tsaya* (i.e., to be dry, so the dry or arid mountain or hill) and remark, “This was the name of the southern and loftiest mountain of Jerusalem. Upon this stood the fortress or citadel of the town, which had hitherto remained in the possession of the Jebusites; whereas the northern portion of the city of Jerusalem, which was upon lower ground, had been conquered by the Judeans and Benjaminites very shortly after the death of Joshua (see at Judges 1.8).”

In the New Testament, the corresponding *Sion*, an indeclinable proper noun, is anarthrous, but it appears in the Septuagint as *he Sion* (i.e., the Zion). So G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Lexicon of the New Testament*, Third Edition (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1937), 407.

7. See Genesis 10.16; Joshua 15.8, 63; 2 Samuel 5.6-16. See too the comments in John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000), 327-329. For a nice retelling of David's capture of the Jebusite citadel, see Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Jerusalem: The Biography* (New York, NY: Vintage, 2011), 26-29.

The phrase “city of David” occurs 46 times in the Bible (40 in the Old Testament, two in the New Testament, and four in 1 Maccabees). NRSV; “Bible Gateway” Online. It refers always to Jerusalem except for Luke's use of the phrase to highlight Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus the Messiah (Luke 2.4, 11).

8. John Bright, *A History of Israel*, Third Edition (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1981), 200.

9. “Ark of God” is a phrase used 24 times in Samuel and 11 times in Chronicles. NRSV; “Bible Gateway” Online.

10. See Bright, *History of Israel*, 200-201.

11. Bright, *History of Israel*, 201. For Nathan's prophetic oracle about the building of a house or temple for the Lord by David's son (i.e., his seed or offspring), see 2 Samuel, chapter 7.

12. See Katharina Galor and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *The Archaeology of Jerusalem: From the Origins to the Ottomans* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2013), 10ff.

13. On Ophel, see 2 Chronicles 27.3; 33.14; Nehemiah 3.26, 27; 11.21; also “Ophel” by E. W. G. Masterman and D. F. Payne in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Volume Three (K-P), General Editor, Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 607.

14. Harris, Archer, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Volume 2, 764. On Jerusalem in the time of David and Solomon, see Thomas Brisco, *Holman Bible Atlas: A Complete Guide to the Expansive Geography of Biblical History* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 110-114; Roberta L. Harris, *The World of the Bible* (New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 72-81. Also W. S. Lasor, "Jerusalem," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Volume Two (E-J), 998-1032.

15. See the introduction to the Psalms by John H. Stek in *The NIV Study Bible*, General Editor, Kenneth L. Barker (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 841ff. Stek notes, "The Psalter is a collection of collections and represents the final stage in a process that spanned centuries." Also, Gordon Wenham, "Reading the Psalms Canonically," *The Psalter Reclaimed: Praying and Praising with the Psalms* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 57-79, gives an overview of modern scholarship on the canonical compilation.

16. "Zion" alone occurs most frequently in the Psalms (35 times), with "Mount Zion" used five times (48.2, 11; 74.2; 78.68; 125.1; cf. Isaiah 4.5; 8.18; 10.12; 18.7; 24.23; 29.8; 31.4; 37.32; Lamentations 5.18; Joel 2.32; Obadiah 17, 21; Micah 4.7; and 2 Kings 19.31). "Daughter Zion" is used once in Psalms (cf. 25 other Old Testament occurrences—six in Isaiah, three in Jeremiah, eight in Lamentations, four in Micah, one in Zephaniah, two in Zechariah, and 2 Kings 19.21; cf. also "daughter of my people" in Isaiah 22.4; "daughter Babylon" in Psalm 137.8; Isaiah 47.1; Jeremiah 50.42; 51.33; Zechariah 2.7; "daughter Tyre" in Psalm 45.12). The phrase "Zion, my holy hill" occurs only in Psalm 2.6 in the Old Testament. NRSV; "Bible Gateway" Online.

17. See the comments in A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms, Volume I, Psalms 1-72*, New Century Bible Commentary, General Editor, Ronald E. Clements (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 67, 367, 465.

18. "Zion," *New Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 733-734. Compare comments by Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., on God's presence with his covenant people in the songs (i.e., Psalms) of Zion, *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, edited by Roy B. Zuck (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1991), 264-265.

19. But on Hermann Gunkel's so-called "Zion hymns" and the "Song of Zion," see Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1962), Volume I, 90-91, Volume II, 106-107.

Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 219-225, define the three major genres in the Psalms as hymns of joy, laments, and thanksgivings. On Gunkel's psalm types, see Anderson, *Book of Psalms, Volume I*, 29-43; R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 990-997; Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London, England: Adam and Charles Black, 1966), 635ff.

20. There are five occurrences of "Zion" in Book I (Psalms 1-41), nine in Book II (Psalms 42-72), eight in Book III (Psalms 73-89), five in Book IV (Psalms 90-106), and fifteen in Book V (Psalms 107-150).

21. Dillard and Longman, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 227, suggest the difficulty of any “discussion of the theological message of the Psalter” and perhaps any thematic treatment as well. They write, “First, the book is composed of 150 individual compositions and, accordingly, does not present a systematically developed argument. Second, . . . the psalms are prayers sung to God; thus they present us with the words of the congregation addressed to God, rather than the Word of God addressed to the people of Israel. How, then, is it possible to speak of the theological concerns of the Psalter?”

22. Psalm classifications are from Anderson, *Book of Psalms, Volume I, Psalms 1-72* and *Book of Psalms, Volume II, Psalms 73-150*, who gives a helpful introduction to each of the psalms.

23. “That this is God, and God forever and ever” is an incredible assertion about Mount Zion, almost as if the psalmist is saying, “Zion is God.” Most commentaries tone down or explain away this direct association of Zion with God. But see the interesting discussion on Zion by Werner H. Schmidt, *The Faith of the Old Testament: A History*, translated by John Sturdy (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1983), 207-220. On the point above, Schmidt says, “Both the psalms of Zion and also some prophetic passages attest the close, almost too close, connection between Yahweh and Jerusalem” (211-212).

Sheriffs, “Zion,” *New Dictionary of Theology*, 734, remarks, “Baal texts locate his mythical palace on top of Mount Zaphon, his ‘chosen site’ and ‘mountain of victory’ from which his voice thunders forth, putting his enemies to flight. Psalm 48 clearly asserts the supremacy of Mount Zion, championing Yahweh’s true kingship against Canaanite beliefs about Baal. . . . To ‘walk about Zion’ inspecting its fortifications [verses 12ff.] meant the strengthening of faith, a deep sense of security, national identity, and enjoyment of God’s presence.”

24. It seemed appropriate to structure these references to the praise of the Lord and of Zion in a liturgical format.

25. Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 46, observes, “The Book of Psalms is quoted more often in the New Testament than any other Old Testament book. That is not a coincidence, for the Psalter is filled with imagery and ideas that point directly to Jesus. Its importance for framing our understanding of the Messiah is inestimable.” See as well, Wenham, “Reading the Psalms Messianically,” *The Psalter Reclaimed*, 81-101; Dillard and Longman, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 233-234.

26. For example, Psalm 2, that declares, “I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill” (verse 6), is quoted by or alluded to in almost twenty places in the New Testament, but Zion is not mentioned specifically (unless Revelation 14.1 alludes to Psalm 2.6). A number of other Zion psalms are used by New Testament authors but with no mention of Zion. See “Loci Citati Vel Allegati,” *Greek-English New Testament*, 1641-1645.

27. Sheriffs, “Zion,” *New Dictionary of Theology*, 734, notes, “Three factors contribute to the language used about Zion: formative events in Israel’s experience; God’s words of promise backed by miracles; and polemic engagement with the alternative city/temple theologies of Canaan and Babylon. . . . [These] all left their mark in history books, psalms, and prophecy.”

28. Ibid.

29. Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 582-583.

30. Scholars have no consensus about the date of Joel but generally suggest very early (before 800 BC), just prior to Jerusalem's fall in 586 BC, or very late (after 500 BC). See the survey by Dillard and Longman, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 365-367. An early date for Joel's prophecy, around 840 BC, is assumed here. See David W Fletcher, "Excursus—The Date of the Book of Joel," *Apocalyptic Rhetoric in Acts of Apostles* (October 1976; published April 2015), online at: www.apocalypticrhetoric.yolasite.com (accessed 21 October 2019).

31. But important literary prophets, such as Ezekiel, Daniel, and Hosea, do not use "Zion" in their writings.

32. The six major predictive themes of the Old Testament prophetic books are: (1) the fall of Samaria and the Northern Kingdom of Israel (722 BC); (2) the fall of Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom of Judah (586 BC); (3) the exile to Babylon; (4) the return from exile and restoration of Jerusalem; (5) the coming of the Messiah; and (6) the establishment of the kingdom or reign of the Messiah. See Clyde M. Woods, *Study Guides for Old Testament Survey* (Henderson, TN: Freed-Hardeman College, 1971), 30.

33. Obadiah, who relates his vision "concerning Edom" (verse 1; perhaps ca. 585 BC), also connects the Lord's remnant to Israel's final victory on Mount Zion. He writes, "But on Mount Zion there shall be those that escape, and it shall be holy; and the house of Jacob shall take possession of those who dispossessed them. . . . Those who have been saved shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (verses 17, 21). Richard A. Henshaw, "Obadiah," *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 1372-1373, comments, "The Temple Mount [*Mount Zion*], which was not allowed to be holy by its captors, now will be so. *Those that escape* are known elsewhere by the term "remnant," both terms occurring in Isaiah 10.20. They are called *those who have been saved* in verse 21. . . . This climactic ending describes a complete reversal of history: the Israelites shall possess their foes' lands, will go back to their beloved temple on Mount Zion, and the Lord will rule over all."

34. Compare Amos who was sent to prophesy against Israel (ca. 760 BC; see Amos 7.10ff.; and the prophet's use of "Samaria" in 3.12; 8.14; "Mount Samaria" in 3.9; 4.1; 6.1; and "Bethel" in 3.14; 4.4; 5.5, 6; 7.10, 13). Amos includes the leaders of Jerusalem or Zion with those in Samaria that he condemns, "Those who are at ease in Zion, and . . . those who feel secure on Mount Samaria, the notables of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel resorts" (6.1).

35. "Three times each year on major feasts (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles) pilgrims went up to Jerusalem (Psalm 122.1, 4)." Philip J. King, "Micah," *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 1387.

36. King, "Micah," *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 1386, notes, "*Tower of the flock* is also a place-name: Migdal Eder, situated between Bethlehem and Hebron, where Jacob tented after burying Rachel (Genesis 35.21). Towers were sometimes erected to protect pastures. Here *tower of the*

flock designates Mount Zion. *Hill* (Hebrew *'ophel*) refers to the fortified upper sector of capital cities where the palace and other royal buildings stood. In Jerusalem, Ophel designated the area lying between the Temple Mount and the City of David on the southeast hill.”

37. So C. F. Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Minor Prophets*, Volume X, translated by James Martin (reprint; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 471.

38. “*Lachish* situated thirty miles southwest of Jerusalem in the Judean hills, was the most important city in Judah after Jerusalem. In the reign of Hezekiah two massive city walls fortified Lachish. . . . Micah reproaches the people of Lachish for relying on horses and chariots. The wordplay is on the name Lachish and the phrase (*to*) *the steeds* (Hebrew *larekesh*).” King, “Micah,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 1382. Compare the section on “Sennacherib and the Siege of Lachish” in Harris, *World of the Bible*, 92-95.

39. For example, in his call for Judah to repent (3.1–4.4), Jeremiah relates, “Faithless Israel has shown herself less guilty than false Judah.” He states that the Lord told him to prophesy “toward the north” and say, “Return, faithless Israel, says the Lord. . . . Return, O faithless children, says the Lord, for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion” (3.11-14). Leo G. Perdue, “Jeremiah,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 1119, clarifies, “A second ‘summons to repentance,’ [is] addressed to Israel. The faithful refugees from the former Northern Kingdom will return to Zion as a part of the new people of God.”

When Jeremiah predicts the invasion of Jerusalem from the north (4.5–10.25) and warns, “Raise a standard toward Zion, flee for safety, do not delay, for I am bringing evil from the north” (4.6), he indicates that the Lord has “likened daughter Zion to the loveliest pasture” (6.2; i.e., the “shepherds” of verse 3 are invading kings and their armies). Such invaders of Zion “are cruel and have no mercy, their sound is like the roaring sea; they ride on horses, equipped like a warrior for battle, against you, O daughter Zion!” (6.23).

40. See comments on “Zion, Daughter of” by William Franklin Stinespring in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, Supplementary Volume, Dictionary Editor, George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1962), 985.

41. Werner E. Lemke, “Lamentations,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 1218, explains, “*Earthen pots* were common utensils that, when broken, were not mended but thrown away (cf. Jeremiah 22.28).” The comparison made by the prophet is vivid and disturbing.

42. This includes the use of “Zion” in a few headings or titles in the NRSV.

43. On the divisions of the book of Isaiah, see Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1979), 311-325; Dillard and Longman, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 268-276; Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, translated by Peter R. Ackroyd (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1965), 303ff.; Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 415ff.

44. NRSV; “Bible Gateway” Online.

45. Allen Ross, "Introduction to the Study of the Book of Isaiah" (August 2004), *The Book of Isaiah*, Bible.org (Richardson, TX: Biblical Studies Foundation, 2019), online at: <https://bible.org/seriespage/1-introduction-study-book-isaiah> (accessed 25 October 2019).
46. *The Penguin Dictionary of the Bible* (London, England: Penguin, 2007), 156.
47. The word "holy" is used 57 times in Isaiah. NRSV; "Bible Gateway" Online.
48. NRSV; "Bible Gateway" Online. It is to be noted, though, that all fourteen instances of "redeemer" and seven of the eight instances of "savior" in Isaiah occur in chapters 40-66, or the "second half" of the book.
49. See "Index of Quotations," Aland, *Greek New Testament*, Second Edition, 910-913; and NRSV; "Bible Gateway" Online.
50. In the lists for Zechariah, there are more than forty entries in "Index of Quotations," Aland, *Greek New Testament*, Second Edition, 918, and about sixty entries in "Loca Citata Vel Allegata," *Greek-English New Testament*, 1658-1659.
51. The phrase "word of the Lord" is used thirteen times in Zechariah (see 1.1, 7; 4.6, 8; 6.9; 7.1, 4, 8; 8.1, 18; 9.1; 11.11; 12.1). NRSV; "Bible Gateway" Online.
52. Zechariah concludes this section with an amazing proclamation from the Lord: "Thus says the Lord of hosts: In those days ten men from nations of every language shall take hold of a Jew, grasping his garment and saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you'" (8.23). W. Sibley Towner, "Zechariah," *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 1420, remarks, "This is probably the earliest use of the term *Jew* in the Hebrew Bible. The universal vision of human harmony with Zion at the center responds fully to the earlier prophetic vision of the peaceable kingdom (Isaiah 11.6-9), the beating of swords into plowshares (Isaiah 2.4; Micah 4.3), the love of God for other nations mediated through the faithful prophets of Israel (Isaiah 19.23-25; Jonah), and the work of the servant of the Lord (Isaiah 2.4; 49.1-6)."
53. "On that day" is used twenty times in Zechariah, mostly in chapters 12-14, evidently a shortened expression for "the day of the Lord" which is absent from his book (see 2.11; 3.10; 9.16; 11.11; 12.3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11; 13.1, 2, 4; 14.4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21). NRSV; "Bible Gateway" Online.
54. It would be helpful for someone to pull together the various themes about Zion in the Hebrew scriptures and see what kind of impact this has made on New Testament writers. Of interest, J. J. M. Roberts, "Zion Tradition," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume, 985-986, suggests five motifs of the Zion tradition: the divine mountain, the river of paradise, the conquest of chaos, the defeat of the nations, and the pilgrimage of the nations.
55. See Lasor, "Jerusalem," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Volume Two (E-J), 1016-1022.

56. Ibid., 1022; compare Galor and Bloedhorn, *Archaeology of Jerusalem*, 65; Eric M. Meyers and Mark A. Chancey, *Alexander to Constantine: Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 37-42.

57. *Archaeology of Jerusalem*, 69.

58. See “Herod the Great and the Introduction of Roman Architecture,” Meyers and Chancey, *Alexander to Constantine*, 50ff.; Harris, *World of the Bible*, 132-135; Thomas R. Hatina, “Palestine,” *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, edited by Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2013), 478-480; and Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Jesus in Jerusalem: The Last Days* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 102ff. See too the interesting comments on “Herod’s Jerusalem” in John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1986), 95-97.

59. Of interest concerning the omission of “Zion” from the writings of Josephus are comments by Georges Augustin Barrois, “Zion,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Volume 3 (R-Z), 960. He states that “the religious significance attached to the name of Zion toward the beginning of the Christian era is manifested by the relative popularity of the feminine name *Salampsio*, a Hellenized form of [the Hebrew] *shalom tzion*, the ‘peace [or salvation] of Zion.’ It was the name of a daughter of Herod, as well as several private persons, as evidenced by inscriptions found on ossuaries. The historical objectivity intended by Josephus in his writings may explain his abstention of the use of Zion as a toponym.”

60. “Zion,” *A Dictionary of the Bible Dealing with Its Language, Literature and Contents Including the Biblical Theology*, Volume IV, edited by James Hastings (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1902), 983. But Wilson indicates that evidence for the precise location of Zion from Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome is ambiguous.

61. For a summary of “Jerusalem in the Days of Herod and Jesus,” see Brisco, *Holman Bible Atlas*, 228-233.

62. Wilson, “Zion,” *Dictionary of the Bible*, Volume IV, 983.

63. So Jack Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 110; Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, Fifth Edition (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2008), 115; Konrad Schmid, *A Historical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, translated by Peter Altmann (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019), 416-417.

Also to be noted, “It was not until the visit of St. Helena (ca. AD 326), the mother of Constantine, and the beginning of the fashion of venerating the holy places set by her visit, that the Christian see [of Jerusalem] became of any importance.” F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, editors, *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Third Edition (reprint; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 869. Galor and Bloedhorn, *Archaeology of Jerusalem*, 128, state, “Beginning in the fourth century, Jerusalem was transformed from an insignificant Roman town to a major

Christian city. The official name remained Aelia, without the pagan designation ‘Capitolina’. Christians emerged from being a persecuted group to become an assertive, dominant force in the city. In 325, Jerusalem rose in stature from a diocese served by a bishop to a metropolis, and in 451 became one of the five patriarchates of the Church, along with the major cities of Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome. Byzantine Palestine in general and Jerusalem in particular served as important centers of Christian pilgrimage and monastic movements. Leading church figures and faithful believers from all over the empire visited the many churches constructed on sites associated with the life, miracles, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus as well as with his disciples and other biblical figures. The churches and holy places, and the traditions with which they are associated, are described in the guidebooks written by pilgrims throughout the Byzantine period.”

64. See the comments by James H. Charlesworth about Herodian Jerusalem in “Jesus Research and Archaeology,” *World of the New Testament*, edited by Green and McDonald, 447-453. Barrois, “Zion,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Volume 3, 960, notes, “The confusion between Davidic Zion and Christian Zion prevailed until the first decade of the twentieth century, when the location of the city of David was established beyond reasonable doubt on the crest of the Eastern hill. Unfortunately the topography of the guides has not generally caught up with the scientific development.”

65. See in Montefiore, *Jerusalem*, “Part Three: Christianity” (151-174), “Part Five: Crusade” (217-283), and “Part Nine: Zionism” (391-519).

66. See the recent and provocative study by Michael Brenner, *In Search of Israel: The History of An Idea* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

67. “Zion,” *New Dictionary of Theology*, 734-735; compare “Christian Attitudes to the Land,” David W Fletcher, “Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Attitudes Toward the Land of Palestine,” *Geography Briefs—World* (Spring 2000; published July 2012), online at: www.davidwfletcher.com/geography-briefs---world.php (accessed 2 November 2019).

68. The matter of passages from the Old Testament, as well as extrabiblical literature, quoted in the New Testament can be a frustrating challenge. For general studies, see E. Earle Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981); Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975); Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the New: An Introduction*, Second Edition (London, England: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015); also “The Use of the Old Testament,” in James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, Second Edition (London, England: SCM, 1990), 81-102. On Matthew’s other references to Jerusalem, see 2.1, 3; 3.5; 4.25; 5.35; 15.1; 16.21; 20.17, 18; 21.10; and 23.37.

69. John Albert Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, Volume I, Seventh Edition, edited by Andrew Robert Fausset (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1857), 377.

70. The Greek in 21.8 for “very large crowd” is *ho pleistos ochlos* (cf. “great crowd,” Greek *ho ochlos polus*, in John 12.9, 12). Matthew relates how the people “spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road” for Jesus. John mentions the use of “branches of palm trees” by the people in their reception of Jesus (John 12.13; cf. Revelation 7.9 and see Note 215 below).

71. “Hosanna” means “save us” but could be here a shout of praise (cf. Psalm 118.25). Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, Volume I, 380, indicates that the words “Jesus” in verse 11, “having salvation” in Zechariah 9.9, and “hosanna” in verse 9 are all cognate or associated terms.

72. Compare 8.29; 9.27; 14.26, 30; 15.22, 23; and 27.23, 50. The Greek word is *kradzo* and means “utter a loud cry, scream, cry out.” Frederick William Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 206.

73. Matthew highlights that when Jesus entered Jerusalem, “the whole city was in turmoil” (Greek *eseisthe pasa he polis*). The word translated “was in turmoil” is from *seio* which means “to shake” (cf. Matthew 27.51; 28.4; Hebrews 12.26; Revelation 6.13). See Note 178 below on the use *saleuo* (also “to shake”), in addition to *seio*, in Hebrews 12.25-29.

74. D. A Carson, “Matthew,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Volume 8, General Editor, Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 437, notes, “The distinguishing feature of the synoptic accounts, as opposed to John 12, is that Jesus arranged for the ride. The applause and the crowds were not manipulated; they would have occurred in any case. But the ride on a colt, because it was planned, could only be an acted parable, a deliberate act of symbolic self-disclosure for those with eyes to see or, after the Resurrection, with memories by which to remember and integrate the events of the preceding weeks and years.” See too Darrell L. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 313-315; Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*, Second Edition (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009), 366-367; Schnabel, *Jesus in Jerusalem*, 156-159.

On Matthew’s use of *pleroo*, “bring to fruition or completion” [so Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 287], compare 1.22; 2.15, 17, 23; 3.15; 4.14; 5.17; 8.17; 12.17; 13.35, 48; 21.4; 23.32; 26.54, 56; 27.9; and the chapter on “Fulfillment” in R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989), 166-205.

75. See comments in Clyde M. Woods, *People’s Old Testament Notes: Isaiah* (Henderson, TN: Woods Publications, 2002), 173, 271.

76. To suggest that Matthew misquotes Zechariah or misunderstands Hebrew parallelism, since he mentions two animals instead of just one (cf. Mark 11.1-10; Luke 19.28-40; John 12.12-19), seems odd in light of the fluidity of quoting sources in the classical world. See helpful comments by Carson, “Matthew,” *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Volume 8, 437-438; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 491-492.

77. Carson, “Matthew,” *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Volume 8, 437, suggests, “It is possible that Matthew presents these verses [4-5] as having been spoken by Jesus.”

78. Matthew uses the phrase “Son of David” ten times in his narrative (see 1.1, 20; 9.27; 12.23; 15.22; 20.30, 31; 21.9, 15; 22.42). Compare his use of “Son of Man” (29 times) and “Son of God” (only six times). NRSV; “Bible Gateway” Online. For his use of *christos* (“Christ” or “Messiah”), see 1.1, 16, 17, 18; 2.4; 11.2; 16.16, 20, 21; 22.42; 23.10; 24.5, 23; 26.63, 68; 27.17, 22. He uses *kurios* (“sir” or “lord”) about 76 times, *basileia* (“reign” or “kingdom”) about 56 times, and *basileus* (“ruler” or “king”) about 22 times. For this and other lexical data on Greek words, see W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, editors, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament*, Fifth Edition, revised by H. K. Moulton (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1978).

79. Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, 805.

80. *The Gospel of Matthew*, New Century Bible, General Editor, Matthew Black (London, England: Oliphants, 1975), 291. For use of the Greek *praus* (“gentle” or “humble”) in other contexts by Matthew, see 5.5; 11.29.

81. *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London, England: Macmillan, 1965), 294.

82. See Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 301-302.

83. The triumphal entry is John’s last reference to “Jerusalem” in his gospel (cf. 1.19; 2.13, 23; 4.20, 21, 45; 5.1, 2; 7.25; 10.22; 11.18, 55; and 12.12). NRSV; “Bible Gateway” Online. For comments on the chronological framework of John’s narrative, see Merrill C. Tenney, “The Gospel of John,” *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Volume 9, 15-16.

84. See the excellent assessment of the context of the triumphal entry in R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John’s Gospel: A Commentary*, edited by C. F. Evans (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1960), 237ff., part of which is given here. “The reader, before passing to St. John’s account of the journey, next day, to Jerusalem, should remind himself that (a) the Lord has given life to Lazarus, and thereby shown Himself to be the Conqueror of death; (b) in consequence He has Himself been condemned to death by the chief Jewish tribunal; and (c) He has been symbolically buried, although Mary’s action in at once removing the spikenard emphasizes the grave’s impotence to have a lasting hold upon Him. This then is He, the Conqueror of death and Lord of life, who now enters His capital in triumph as the King of Israel.”

85. On the raising of Lazarus, the seventh sign, see Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus*, 320-321. On the silence of the synoptic gospels concerning the resurrection of Lazarus, see Leon Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 168-172. On the glorification of the Son of Man, see Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 367. On “glory” as a major theme for John’s gospel, see Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2015), 43-62.

86. The Greek *ochlos* can refer to “an aggregate of people’ with context indicating type, interest, or relative number . . . mass of people in general” or “of persons constituting a lower class in contrast to persons in authority or with distinction in the community.” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 262. In the New Testament, it is used mostly in the Gospels and Acts (49 times in Matthew; 36 in Mark; 41 in Luke; 19 in John; and 20 in Acts; NRSV; “Bible Gateway” Online) with a few occurrences in Revelation. John mentions “the great crowd” (Greek *ho ochlos polus*) two times and only here (12.9, 12) in his gospel.

87. Compare Leviticus 23.40; 1 Maccabees 13.50-52; 2 Maccabees 10.1-9. Lightfoot, *St. John’s Gospel*, 238, remarks, “Jewish coins inscribed with a palm-tree or palm branch are common between 140 B.C. and A.D. 70, and some carry a palm-tree with ‘the redemption of Zion’ in Hebrew characters. Hence St. John, the only evangelist who mentions palm branches in connection with the entry, may wish to imply that the great crowd saw in the Lord’s arrival the coming of one who, like the high priest in the great age of the Maccabees, would unite in his person both spiritual and temporal power, dispensing these from his seat of office in the temple; and thus the Jews would be once more free, delivered from the hated sovereignty of Rome. In St. John’s gospel it is only after the Lord has been thus met and greeted by the multitude—and not from the beginning of His journey, as in the earlier gospels—that He utters a silent protest against its almost complete misunderstanding of His royal mission. He procures a young donkey and advances seated on it, in fulfilment, St. John point out, of the prophecy [Zechariah 9.9] that Zion’s King would come, not on a war horse, suggestive of destruction, but on a colt, the beast of peace.”

88. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*, 642-643, observes, “Although John’s Gospel is clear that the significance of this event in terms of Zechariah 9.9 is something that the disciples came to appreciate only later, the entry was a declaration of the arrival of the promised figure and a time of hope. It was the offer to the nation of its king, but with an air of humility that paralleled the larger suffering and service character of Jesus’ ministry. Thus, Jesus entered the city not merely as a pilgrim or even as a prophet, but as a messianic claimant.” Compare the comments by F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 258-261.

89. For John’s emphasis on Jesus as king in chapter 12, see Lewis A. Foster, *A Bible Study on the Book of John: A Deeper Understanding of The Way, The Truth, and The Life* (Mason, OH: Christian Restoration Association, 2017), 143-157. John uses the expression “King of Israel” here in 12.13 and at 1.49 (cf. Matthew 27.42; Mark 15.32), and he uses “king” (Greek *basileus*) only fifteen times (see 1.49; 6.15; 12.13, 15; 18.33, 37, 39; 19.3, 12, 14, 15; 19.15, 19, 21) and “reign” or “kingdom” (Greek *basileia*) only four times (see 3.3, 5; 18.36), less frequently than the other gospels.

Of interest is John’s use of “do not be afraid” (NRSV) or “fear not” (ESV), from the Greek *me phobou*, in reference to the Zion prophecy concerning the arrival of the king (see note 91 below). The use of *phobos* (“fear”; see 7.13; 19.38; 20.19) and *phobeomai* (“to fear”; see 6.19, 20; 9.22; 12.15; 19.8) does not seem to be a particular emphasis of John in his gospel as it is in Matthew and Luke.

90. See chapters 4, 5, and 6 about “the Christ of God,” “the Son of God,” and “the ‘I AM’ sayings,” in Leon Morris, *Jesus Is the Christ: Studies in the Theology of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 68-125. John refers to “Son of God” eight times (1.34, 49; 3.18; 5.25; 11.4, 27; 19.7; 20.31), “Son of Man” twelve times (1.51; 3.13, 14; 5.27; 6.27, 53, 62; 8.28; 9.35; 12.23, 34; 13.31), and does not mention “Son of David” at all (but see 7.42 for his only use of “David”). NRSV; “Bible Gateway” Online. He uses *christos* (“Christ” or “Messiah”) eighteen times (1.17, 20, 25, 41; 3.28; 4.25, 29; 7.26, 27, 31, 41, 42; 9.22; 10.24; 11.27; 12.34; 17.3; 20.31) and *kurios* (“sir” or “lord”) about fifty times.

91. Johannes Beutler, “The Use of ‘Scripture’ in the Gospel of John,” *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, edited by R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 150, states, “In John 12.14 the basis of the quotation from ‘what is written’ seems to be Zechariah 9.9, but there are elements that cannot be explained by this text. Accordingly, the exhortation in the beginning, ‘Fear not, daughter of Zion,’ does not come from Zechariah. Commentators refer instead to Isaiah (40.9) or Zephaniah (3.14f.). Only when taken together do these texts render the wording of John 12.14.” Compare G. H. C. MacGregor, *The Gospel of John*, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, edited by James Moffatt (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1928), 263, who says, “John changes Zechariah’s ‘rejoice greatly’ into ‘fear not,’ perhaps echoing Isaiah 40.9. Nor does he quote the Hebrew poetic parallelism which leads Matthew to imagine a foal as well as a donkey! The donkey, in contrast to the usual war-horse of a victorious leader, is symbolic of lowliness and peace. Jesus comes, not as a military, but as a spiritual Messiah.” But Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel according to St. John*, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, General Editor, J. J. S. Perowne (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 249-250, argues that “the quotation is freely made . . . abbreviated . . . [and] the Evangelist seems to be translating direct from the Hebrew.”

92. John explores more fully the grander theme of Jesus as the Son of his heavenly Father. See “God, the Father” in Morris, *Jesus Is the Christ*, 126-144; “The Family of Father and Son, John 8–12” in Royce Gordon Gruenler, *The Trinity in the Gospel of John: A Thematic Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1986), 57-87.

93. This represents Paul’s direct use of “Zion” in his writings, but it does not exhaust possible allusions to Old Testament scriptures that mention Zion explicitly. For example, Walter T. Wilson, *Pauline Parallels: A Comprehensive Guide* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 52-73, lists the following as biblical parallels for sections of Romans 9–11: for 9.27-33, Isaiah 1.8-9, 28.16, and 37.32; for 10.5-13, Isaiah 28.16 and Joel 2.32; for 10.14-21, Isaiah 52.7; for 11.25-32, Psalm 14.7 and Isaiah 59.20-21.

94. See “The Righteousness of God in His Ruling of History (9.1–11.36)” in Emil Brunner, *The Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1999), 83-99.

95. *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1970), 399. Compare A. Theissen, “Romans,” *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, General Editor, Reginald

C. Fuller (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1975), 1128, who states, “The problem which Paul sets himself in these three chapters is the failure of the Gospel to convince Israel. How can the Gospel be the true fulfilment of the Messianic promises, when its central doctrine declaring Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah is rejected by the very Israel to whom God has promised the Messiah? The Apostle discusses the exclusion of Israel as a whole from the salvation of the Messiah and that only here and now, that is in the Church on earth. It would lead to grave misunderstandings to think that his subject is Israel’s exclusion from heaven at the Last Judgement, which judgement, needless to say, is not collective but individual.”

96. Matthew Black, *Romans*, New Century Bible Commentary, General Editor, Matthew Black (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 128, suggests that Paul’s argument “has two main points: (a) the Gentiles owe their salvation to the rejection of Israel; (b) in the long term, God’s purposes embrace His own people.”

97. “This section of the letter raises some extremely difficult issues. There are critical questions about how Paul uses Scripture, about the relation of hardening to showing mercy, and much besides. It is perhaps this section that is most concerned with ‘theodicy’, explaining how God is acting justly and compassionately despite appearances to the contrary.” I. Howard Marshall, Stephen Travis, and Ian Paul, *Exploring the New Testament, Volume 2: A Guide to the Letters and Revelation*, Second Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 125. Quoting N. T. Wright, Anthony C. Thiselton, *Discovering Romans: Content, Interpretation, Reception*, Discovering Biblical Texts Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 186, states, “These chapters present a complex and integrated whole, which in turn is closely integrated into the warp and woof of the rest of the letter.” Thiselton continues, “It builds, he adds, on the foundation laid in chapters 1–8 and prepares especially for the appeal in chapters 14 and 15.” See too C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries, General Editor, Henry Chadwick (reprint; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 175; C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 214ff.; Craig C. Hill, “Romans,” *The Pauline Epistles*, Oxford Bible Commentary, edited by John Muddiman and John Barton (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2001), 79; John Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, TPI New Testament Commentaries, General Editors, Howard Clark Kee and Dennis Nineham (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1989), 37-39.

Compare the older view of Alexander Balmain Bruce, *St. Paul’s Conception of Christianity* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1896), 310, that “the subject [of the election and rejection of Israel] is very abruptly introduced. There appears to be no logical connection between the close of chapter eighth and the beginning of chapter ninth. And there is no *logical* connection, but there is a very close *emotional* one.” William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Fifth Edition, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1962), 226, comment, “We notice that there is no grammatical connexion with the preceding chapter. A new point is introduced and the sequence of thought is gradually made apparent as the argument proceeds. Perhaps there has been a pause in writing the Epistle, the amanuensis has for a time suspended his labours.” But Black, *Romans*, 128, states, “The section is a compact and continuous whole, possibly an incorporated diatribe or missionary sermon, distinctive in style as in content from [chapters]

1–8.” See as well C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, Moffatt New Testament Commentary, edited by James Moffatt (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1932), 148, who says, “The style has a character of its own. . . . In this section the conversational note is very clear. The style is, in fact, that of the so-called *diatribe*, or philosophical conversation.”

98. Compare Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 108, who states, “The story of the attempt to evangelize the Jews in the first 200 years of Christianity was, on the whole, a failure.”

99. Compare Acts 13.44-52; 14.27; 15.12ff.; 18.5ff.; 20.21; 22.14-15, 21; 26.16-18, 20, 23; 28.28.

100. While not necessarily an axiom, this statement by Paul reflects what happened historically and methodologically. On Paul’s mission to the Gentiles, see Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 112ff., 194ff.; 256ff.; E. P. Sanders, *Paul*, Past Masters Series, General Editor, Keith Thomas (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1991), 19-25; Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 522-530. On “Mobility and Mission” in the New Testament world, see Stambaugh and Balch, *New Testament in Its Social Environment*, 37-62.

101. “Paul’s ancestors and Paul himself did not adopt the customs, practices, and languages of the non-Jewish populace. They were *Hebraioi* and not *Hellenistai* (“Hellenists”; Acts 6.1). Paul spoke the Hebrew language and practiced Hebrew customs (Acts 18.18; 21.26, 40; 22.2). Although born in Tarsus (Acts 9.11; 22.3), the principal city in Cilicia and thoroughly Hellenized, Paul was educated by Gamaliel in Jerusalem and acquired strict training in the Law of Moses and the traditions of the rabbis. Paul is much more than just an Israelite. He is a Hebraist Israelite, or as he puts it, ‘a Hebrew of Hebrews.’ Such was the pedigree of the apostle by reason of his fleshly birth of Jewish heritage.” David W Fletcher, “Paul’s Warning to the Philippians (Philippians 3.1-11),” in “Survey of New Testament Documents” (Summer 2019), Religion–Biblical Studies, online at: www.davidwfletcher.com/religion-files.php (accessed 22 November 2019).

102. On Paul’s use of *lupe* (“sorrow” or “inner distress”), see 2 Corinthians 2.1, 3, 7; 7.10; 9.7; Philippians 2.27. For his one other use of *odune* (“pain”), see 1 Timothy 6.10.

103. “At no other point in his letters does Paul cite the Old Testament text as much as he does here. In order to prove the veracity of God, Paul has to demonstrate that the present situation corresponds to the word of prophecy. Accordingly, Scripture is cited as both a witness for and an accuser against Israel, and to establish God’s faithfulness in realizing his eternal plan. This sovereign purpose of God is a saving purpose. His absolute will is directed toward the salvation of his people, whether Jew or Gentile.” Glenn W. Barker, William L. Lane, and J. Ramsay Michaels, *The New Testament Speaks* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1969), 198. Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament*, 122, observes, “The apostle’s analysis in Romans 9–11 is intricate and interlaced throughout with Old Testament ‘proofs’, but it follows an orderly sequence and gives a profound apologetic for a ‘Christian’ interpretation of the Old Testament. Underlying the whole

of the argument, and indeed the whole of Paul's Old Testament exegesis, is the fundamental postulate that the 'true Israel', the heir of the promises, does not consist of physical descendants *ipso facto* but of 'children of the promise' sovereignly selected by God." Compare Sanday and Headlam on Paul's use of the Old Testament, *Epistle to the Romans*, 302-307.

104. On Paul's concept of righteousness as "fundamental to this passage and . . . the subject of intense debate," see Hill, "Romans," *Pauline Epistles*, 81-82.

105. These verses contain a quotation from Isaiah 28.16 (cf. 8.14), but the preceding section about the "remnant" (verses 27-29) quotes Isaiah 10.22-23 and Isaiah 1.8-9, the latter making reference to Zion. Isaiah 37.32 as well can be included in parallels for this text in Romans. It reads, "For from Jerusalem a remnant shall go out, and from Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this." See Wilson, *Pauline Parallels: A Comprehensive Guide*, 58-60.

On the Zion quotation, Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, New Edition (New York, NY: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1896), 520, notes, "This passage is apparently made up of two, one occurring in Isaiah 28.16, the other in Isaiah 8.14. In both of these passages mention is made of a stone, but the predicates of this stone, as given in the latter passage, are transferred to the other, and those there mentioned omitted. This method of quoting Scripture is common among all writers, especially where the several passages quoted and merged into each other, refer to the same subject. It is obvious that the writers of the New Testament are very free in their mode of quoting from the Old, giving the sense, as they, being inspired by the same Spirit, could do authoritatively, without binding themselves strictly to the words."

106. A literal reading of the text would be, "Behold, I place in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and the one believing on him will not be put to shame." Robert K. Brown and Philip W. Comfort, translators, *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament*, Editor, J. D. Douglas (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1990), 558. The Greek words *lithos* and *petra* refer to stones and rocks of various types but here are qualified by *proskomma* ("stumbling"; cf. Romans 14.13, 20; 1 Corinthians 8.9; 1 Peter 2.8) and *skandalon* ("offense"; cf. Romans 11.9; 14.13; 16.17; 1 Corinthians 1.23; Galatians 5.11; 1 Peter 2.8). Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 250, observes, "The fact that the same two Isaiah passages are also combined in 1 Peter 2.6-8, together with Psalm 118.22—interestingly the text used in 1 Peter shows agreements with that in Romans over against both the Hebrew and the Septuagint—has been seen as support for the suggestion that a collection of 'stone' testimonies was part of the early tradition of the Church." Compare Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 194; Black, *Romans*, 137; Dodd, *Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 163-164; Moyise, *Old Testament in the New*, 68; Sanday and Headlam, *Epistle to the Romans*, 281-282; Thiselton, *Discovering Romans*, 199.

107. See Elias Andrews, *The Meaning of Christ for Paul* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1969), 61ff.

108. See, though, the discussion by C. K. Barrett, "Romans 9.30–10.21: Fall and Responsibility of Israel," *Essays on Paul* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1982), 132-153. But Ziesler, *Paul's*

Letter to the Romans, 254, remarks, “The quotation shows that the faith mentioned is verse 32 is not faith in general, but specifically faith in Christ. In effect, the stone over which Israel has stumbled is the same stone that the Christian Gentiles have taken as their foundation. Whether this stumbling occurred in the rejection of the historical Jesus, or in the failure to respond to the Christian preaching of people like Paul himself, is not clear. Certainly ‘he who believes in him’ in 10.11 refers to one who has Christian faith, and it is to be presumed that it does so here too. It is therefore likely that the ‘rock’ in this verse is Christ, and not the Torah, as has been suggested [by Barrett, see reference above].”

109. For Paul’s use of Jerusalem, see Romans 15.19, 25, 26, 31; 1 Corinthians 16.3; Galatians 1.17, 18; 4.25, 26.

110. But Black, *Romans*, 137, states, “Already the Targum interprets the precious foundation stone as ‘a mighty King’. For Paul the stone of stumbling which is also the foundation-stone is Christ. Had this identification and interpretation already been made in the use of these *testimonia* before Paul?”

111. Paul uses “Christ” in this section in 9.1, 3, 5; 10.4, 6, 7, 17. He uses “Lord” in this section in 10.9, 12, 13, 16; 11.34. These both are frequent words used by Paul in Romans (with about forty occurrences of *kurios* and about sixty-five occurrences of *christos*) and in his other letters.

Paul uses the phrase “Son of God” with reference to Jesus in Romans 1.4 (cf. 2 Corinthians 1.19; Galatians 2.20; Ephesians 4.13). He does not use the title “Son of Man” or “Son of David,” but such is implied in his statement about Jesus at the beginning of Romans, “who was descended from David according to the flesh” (1.3; cf. 2 Timothy 2.8). NRSV; “Bible Gateway” Online.” Paul uses *basileia* (“reign” or “kingdom”) in Romans 14.17; 1 Corinthians 7.20; 6.9, 10; 15.24, 50; Galatians 5.21; Ephesians 5.5; Colossians 1.13; 4.11; 1 Thessalonians 2.12; 2 Thessalonians 1.5; 2 Timothy 4.1, 18. He uses *basileus* (“ruler” or “king”) only in 2 Corinthians 11.32; 1 Timothy 1.17; 2.2; 6.15.

112. Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 710, notes, “This passage is too problematic and controverted. . . . There is much debate about whether verse 26 prophesies that the majority of ethnic Israel will be saved at the very end of the age. Consequently, I think that one’s overall view about whether gentiles are to be identified as true Israel should be based not on this passage alone but on other passages, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Indeed, I believe that this passage has nothing to do with gentile redemption but rather is about the salvation of a remnant of ethnic Israel.”

113. Thiselton, *Discovering Romans*, 209ff., is very helpful on this section, as he sifts through varying nuances of interpretation.

114. The Greek word in 11.4, used only here in the New Testament (cf. 1 Clement 17.5 quoting 2 Maccabees 2.4; 11.17), is *chrematismos* and means “special divine response, oracle, answer, revelation.” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 384. Black, *Romans*, 142, notes, “This rare and solemn word clearly is consciously selected to give prominence to the authoritative word of God that follows.”

115. Paul uses the Greek *leimma* in 11.5 and *hupoleimma* in 9.27, both translated “remnant” with the same basic meaning. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 365, comments on the latter, “a small portion surviving out of a larger number, in Israelite usage, of a relatively small proportion of persons left over for realization of benefits not to be enjoyed by the majority.” On Paul’s doctrine of the remnant, see Sanday and Headlam, *Epistle to the Romans*, 316-318.

Barker, Lane, and Michaels, *New Testament Speaks*, 198-200, emphasize the biblical concept of the remnant as “central to Paul’s thinking throughout the whole of this argument. . . . It is clear from the Old Testament that Israel was never what we would regard as an ideal people of God. . . . Nevertheless, a part of Israel was preserved and saved from the time of the wilderness wanderings (Joshua and Caleb) to Paul’s day (Romans 11.1). In this perspective Israel’s history is the history of the remnant, and of the remnant of the remnant. The very existence of a remnant indicates that God’s judgment on Israel was not total. Accordingly, the remnant is a sign both of divine wrath and of divine grace. Inasmuch as divine grace prevails, the remnant becomes a unique witness for salvation. That God leaves a remnant is a witness to his grace and a comforting reality. More important, the remnant that experiences salvation is henceforth considered the nucleus of a new people of God, or *all Israel*. The object of salvation is never the preservation of the remnant for its own sake, but the creation of a new people.”

116. On Paul’s illustration of the olive tree and branches, see David J. Williams, *Paul’s Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 41-42. Compare Herbert M. Gale, *The Use of Analogy in the Letters of Paul* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1964), 205-215; and comments by Black, *Romans*, 145-147.

117. “The effective missionary successes in the Gentile world shape the new events which determine Paul’s theological elaboration of salvation history. What he offers in Romans 9–11 is a salvation-historical interpretation of events in the mission field. Through Israel’s unbelief, the full number of Gentiles comes in. Thus the path leads through Israel. The constant, which is the divine plan with the chosen people as its object, still remains; but God is carrying it out in an unforeseen way in the context of historical contingency until at last all Israel will be saved.” Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1967), 251. On Paul’s use of “mystery” here, see Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 280ff.

118. *Romans*, 147-148. Compare Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 283. Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, Volume III, 155, adds that “Paul, chapter 3, in describing sin had quoted Psalm 14, and chiefly chapter 49 of Isaiah; now in describing salvation, he joins together the same texts.”

119. See Sanday and Headlam, *Epistle to the Romans*, 336-337. They note that “the Rabbis connected these passages [Isaiah 27.9 and 59.20] with the Messiah. . . . Moreover a universal restoration of Israel was part of the current Jewish expectation. All Israel should be collected together. There was to be a kingdom in Palestine, and in order that Israel as a whole might share in this there was to be a general resurrection. Nor was the belief in the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles without parallel. Although later Judaism entirely denied all hope to the Gentiles,

much of Judaism of St. Paul's day still maintained the Old Testament belief (Isaiah 14.2; 66.12, 19-21; Daniel 2.44; 7.14, 27)."

120. Thiselton, *Discovering Romans*, 216, calls this statement in verse 26, "the redefinition of 'all Israel'." See, to the contrary, Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 282-283; Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 589-590; also Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 281ff. Of interest is Dodd, *Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 183ff., who, at the end of his remarks on the text, discusses the idea of absolute universalism then takes the matter to a cosmic level and says, "Whatever we may make of Paul's teaching here, with all its mythological and speculative elements, we must confess that it presents a broad and elevated philosophy of history." Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 223-224, notes "an interesting parallel to Paul's words in *Sanhedrin*, 10.1: 'All Israelites have a share in the world to come.' This statement certainly does not refer to each several Israelite, for it proceeds to enumerate a long list of exceptions: from 'all Israel' must be subtracted all Sadducees, heretics, magicians, the licentious, and many more. It means that Israel as a whole is destined for eternal life in the Age to Come. This, of course, does not prove that Paul's meaning was the same; but when his two statements, about Gentiles and Jews, are taken together, it seems probable that he is thinking in representative terms . . . first the remnant of Israel, then Gentiles, finally Israel as a whole."

121. A. Theissen, "Romans," *New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, 1135, observes, "The final conversion of Israel could not be known to Paul from any natural source. He himself calls it a mystery (cf. Matthew 13.11; 1 Corinthians 2.7; Ephesians 3.3f.). Nevertheless he does not claim a special revelation as the authority for his statement but argues the point. The reasons which he advances are taken (1) from the Scriptures, (2) from Israel's history, and (3) from the divine plan of salvation. . . . Lagrange . . . on Luke 13.35 finds this mystery already revealed by our Lord himself. 'Full number of the Gentiles' need not be pressed so as to mean every individual, nor 'all Israel'. The mystery is hidden, but to be revealed, and is a part of the divine saving plan, therefore a supernatural reality."

122. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 215, suggests, "We shall misunderstand these chapters, if we fail to recognize that their key-word is 'mercy'."

123. Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans*, 227, quips, "God has brought men into a position which merits nothing but his wrath that his relations with them may be marked by nothing but mercy. God's rejections, punishments, and abandonments (1.24, 26, 28) are rightly understood as the foil of his mercy. Only sinners can be the objects of his mercy, and only those who know that they are sinners can know that they are loved. The righteous 'need no repentance' (Luke 15.7) and cannot know what it is to be forgiven. Every man must be damned if he is to be justified."

124. See chapter on "the unsearchable judgments of God" in Richard C. Halverson, *Prologue to Prison: Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Los Angeles, CA: Cowman Publishing, 1964), 201-208; also comments on "the mystery of election" in Moyise, *Old Testament in the New*, 123-134.

125. The provinces that Peter mentions comprise a wide geographical area or most of what was then Asia Minor.

126. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 118. Compare the use of this word in Matthew 20.16; 22.14; 24.22, 24, 31; Mark 13.20, 22, 27; Luke 18.7; 23.35; John 1.34; Romans 8.33; 16.13; Colossians 3.12; 1 Timothy 5.21; 2 Timothy 2.10; Titus 1.1; 1 Peter 2.4, 6, 9; 2 John 1, 13; Revelation 17.14.

127. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 271.

128. *Ibid.*, 273.

129. See Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies*, 401; also the discussion by Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 740-742, where he emphasizes Peter's use of the prophecies about the restoration of Israel.

130. See comments in Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, Volume V, 54-56.

131. See notes in J. W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, Westminster Commentaries, edited by Walter Lock and D. C. Simpson (London, England: Methuen, 1934), 66. On Peter's use of "house" (Greek *oikos*) as an image for God's people or the church, see Ernest Best, *1 Peter*, New Century Bible, edited by Matthew Black (London, England: Oliphants, 1971), 101-102; also Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, Second Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 689. Peter indicates the "spiritual" nature of this house of living stones by way of contrast with the Jewish temple of Zion that was build of material stones and also due to the fact that the church or "house of God" (Greek *to oikou tou theou*; 1 Peter 4.17) was the dwelling place of the Spirit of God (see 1 Peter 4.14). James Moffatt, *The General Epistles: James, Peter, and Judas*, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, edited by James Moffatt (London, England: Hodder and Stoughton, 1945), 114-115, adds, "Spiritual is equivalent to 'not made with hands,' and there may be an allusion to the Latin *vivus* in the adjective living, for *vivus*, when applied to a stone, meant a stone that had not been worked by hand. Hebrew thought also associated the building of a house with a family, as in 1 Samuel 2.35, where to 'build up a sure house for David' was to ensure a succession of children; indeed the Targum on Psalm 118.22 reads, 'the youth which the builders rejected.' But Peter does not elaborate the figure of the church as a building, as Paul had done."

132. Literally, *akrogoniaios* indicates what is at the highest or extreme angle or corner and is used by Peter to compare Jesus "to a stone (it is not certain whether a foundation stone or a capstone is meant) as primary bonding entity in the community of God's people." Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 14. Compare "head of the corner" (Greek *kephalen gonias*) in verse 7 and "stone of stumbling" (Greek *lithos proskommatos*) in verse 8.

Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 690, suggests, "The Jewish interpretive principle *gezerah shavah*, which linked texts that had a common key word, makes it natural for Peter to cite Psalm 118.22 and Isaiah 8.14. Although this interpretive technique suggests that he need not be dependent on Paul, both Peter and Paul may have depended on Jesus for the cornerstone image (Mark 12.10-11). Psalm 118 was sung during the Passover season (cf. 1 Peter 1.19), normally, at least some of the Jews in this period, after thanking God for delivering Israel from slavery in Egypt into freedom, 'from darkness to great light' (cf. 2.9)."

David H. Wheaton, “1 Peter,” in *The New Bible Commentary*, Third Edition, edited by D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 1241, remarks, “Two strands of prophecy are drawn together here: the precious foundation stone of Isaiah 28.16 . . . and the rejected keystone of Psalm 118.22. Jesus applied the latter reference to Himself in Mark 12.10 and parallels, and Peter quoted it of Him before the Sanhedrin in Acts 4.11. Jesus Christ is both Foundation on which the Christian church is built, and the Keystone into whom it grows up (see 1 Corinthians 3.11; Ephesians 4.11-13). By bringing the two metaphors together Peter emphasizes that Christ is precious only to believers (as the original context showed), and that those who refuse to believe find Him a Stone which causes them to *stumble*—here is added a quotation from Isaiah 8.14.”

133. Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 327, connects Peter’s image of “living” stones with the resurrection of Jesus. Wand, *General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 66, says that “there is no parallel in the Old Testament to a *living* stone, which, as Bigg points out, is to St. Peter not simply an ‘animated stone’ but one which is ‘spiritual, divine, eternal’.”

134. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 45. Compare Matthew 21.42; Mark 8.31; 12.10; Luke 9.22; 17.25; 20.17; Hebrews 12.17.

135. The Greek for “the builders” is *hoi oikodomountes* from *oikodomeo*, a verb used here by Peter twice (2.5, 7). Wand, *General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 66, observes, “The Psalmist identifies the stone with Zion itself which was cast on one side by builders who did not understand its value, but has now been placed at the extremity of the corner, thus becoming the most important stone in the foundation since it holds the walls together. As Zion was thus the fundamental element in God’s kingdom upon earth, it became easy to interpret the passage of the Messiah, who bears the same relation to the members of the kingdom as does the capital city to the kingdom itself. In this sense it is used of Jesus as early as Mark 12.10, and St. Peter had thus employed it himself in his speech before the High Priest at Jerusalem (Acts 4.11).”

136. See Endnote 105 above on the Greek words used here by Peter in the quotation and by Paul in Romans 9.33. Moffatt, *The General Epistles*, 116-117, remarks that Peter quotes “freely from the Septuagint and without any reference to its original historical meaning; what matters is the conclusion. . . . People come across Christ; some find and make him the stay and support of life, while others trip over him and collapse. To some he is, as the psalm sings, the cornerstone of their Sion or sanctuary, the foundation-stone at the angle of the building which determines the whole structure; to others he is in their way. . . . The figure is not quite clear; the Stone may be thought of as one and the same, the passer-by tripping over the cornerstone of the building which juts out on the road, or two different stones may be in the apostle’s view. But the idea is plain: the presence of Christ in the world elicits faith and unbelief. The belief of Christians is thrown into relief against a background of repudiation on the part of others. These others include Jews, but they are not confined to Jews. Peter does not enter into any explanation of the offense of the cross, as Paul does. . . . Peter is not thinking of Israel specially.”

137. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 118. In the writings of the New Testament, *eklektos* is used predominately of Christians or the chosen people of God. For variations in the Greek manuscripts of John 1.34, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 172.

138. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 130-131.

139. The mention of Jesus in 1 Peter is always “Jesus Christ” or “Jesus Messiah” (Greek *Iesou Christou*; see 1.1, 2, 3, 7, 13; 2.5; 3.21; 4.11). Compare 2 Peter where the use of *kurios* (“Lord”) and *soter* (“Savior”) is frequent with “Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1.1, 8, 14, 16; 3.18; cf. 1.2). The terms “Son of Man” and “Son of God” do not occur in Peter’s letters, but see 2 Peter 1.17 where the apostle refers to the heavenly voice of approval upon Jesus (i.e., “This is my Son”) at his transfiguration. In light of his predominantly Gentile or Hellenistic audience, Peter’s frequent reference to “God” (about forty times in 1 Peter and seven times in 2 Peter) seems very proper.

140. Peter uses *basileios* (“kingly” or “royal”) only in 1 Peter 2.9. He uses *basileus* (“ruler” or “king”) in 1 Peter 2.13, 17. He uses *basileia* (“reign” or “kingdom”) only in 2 Peter 1.11. On Peter’s limited use of these terms, Moffatt, *The General Epistles*, 118, notes, “The former phrase [royal or kingly priesthood] is the only allusion to the King or the Kingdom in the epistle, terms which Peter perhaps avoided on account of their liability to be misconstrued (see on 4.15).”

Also, Peter is the only New Testament writer to use *hierateuma* (“priesthood” or “body of priests”; 1 Peter 2.5, 9; cf. Exodus 19.6). See Best, *1 Peter*, 102-104, on “holy priesthood” and “spiritual sacrifices” here. Compare comments on verse 9 by Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, Volume V, 56-57.

141. The NRSV translates *arete* as “mighty acts.” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 53, explains that *arete* means uncommon excellence or capability and is “a fundamental term in Hellenic society relating to intrinsic personal worth exhibited in character traits or civic performance meriting praise and affirmation, hence especially of military prowess in Homeric society and then of a broader range of personal characteristics beneficial to society. . . . In 1 Peter 2.9 the focus is on demonstrations of *arete*.”

Moffatt, *The General Epistles*, 119, indicates that “transference of religious consciousness from the city or state to a religious society had been already initiated in cults like those of Isis or Mithras, which were international or rather non-national in scope. For this and other reasons they were suspected by the Romans, either as immoral . . . or as harboring anti-social and unpatriotic tendencies. Both criticisms were levelled against Christianity as one of these new Oriental fellowships, and both now engage the attention of the apostle, who issues a series of counsels (2.11–3.12) on the practical duty of proclaiming the wonderous deeds of their God.”

142. Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 690.

143. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 289, states that *pneumatikos* indicates that which transcends physical existence and influence, and of persons it is “especially oriented toward spiritual matters or influenced by the Spirit of God.” See too 1 Corinthians 2.15; 3.1; 13.47; Galatians 6.1. On

Peter's use of *kaleo* ("to call" or "to summon") in the sense of God's invitation to come to his house and receive his blessings, see 1 Peter 1.15; 2.9, 21; 3.6, 9; 5.10; 2 Peter 1.3, 10.

144. *1 Peter*, 105.

145. See comments on "word of exhortation" (13.22) in Barker, Lane, and Michaels, *New Testament Speaks*, 308-309; also Dom Aelred Cody, "Hebrews," *New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, 1221-1222; and Thomas E. Phillips, "Literary Forms in the New Testament," *World of the New Testament*, edited by Green and McDonald, 385.

146. For "go up . . . to Zion," see Isaiah 2.3; Jeremiah 31.6; Obadiah 21; and Micah 4.2. For "come . . . to Zion," see Isaiah 2.3; 35.10; 51.11; 59.20; 60.14; Jeremiah 31.6; 50.5; Micah 4.2; and Lamentations 1.4. Three passages combine the two movements, "Come, let us go up to" ("the mountain of the Lord" in Isaiah 2.3 and Micah 4.2; "Zion" in Jeremiah 31.6; cf. Genesis 35.3). Also, see Isaiah 31.4 where "the Lord of hosts will come down to fight upon Zion and upon its hill." NRSV; "Bible Gateway" Online.

147. The Greek for 11.22 reads, *alla proseleluthate Sion horei*, and the word translated "you have come" is the perfect active indicative of *proserchomai*.

148. The writer of Hebrews seems to use "Jesus" (Greek *Iesous*; thirteen times in 2.9, 11; 3.1, 3; 4.14; 5.7; 6.20; 7.22; 8.6; 10.19; 12.2; 13.12, 20) and "Christ" (Greek *Christos*; twelve times in 3.6, 14; 5.5; 6.1; 9.11, 23, 24, 28; 10.1, 5, 12; 11.26) interchangeably. He uses "Jesus Christ" only three times (10.10; 13.8, 21). NRSV; "Bible Gateway" Online. On the writer's use of *kurios* ("sir" or "lord"), see 1.10; 2.3; 7.14, 21; 8.2, 8, 9, 10, 11; 10.16, 30; 12.5, 6, 14; 13.6, 20.

149. On Hebrew's use of "Son of God," see 4.14; 6.6; 7.3; 10.29 (cf. "Son" only in 1.2, 5, 8; 3.6; 5.8; 7.28). "Son of Man" is used only in Hebrews 2.6 (ESV). Besides his strong emphasis on the divinity of Jesus, the author likewise places great importance on the humanity of Jesus (see especially 2.5-18; 4.14-5.10), and he indicates this with a variety of expressions, for example, "for a little while lower than the angels" (2.7, 9), "suffering of death" and "taste death" (2.9; cf. 2.14; 5.7), "flesh and blood" (2.14; cf. "his own blood" in 9.12 and 13.12, "blood of Christ" in 9.14, and "blood of Jesus" in 10.19; also "blood of the covenant" in 10.29 and "blood of the eternal covenant" in 13.20; on "flesh" see 5.7 and 10.20), "tested by what he suffered" (2.18; cf. 4.15), able "to sympathize with our weaknesses" (4.15), "in the days of his flesh . . . offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears" (5.7), "learned obedience through what he suffered" (5.8), and so forth. NRSV; "Bible Gateway" Online.

Two descriptions about Jesus—"sympathize with our weaknesses" (4.15; cf. 10.34; Greek *sumpathesai tais astheneiais hemon*) and "learned obedience" (5.8; Greek *emathen . . . ten hupakoen*)—are a remarkable testimony to the extent that Jesus, in his incarnation, identified with humans. The writer of Hebrews builds on this foundational principle of Christian faith to exalt Jesus as the superior high priest (Greek *archiereus*) of a new covenant (see 2.17; 3.1; 4.14, 15; 5.5, 10; 6.20; 7.26; 8.1; 9.11).

150. See Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 698-703, 711-715; Marshall, Travis, and Paul, *Exploring the New Testament, Volume 2*, 254-256; A. M. Stibbs, “Hebrews,” *New Bible Commentary*, edited by Guthrie and Motyer, 1191-1192. See too the intricate argument for the date of Hebrews prior to the fall of Jerusalem (i.e., ca. AD 67) in John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1976), 200ff.

151. Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 637-638.

152. Hebrews uses *diatheke* (“covenant”) more than any other New Testament writer, about seventeen times (see 7.22; 8.6, 8, 9, 10; 9.4, 15, 16, 17, 20; 10.16, 29; 12.24; 13.20), and makes a sharp distinction between the temporary and inferior “first” or “former” covenant and the eternal and superior “new” or “better” covenant that God made with his people through Jesus Christ.

153. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 10. Compare Stibbs, “Hebrews,” *New Bible Commentary*, edited by Guthrie and Motyer, 1192-1193.

154. For “new” way, the writer uses the Greek word *kainos* (in 8.8, 13 and 9.15 with *diatheke*, “covenant”) that indicates something “different and superior in quality relative to something old.” Here, in 10.20, he uses the Greek word *prospatos* (used only in Hebrews in the New Testament) which highlights the “imagery of a road recently [or newly] made.” Compare 12.24, where he uses a third Greek word, *neos*, that means “something recently made, in existence for a relatively short time.” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 184, 240, 306.

For “living” way, Hebrews uses the Greek *zo* (or the form *zao*, called “an invention of grammarians” by Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 160-161), that simply means “to be in a state of being alive” and occurs often in Scripture and in Hebrews in reference to God (see 3.12; 9.14; 10.31; 12.22; cf. 4.12; 7.25; 10.38; 12.9).

155. Descriptions of subsections here are from headings in Harold W. Attridge, “The Letter to the Hebrews,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 2262-2267.

156. Jesus is both *archegos* (“one noted for beginning something . . . originator, founder”; cf. 2.10) and *teleiotes* (“perfecter”; cf. 7.11, the lack of “perfection . . . of a cultic system deficient in total effectiveness”). Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 56, 350.

157. “Cross” (Greek *stauros*) is used only here (12.2) in Hebrews. Of Jesus, the writer also uses *pathema* (2.9, 10; cf. 10.32) which means “experience of pain or distress, suffering.” The Greek *pascho*, a verb that “relates to experience of something . . . [and] in the New Testament most often in the negative sense . . . with focus on experience of pain or death, suffer,” is used of Jesus as well in Hebrews (2.18; 5.8; 9.26; 13.12). Compare too the interesting use of *oneidismos* (“demeaning fault-finding, disgrace”) in the phrase “the reproach of Christ” (11.26; cf. 10.33; 13.13). Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 252, 263, 274-275.

158. D. Stephen Long, *Hebrews, Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*, General Editors, Amy Plantinga Pauw and William C. Placher (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox,

2011), 222, notes that the homilist “interrupts the flow of admonitions by a theophanic temple vision. Verses 18–24 might seem out of place. They lack the imperative structure that characterizes this section. Nor do they fit with the string of practical counsel that flanks both sides of this section. Yet because the author just told his audience to ‘pursue peace . . . and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord,’ this interlude makes perfect sense. It follows upon the rigorous word about Esau as a word of comfort about the access they now have to God’s presence. Zion fulfills Sinai. It does not do away with it. The serious call to holiness demanded by Sinai remains in effect. The author will follow up on these contrasting theophanies by reminding his listeners that ‘God is a consuming fire’ (12.29). The serious call remains, but it has a mediator who is enthroned in a ‘festal gathering,’ who accomplished that holiness and is now the source and perfection of its fulfillment for others, some of whom are now ‘made perfect.’”

159. In Hebrews 13.12, the Greek word for “city” is not used but is implied in the phrase “outside the gate” (Greek *exo tes pules*) and so translated in NRSV, “outside the city gate.” Similarly, in 13.14, *polis* occurs only one time but appropriately is mentioned twice in NRSV because of the Greek syntax. Benjamin A. Foreman, “Locating Jesus’ Crucifixion and Burial,” *Lexham Geographic Commentary on the Gospels*, General Editor, Barry J. Beitzel (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017), 506, comments on the crucifixion of Jesus that “the author of Hebrews is more explicit [than the Gospels] about the location, suggesting the crucifixion occurred near the city gate: ‘So Jesus also suffered outside the gate’ (Hebrews 13.12). Although this is an odd passage to find such a geographical detail, the author’s reference to the locality of such an important event *in passing* suggests it was well-known to his readers.”

160. The Greek word for “heavenly” or “celestial” is *epouranios* and defined “with reference to heaven, the place where God dwells with the beings and things that pertain to him; they may actually be there with him, or they may belong there by nature, or come from there.” William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Fourth Revised Edition (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 305. It is used in Hebrews 3.1; 6.4; 8.5; 9.23; 11.16; and 12.22; compare Paul’s use of the word in 1 Corinthians 15.40, 48, 49; Ephesians 1.3, 20; 2.6; 3.10; 6.12; Philippians 2.10; 2 Timothy 4.18.

On “strangers and foreigners on the earth” (11.13; Greek *zenoi kai parepidemoi eisin epi tes ges*), compare Ephesians 2.12, 19; also 13.2; Romans 12.13; and Isaiah 61.5; Obadiah 11. The Greek word for “homeland” is *patris* and indicates “a place or region one can call home . . . in the sense of native land.” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 275. On the theme of pilgrimage and promise in Hebrews, see Barker, Lane, and Michaels, *New Testament Speaks*, 317-319.

161. The writer’s use of *parembole* (“camp”) twice in 13.11, 13 is of interest. It designates the “spatial or structural arrangement for a group of people engaged in military or related activity . . . with focus on non-urban feature, camp, of temporary fortified place for Israelites on their march [in Hebrews].” Compare its use of the Messianic community in Revelation 20.9. It is more common in Acts for the barracks of Roman troops (see Acts 21.34, 37; 22.24; 23.10, 16, 32; 28.16). Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 271. The writer seems clear on his exhortation to his readers

here, “Let us then go to him [i.e., Jesus] outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured.” He seems to be implying, in a metaphorical sense, that Christians should go and remain “outside” physical Zion, that is, the earthly or temporal Jerusalem which is central to the temple apparatus of the old covenant. This is the point of his statement, “We have an altar from which those who officiate in the tent have no right to eat.” Believers in Jesus, the harbinger of a new and lasting covenant with God, have come “outside the gate” and even “outside the camp” to a new Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. He continues, “For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.” And this is where Christians “continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God” that is “pleasing to God” (13.10-16). See too the comments on this interesting use of *parembole* and “sacred space” in Long, *Hebrews*, 215-216.

On his use of *thusia* (“sacrifice” or “offering”), see 5.1; 7.27; 8.3; 9.9, 23, 26; 10.1, 5, 8, 11, 12, 26; 11.4; 13.15, 16. Compare *thusiasterion* (“altar”) in 7.13; 13.10; *thumiaterion* (“incense altar”) in 9.4; also *hilaskomai* (“to expiate”) in 2.17; and *hilasterion* (“place of expiation”) in 9.5. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 171, 172, 175. Too, the Greek word *prosphero* (“to bring” or “to present”), in the sense of a ritual offering or presentation, is used frequently in Hebrews. See Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 868.

162. Compare the phrase “the coming world” (Greek *ten oikoumenen ten mellousan*) in 2.5 (cf. 1.6). On “coming” (Greek *mello*) in reference to God’s created order, compare “age to come” (6.5), “city that is to come” (13.14). For theological comments on the “already but not yet” tension in New Testament salvation history, see Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, 166ff.

163. “Letter to Hebrews,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 2266. Compare comments by James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, The International Critical Commentary (reprint; Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1957), 213-214.

164. See Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies*, 399; Moyise, “The Old Testament in Hebrews,” *Old Testament in the New*, 149ff.

165. For example, on the denial of any possibility of a second repentance (12.17), parallel 6.4-8 and 10.26-31. On his use of “firstborn” (Greek *prototokos*; 12.23), see 1.6 and 11.28. For Jesus as “mediator” of a new and better covenant (12.24), compare 8.6 and 9.15. On his use of “sprinkled” (Greek *hrantismos*; 12.24), parallel the verb form, *hrantizo*, in 9.13, 19, 21 and 10.22. “The one who is speaking” and “the one who warns from heaven” in 12.25 echoes “God spoke” in 1.1 (cf. “word” of God in 1.3; 4.12; 6.5; 11.3; also 13.7). And the cosmic destruction of 12.26 (cf. Haggai 2.6) recalls 1.10-12. Attridge, “Letter to Hebrews,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 2266-2267.

166. The word translated “sanctuary” by NRSV in 9.24 is *hagia* (cf. *ta hagia*, “the Holy Place” in verse 25) and occurs about seventeen times in Hebrews. Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 13. It signifies what is “set apart for dedication to the interests or expectations of deity . . . of things [that are] holy, sacred, consecrated.” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 3-4. Compare the author’s use of *skene* (“tent” or “tabernacle”; 8.2, 5; 9.2, 3, 6, 8, 11, 21; 11.9; 13.10). Worthy of note, the book does not use *hieron* or *naos*, Greek words for “temple.”

The writer makes clear that Christ “entered” (Greek *eiserchomai*), not “copies of the true things” (Greek *antitupa ton alethinon*), but “into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us” (Greek *all’ eis auton ton ouranon, nun emphanisthenai to prosopo tou theou huper hemon*). Comfort and Brown, translators, *Greek-English Interlinear*, 778. The exact phrase “face of God” seems to be rare in Scripture, but compare Matthew 18.10; Revelation 6.16; 20.11; also Genesis 33.10; Psalm 42.2.

167. The Greek word *megalosune* (“majesty”; only here in 1.3; 8.1 and Jude 25 in the New Testament) is an expression or title for God. The phrase “on high” in 1.3 (Greek *hupselos*) could be comparable to “in the heavens” (Greek *en tois ouranois*) of 8.1. Compare *hupseloteros ton ouranon* in 7.26 (“exalted above [or ‘higher than’] the heavens”).

168. For other uses of *thronos* (“throne”) in Hebrews, see 4.16; 8.1; and 12.2. On *hrabdos* (“scepter” or “rod”), see 9.4; 11.21. For *basileia* (“reign” or “kingdom”), see 11.33; 12.28 (cf. *basileus*, “ruler” or “king,” in 7.1, 2; 11.23, 27). In the context of chapter 1, all three words imply royalty. Compare Long, *Hebrews*, 219-220, on Jesus as king and priest in Hebrews.

169. See discussion by David W Fletcher, “The Deity of Christ in the Psalms” (Spring 1979), *Religion–Biblical Studies*, online at: www.davidwfletcher.com/religion-files.php (accessed 26 December 2019).

170. The Greek phrase *en ouranois* in 12.23 literally is “in the heavens” or “in the heavenly places” (cf. 1.10; 4.14; 7.26; 8.1; 9.23, 24; 11.12; 12.23, 25, 26). The word for “mountain” (Greek *oros*; cf. 8.5; 11.38; 12.20, 22) occurs in some Greek manuscripts in 12.18 and is so reflected in NKJV (“the mountain that may be touched”; cf. “something that can be touched” in NRSV). Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 605. Compare Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 214-215. Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, Volume IV, 469, observes, “The name of *Sinai* is elegantly passed over in silence, whereas *Sion* is mentioned.”

On “heavenly Jerusalem,” George Wesley Buchanan, *To the Hebrews: Translation, Comment and Conclusions*, The Anchor Bible, Volume 36, General Editors, William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1972), 222, notes, “Zechariah had promised that when the Lord became king, Jerusalem would remain aloft upon its site as a city without a curse (Zechariah 14.9-11). In Ezekiel’s vision of the restored temple (40-48), he saw the glory of the Lord entering the temple (43.4), and Ezekiel was told that the temple would be the place of the Lord’s throne where he would dwell with his people forever (43.6-7, 9). ‘Heavenly Jerusalem’ was not used to mislead the reader into thinking Mount Zion was in heaven, although Jews and Christians believed there was a Jerusalem in heaven as well, but to affirm its divine origin, just as in 6.5 the heavenly gift was something believers on earth had tasted, meaning it was a teaching considered divine or heavenly.”

171. But Cody, “Hebrews,” *New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, 1236, notes about 12.18-24, “The heavenly city, goal of the Christian’s pilgrimage, at last appears in detail. At the same time the contrast of the two covenants, two orders of salvation, is made with the symbolism of two mountains—Sinai, the mountain where the old covenant was made, and Sion, the mountain

of the heavenly Jerusalem. . . . [In verse 22] the contrast found in the heavenly Sion begins. The imagery is apocalyptic and eschatological. Rabbinic Judaism made much of a restored Jerusalem, which was at the same time a ‘Jerusalem of the coming age’ and a ‘Jerusalem above’ (cf. Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum New Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* III, 532 and 573; Apocalypse 3.12; 5.11; 14.1; 21.2, 10; Galatians 4.26). In Hebrew’s perspectives this Jerusalem belongs to the heavenly world of valid spiritual realities (not a mountain that ‘can be touched’, 12.18) and of man’s meeting with God. It is also the Jerusalem which belongs to the eschatological age as an age which for the Old Testament was the coming age, but which is now the Messianic age already ushered in by Christ. And again, in Hebrew’s double perspective of the eschatological age as an age which is, and at the same time is yet to be, we have *already* come to the heavenly city . . . because we share already in the reality of the good things brought by Christ (10.1), but at the same time we are *still* on the way to the heavenly city ‘which is to come’ (13.14; cf. also 10.19-25).” Compare comments by Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 659, on 11.9-11, where he concludes, “New Testament texts like this one suggest that Christians’ future hope is inseparably connected with Israel’s history, and Christians do biblical tradition a great disservice to cut it loose from its historical moorings in ancient Israel.”

172. Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays* (reprint; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952), 410, comments, “You stand in view of heavenly glories immeasurably nobler than the terrors of Sinai. If then the people who were admitted to that revelation were charged to make every external preparation (Exodus 19.14f.), much more must you prepare yourselves spiritually.”

173. Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, Volume IV, 470-471, outlines a sevenfold opposition in verses 22-24: (1) “the *mountain* which was touched” with “*Mount Zion*”; (2) “the fire that burned” with “the city of the living God”; (3) “blackness or mist” with “ten thousand (an innumerable company) of angels and of the first-born”; (4) “darkness” with “God, the Judge of all”; (5) “tempest” with “the spirits of just men made perfect”; (6) “the sound of a trumpet” with “Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament”; and (7) “the *voice* of words” with “the blood of sprinkling *speaking* what is very good.”

174. Westcott, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 413, remarks, “Over against ‘the material and kindled fire’ or Sinai is set the mountain and city of God, His palace and the home of His people. . . . He is not revealed in one passing vision of terrible Majesty as at the giving of the Law, but in His proper ‘dwelling-place.’ Zion is distinctively the ‘acropolis,’ the seat of God’s throne, and Jerusalem the city. . . . In the spiritual reality Mount Zion represents the strong divine foundation of the new Order, while the City of the Living God represents the social structure in which the Order is embodied. God—Who is a Living God—does not dwell alone, but surrounded by His people. His Majesty and His Love are equally represented in the New Jerusalem.” Craig G. Bartholomew, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 517, says, “Positively, Hebrews does envision a new temple. In 12.22-23 the readers are reminded that they already have come to Mount Zion, a new-temple image. This is juxtaposed with the images of ‘the city of the living God,’ ‘the heavenly Jerusalem,’ and ‘the assembly of the firstborn.’ The description of

Christians as ‘firstborn’ is related to the description of Christ in 1.6 as ‘the firstborn.’ Lane argues that 1.6 refers not to Jesus’s incarnation but to his ascension. If this is right, then firstborn would be associated with the resurrection of the dead, a major element in Jewish new-creation eschatology. Certainly the language of heavenly place must be read within the eschatological framework of Hebrews so that, as in other parts of the New Testament, the vision of a new temple does not mean going to heaven but refers to a creation in which God dwells, precisely the picture we find in Revelation 21. As C. K. Barrett points out, ‘The heavenly tabernacle in Hebrews is not the product of Platonic idealism, but the eschatological temple of apocalyptic Judaism, the temple which is in heaven primarily in order that it be manifested on earth.’”

175. Perhaps Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 341, draws the contrast too sharply when he writes, “Zion does not stand for the new covenant and its already realized benefits. It stands for the final reconciliation of God with his people when God in Christ comes down to earth. Our author paints a vivid picture of that final theophany so the audience can almost see it. But they have not yet partaken of it or participated in it.” Contrast the treatment by Long, *Hebrews*, 222-224, who states, “The author of Hebrews contrasts covenants, the one made at Mount Sinai with Moses and the other at Mount Zion with Jesus. An explicit mention of Sinai is not present [in 12.18-24], but it is clearly what the author has in mind. If Sinai represents the Mosaic covenant, Zion represents the Davidic. Hebrews has not rejected the former.” Long continues and emphasizes the holiness that is demanded in our approaching or coming to God with respect to both Moses (i.e., Mount Sinai) and Jesus (i.e., Mount Zion). He says, “Hebrews suggest a shift in holiness. This shift would be misconstrued if we interpret it as material versus immaterial, as earthly versus heavenly. . . . Hebrews contrasts what they have not approached to what they have. This emphasizes the liturgical setting. To approach is to go toward God’s presence; it is the act of gathering for worship. . . . The first contrast between ‘something that can be touched,’ suggests a contrast between something material and something immaterial. In part this is undeniable. This city is not locatable in the same way Sinai was. Zion is still to come even though it is already present in heaven. Angels, the firstborn, and the perfected spirits of the righteous inhabit it, but we cannot yet go to it and designate it by pointing. It cannot be ‘touched.’ But it is a reality through the ‘sprinkled blood.’ In that sense it is as material as Jesus himself. It is a liturgical site where people can gather in order to live in communion with ‘innumerable angels,’ and those who have gone before us, ordering their lives to God, Jesus, the spirit of the righteous, and the new covenant.”

176. *Hebrews*, A Good News Commentary, edited by W. Ward Gasque (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1983), 209. Compare the assessment, “Peroration: Theophanies Behind and Before Them (Hebrews 12.18-29),” and the section, “A Closer Look: Realized Eschatology in Hebrews?” in Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians*, 335ff., 347ff.

177. Samuel T. Lowrie, *An Explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York, NY: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1884), 484-485, notes, “The words we have before us are not an answer to the question: what is this Mount Zion to which believers have come? They answer the question: where have believers come to hear God speak? In that answer the item: it is Zion, is as important

as any that follow, and as something overlooked, needs as much to be affirmed.” See too “The God Who Speaks” in Long, *Hebrews*, 228-232.

178. On similar thoughts about creation and providence, see 1.2-3, 10-12; 2.5, 10; 4.3-4; 11.1-3. On the use of *poieo* (“produce something material . . . of divine productivity, make, create”), see 1.2 (cf. *ktisma*, “created entity” or “creation” in 4.13; 9.11). On *metathesis* (“removal” or “change”), compare 7.12; 11.5. For *saleuo* (“cause to waver or totter, shake . . . [of] things and structures”), see Matthew 24.29; Mark 13.25; Acts 4.31; 16.26. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 209, 229, 290, 316. See too the comments by Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians*, 346, who states, “The ‘shake-up’ does not have to do with the complete dissolution of the material realm but rather of the sorting of all things and putting them right. Finally, the new and glorious dwelling place of God will be where God grants shalom, final wholeness for his people, hence the language in our passage about all–Old Testament and New Testament saints–being joined together and all being perfected together. To be sure our author envisions the replacement of the temporal and the temporary by the permanent and eternal, which comes down from heaven, but he is not envisioning the replacement of the material realm with a nonmaterial realm. . . . The heavenly city involves persons like Jesus who have a resurrection body and those who have received at his coming a better resurrection. What our author envisions is not less solid or material, it is more so, more permanent—an unshakable kingdom on earth, as it once was in heaven but has come down and is in the process of being received but has not yet reached its consummate state. Shaking of the earth (i.e., earthquakes) was regularly associated with theophanies and especially with the coming Yom Yahweh, the Day of the Lord (Isaiah 13; 34; Ezekiel 7; 30.1-9; Joel 2.1-11), and more generally with the end times (2 *Baruch* 32.1; 2 Esdras [4 Ezra] 6.16; 20.26; *Sibylline Oracles* 3.675). ‘The text does not suggest that God destroys a lower realm and preserves a higher one . . . both heaven and earth are shaken.’”

Compare the comments by Bartholomew, “Excursus B: Creation and Eschatology in Hebrews,” *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, 511-518; and Beale, “The Already–Not Yet Resurrection and New-Creational Kingdom in the General Epistles,” *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 317-322. Beale concludes his section on Hebrews saying, “Jesus is the greater Moses whom God has delivered from death at the greater exodus, along with his people. And just as the exodus was thought of as a new creation, so it is followed by the even more monumental new exodus and new creation in Jesus’s resurrection. Just as the first exodus was to lead to the establishment of the temporary temple (e.g., Exodus 15.17; Isaiah 63.18), so Isaiah 63.15 . . . and 64.1 . . . prophesy that the second, end-time exodus (Isaiah 63.11) will also lead to God’s heavenly sanctuary descending to earth and residing permanently. As Hebrews has recounted in earlier chapters, Jesus has led his people to that heavenly mountain-tabernacle (6.19-20; 9.11-12, 23-24; 10.19-22; 12.22-24).” Beale emphasizes the resurrection of Jesus in his comments, but interestingly the writer of Hebrews mentions explicitly the resurrection of Jesus only one time in 13.20. See also the comments by Stibbs, “Hebrews,” *New Bible Commentary*, edited by Guthrie and Motyer, 1219.

179. “Letter to Hebrews,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 2267.

180. The book is an apocalypse or revelation (Greek *apokalupsis*; 1.1), a prophecy (Greek *propheteia*; 1.3; cf. 11.6; 19.10; 22.7, 10, 18, 19), and a letter or writing that has the usual epistolary conventions (1.3, 4-6, 11; cf. 2.1, 8, 12, 18; 3.1, 7, 14; 22.21). In his book, John uses “write” (Greek *grapho*) about thirty times. Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 178-179. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 46, says *apokalupsis* means “making fully known, uncovering, disclosure, revelation, in the New Testament only of disclosure implicitly linked with divine plan, purpose, or action.” John in this writing adheres firmly to the tradition of Jewish apocalyptic literature, but on variations to the tradition due to the composite nature of John’s writing, see the brief comments by Leon Morris, “The Revelation to John,” *Apocalyptic* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 91-95. Compare “What Kind of Book Is Revelation?” in Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Theology, General Editor, James D. G. Dunn (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1-17; also Court, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 14, 303-305; Larry R. Helyer, “Apocalypticism,” *World of the New Testament*, edited by Green and McDonald, 252-263; Moyise, “The Old Testament in Revelation,” *Old Testament in the New*, 189ff. For a this-worldly, socioeconomic interpretation of Revelation, see Walter Brueggemann, “The Book of Revelation: The Ultimate Alternative,” *Money and Possessions*, Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church, Series Editor, Samuel E. Balentine (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2016), 265-279.

181. The Greek word *deiknumi* or *deiknuo* (“display” or “show”) indicates something “to be observed by another [in the sense of] point out, make known” or “to be understood by another [in the sense of] explain, demonstrate.” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 85. John uses this word in Revelation 1.1; 4.1; 17.1; 21.9, 10; 22.1, 6, 8. “What must soon take place” literally is “the things that must happen with speed” (Greek *he dei genesthai en tachei*). On John’s use of *dei* (“it is necessary”), see also 4.1; 10.11; 11.5; 13.10; 17.10; 20.3; 22.6. On his use of *tachos* (“soon” or “without delay”), compare 22.6.

182. The Greek words for see (the visual sense), for example, *blepo*, *idou*, and *orao*, are frequent in Revelation with sixteen, twenty-six, and seven occurrences respectively. Also, words about hearing (the auditory sense) occur often (e.g., *akouo*, “to hear,” is used 45 times; *phone*, “sound” or “noise” or “voice,” is used 47 times). On John’s use of *phaino* (“shine” or “appear”), see 1.16; 8.12; 18.23; 21.23. For *phaneroo* (“to make known” or “to show”), see 3.18; 15.4. As to be expected in a book of the apocalyptic genre, “angels” (Greek *aggeloi*) are everywhere and appear about sixty-seven times. Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 9-10, 38, 150, 470-471, 703, 999.

183. This is the first of seven beatitudes in Revelation (cf. 14.13; 16.15; 19.9; 20.6; 22.7, 14). On John’s use of *anaginosko*, here of “public reading aloud,” so Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 23, compare Matthew 24.15; Mark 12.26; Luke 4.16; Colossians 4.16.

184. The Greek is *ho gar kairos eggus*. On John’s use of *kairos* (“time” or “period”), compare 11.18; 12.12, 14; 22.10. For his other use of *eggus* (“near” or “close”), see 22.10.

185. The Greek word translated “testimony” is *marturia* which means “testimony” or “witness” in the “sense of attestation as appraisal or approval.” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 222.

186. The opening doxology to Christ is punctuated by two brief oracles. The first, in verse 6, is from Exodus 19.6. The second, in verse 7, alludes to Daniel 7.13 and is applied by John to Jesus as the coming Son of Man (cf. 14.14; Mark 8.38; 13.26). See David E. Aune, “The Revelation to John (Apocalypse),” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 2310.

187. Compare “Alpha and Omega” with “the first and the last” (1.17; 2.8; 22.13; see Isaiah 41.4; 44.6; 48.13) and “the beginning and the end” (21.6; 22.13).

188. John refers to “Jesus” fourteen times in Revelation including “Jesus Christ” in 1.1, 2, 5 and “Lord Jesus” in 22.20, 21. He refers to “Christ” eight times, the three above and also at 11.15; 12.10; 20.4, 6; and 22.21 in some manuscripts.

189. John uses *archon* (“ruler” or “official”) only here (1.5) in Revelation. He uses *basileus* (“ruler” or “king”) nineteen times in Revelation and *basileia* (“reign” or “kingdom”) nine times (1.6, 9; 5.10; 11.15; 12.10; 16.10; 17.12, 17, 18). Compare also his use of *basileuo* (“to rule”) in 5.10; 11.15, 17; 19.6; 20.4, 6; 22.5. Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 143, 144.

190. Aune, “Revelation,” 2310, notes that the “seven spirits” are “the seven archangels who stand before God (3.1; 4.5; 5.6; 8.2; see also Tobit 12.15; Luke 1.19; *1 Enoch* 20.1-7). Other interpreters view the seven spirits here as a reference to the Holy Spirit. The number “seven” (Greek *hepta*) is frequent in Revelation with thirty-four occurrences. See Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 375-376.

191. A good example of this is John’s use of *pantokrator* which means “mighty ruler of all” or “Almighty” (Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 265). With the exception of 2 Corinthians 6.18, it is used only in Revelation in the New Testament. See as well his use of *kratos* (“power” or “dominion”) in the doxologies of 1.6; 5.13 (cf. Luke 1.51; Ephesians 1.19; 6.10; Colossians 1.11; 1 Timothy 6.16; Hebrews 2.14; 1 Peter 4.11; 5.11; Jude 25).

192. See especially the section on John’s Revelation, “The Lamb will conquer,” in Klaus Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*, translated by John Bowden (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1987), 118-135. Wengst begins this section with the following observation: “There is no direct mention of Rome at any point. Nevertheless controversy with the *imperium* runs through the whole book. The reality governed by the Pax Romana is seen very clearly. That happens in an unprecedentedly one-sided way. There is not a single positive statement, nor even a neutral one; Rome and its actions are only depicted in the darkest colours.” Compare Bauckham, “The Critique of Roman Power,” *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 35-39; David A. DeSilva, *Unholy Allegiances: Heeding Revelation’s Warning* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013); J. Nelson Kraybill, *Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics, and Devotion in the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010); Leonard L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1990). See,

however, the contrary view of Leonhard Goppelt, *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times*, translated by Robert A. Guelich (London, England: Adam & Charles Black, 1970), 111-112, who says, “Revelation does not propose an apocalyptic rejection of the attitude of apparent recognition of the state. . . . Christians, as aliens, are both free from the world as God’s creation by serving in its institutions until the day of visitation. The Apocalypse forbids neither the serving of the world, nor intercession for it, but warns against worshipping it.”

On early Christianity as a countercultural political religion, see the interesting piece by Robin Phillips, “Political Christianity in the Early Church,” *Christian Voice* (Carmarthen, Wales: Stephen Green, 2020), online at: www.repentuk.com/Articles/Political%20Christianity.pdf (accessed 1 January 2020).

193. On “in the spirit” (Greek *en pneumati*) in Revelation, see 4.2; 17.3; 21.10 (cf. Acts 19.21; Romans 8.9; 1 Corinthians 6.11; 14.2; Ephesians 4.23; 6.18; Philippians 2.1; 3.3; Colossians 1.8; 1 Peter 3.18; 4.6). For “the Lord’s day” (Greek *en te kuriake hemera*), compare “the Lord’s supper” (Greek *kuriakon deipnon*) in 1 Corinthians 11.20.

194. The later date is suggested by both the nature and extent of the persecution reflected in Revelation. It is worldwide (3.10); it involves emperor worship (13.4, 12, 15ff.; 14.9, 11; 15.2; 16.2; 19.20; 20.4); the persecution already has begun (17.6; cf. 1.9; 2.10, 13; 6.9); and the persecution has begun again or has been renewed (17.8, 11). Also, the more developed circumstance of the churches seems to indicate the later date (e.g., 2.4; 3.17). See Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 949-961; compare Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 221-253.

195. On John’s use of *nikao* (“conquer” or “overcome”) in Revelation, see 2.7, 11, 17, 26; 3.5, 12, 21; 5.5; 6.2; 11.7; 12.11; 13.7; 15.2; 17.14; 21.7.

196. See “Traditional Interpretive Approaches” in Gilbert Desrosiers, *An Introduction to Revelation: A Pathway to Interpretation*, Continuum Biblical Studies Series, Edited by Steve Moyise (New York, NY: Continuum, 2000), 25-37.

197. John uses “Son of Man” in Revelation 1.13 and 14.14. In both instances he prefaces *hion anthropou* with *homoion* (from *homoios* meaning “similar to” or “like”). He uses “Son of God” only once (2.18; cf. 12.5). On his use of *kurios* (“sir” or “lord”), see 1.8; 4.8, 11; 7.14; 11.4, 8, 15, 17; 14.13; 15.3, 4; 16.7; 17.14; 18.8; 19.6, 16; 21.22; 22.5, 6, 20, 21.

198. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 867, states, “In the unfolding drama of the book, the theme of judgment is never far away.”

199. The interlude also could be organized as a series of “seven signs and characters before final judgment” (e.g., the woman, child, and dragon in 12.1-6; Satan cast out of heaven in 12.7-12; the woman persecuted in 12.13-17; the beast from the sea in 13.1-10; the beast from the earth in 13.11-18; the Lamb and the 144,000 in 14.1-5; and the three angels and the harvest of the Son of Man in 14.6-20). See “Revelation,” *The NKJV Study Bible*, Second Edition, General Editor, Earl D. Radmacher (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014), 2068; also Charles H. Talbert, “The Seven Agents of Judgment, Revelation 14.1-20,” *The Apocalypse: A Reading of the Revelation of*

John (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 59-68. Talbert notes, “In 14.6-20 there are seven announcements of God’s judgment, starting with that on Babylon (verse 8) and those with the mark of the beast (verses 9-10) that comes at the end of, but within, history. These announcements are made by seven agents, six of whom are specified as angels (verses 6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18). The only exception comes in verse 14 where the agent is called ‘one like a son of man.’”

200. See chapters on “Seeing Things,” “Hearing Voices,” and “Games with Time,” in Harry O. Maier, *Apocalypse Recalled: The Book of Revelation after Christendom* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), 64-163. For an emphasis on the visual nature of Revelation, see Christopher A. Frilingos, *Spectacles of Empires: Monsters, Martyrs, and the Book of Revelation* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). For a brief analysis of imagery in Revelation, see Ian Paul, “The Book of Revelation: Image, Symbol and Metaphor,” *Studies in the Book of Revelation*, edited by Steve Moyise (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 2001), 131-147.

201. John J. Scullion, “Revelation (The Apocalypse),” *New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, 1279, states, “Sion is, prophetically, the traditional place where the remnant will assemble as the kernel of the Messianic kingdom of 2 Kings 19.30-31; Joel 2.32; Obadiah 17; Zephaniah 3.12-13. Here it is not the geographical Sion, but the ideal place of refuge for the people of God.”

202. The Greek word for “throne” (*thronos*) is used about forty times in Revelation with only fourteen occurrences total in all other New Testament writings. See Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 462-463.

203. John’s emphasis here in 5.5 is on Jesus as Davidic Messiah (cf. 2.28; 3.7; 22.16). Aune, “Revelation,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 2316, notes, “*Lion of the tribe of Judah* (Genesis 49.9-10), a metaphor for the king or Messiah expected to come from the royal tribe of Judah, a claim frequently made for Jesus (Hebrews 7.14; 8.8). *Root of David* (see also 22.16), meaning stock of David or descendant of David, king of Israel, is a messianic title (see Isaiah 11.1, 10; Jeremiah 23.5; 33.15; Zechariah 3.8; 6.12; Romans 15.12). The Davidic ancestry of Jesus is frequently mentioned in the New Testament (Matthew 1.1; Luke 2.4; John 7.42; Acts 2.30-32; 13.22-23; Romans 1.3; 2 Timothy 2.8).”

204. In 5.9, “they sing a new song” in Greek is *kai adousin oden kainen*. “Song” (Greek *ode*) is used by John in Revelation four times (5.9; twice in 14.3; and 15.3) and only two other times in the New Testament (Ephesians 5.19; Colossians 3.16). Similarly, the verb *ado* (“to sing”) is used only in Ephesians 5.19 and Colossians 3.16 and by John (Revelation 5.9; 14.3; 15.3).

205. Here in 5.13, “the Lamb” (i.e., Jesus) is given equal “blessing and honor and glory and might” with “the one seated on the throne.” Compare 1.14 where John describes “one like the Son of Man” (an allusion to Daniel 7.13; see also Revelation 1.7; 14.14) with “his head and his hair . . . white as white wool, white as snow” which is a reference to the Ancient of Days (i.e., God) in Daniel 7.9. John in this description of Christ implicitly characterizes the Son of Man as God. So Aune, “Revelation,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 2311.

206. Definitely, 1.12ff. with its emphasis on the vision and the victory of the Son of Man over “Death and Hades” can be considered the keynote for John’s entire Revelation, with a general outline of its contents in 1.19. But the backdrop for the Mount Zion passage in chapter 14 seems to be his vision of chapters 4 and 5 with its emphasis on “the Lion” who is “the Lamb.”

207. The Greek word *arnion* (“lamb” or “sheep”) is used only by John in the New Testament and only in Revelation (twenty-eight times) with the exception of John 21.15. Compare *aren* (“lamb”) in Luke 10.3 and *amnos* (“lamb”) in John 1.29, 36; Acts 8.32; 1 Peter 1.19.

208. The word for “slaughtered” is *sphadzo* (used in New Testament only in Revelation 5.6, 9, 12; 6.4, 9; 13.3, 8; 18.24; and 1 John 3.12) and means to “put to death in a violent manner, slay, slaughter.” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 344.

209. For “center” (Greek *mesos*) in Revelation, see 1.13; 2.1; 4.6; 5.6; 6.6; 7.17; 22.2. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 228, indicates that the word means “at a point in or near the center.”

210. “Beast” (Greek *therion*) is used about thirty-two times in Revelation. Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 459-460. On the convergence of “beast” with the word for “image” (Greek *eikon*), see Revelation 13.14, 15; 14.9, 11; 15.2; 16.2; 19.20; 20.4.

211. The Greek word *enopion* (“in the presence of”) is a favorite for John which he uses in Revelation about thirty times. Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 341. On *orge* (“wrath”), see 6.16, 17; 11.18; 14.10; 16.19; 19.15.

212. The verb for “wash” is the Greek *pluno*, used infrequently in the New Testament, and means to clean or wash fishing nets (e.g., Luke 5.2) or, metaphorically, of personal purification (e.g., Revelation 7.14; 22.14). Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 289. On the word for “robe” (*stole*), compare Revelation 6.11; 7.9, 13; 22.14; Mark 12.38; 16.5; Luke 15.22; 20.46. For *leukaino* (“to make white”), see Mark 9.3 and compare the word for “white” (Greek *leukos*) in Revelation 1.14; 2.17; 3.4, 5, 18; 4.4; 6.2, 11; 7.9, 13; 14.14; 19.11, 14; 20.11. The phrase “blood of the Lamb” is unique to John in Revelation (*en to haimati tou arniou*, 7.14; *dia to haima tou arniou*, 12.11). For John’s other uses of “blood” (Greek *haima*) in Revelation, see 1.5; 5.9; 6.10, 13; 8.7, 8; 11.6; 14.20; 16.3, 4, 6; 17.6; 18.24; 19.2, 13.

213. On “to tend” or “to shepherd” (Greek *poimaino*), compare Revelation 2.27; 12.5; and 19.15 with 7.17.

214. The “marriage supper” in 19.9 literally is “the supper of the wedding of the Lamb” (Greek *to deipnon tou gamou tou arniou*; NGEI). On “supper” (Greek *deipnon*), compare 19.17; on “marriage” or “wedding” (Greek *gamos*), see 19.7.

215. The Greek word (*phoinix*) that indicates the fronds or leaves of the date-palm tree, or “palm branches,” is used in the New Testament only here in Revelation 7.9 and in John 12.13. It is “in many ancient cultures a symbol of victory.” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 375.

216. John uses *polis* (“city”) twenty-five times in Revelation with twelve of those in chapters 21 and 22. Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 834. On his use of *naos* (“temple”) in Revelation, see 3.12; 7.15; 11.1, 2, 19; 14.15, 17; 15.5, 6, 8; 16.1, 17; 21.22.

217. Brown and Comfort, *Greek-English Interlinear*, 886, render the Greek phrase *kai idou to arnion hestos epi to oros Sion* as “and behold the Lamb having taken [his] stand on Mount Zion.” The perfect participle form of *histemi* (“to cause to be in a place or position” or “to stand . . . in various situations . . . in the presence of someone,” so Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 178) seems to be emphatic here in 14.1 as very soon the Lamb (i.e., “one like the Son of Man”) will commence judgment (14.14; cf. Acts 7.56).

Some commentators see John here reflecting Psalm 2.6, “I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.” So G. B. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1966), 179; compare J. P. M. Sweet, *Revelation*, Westminster Pelican Commentaries (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1979). Sweet states, “*On Mount Zion stood the Lamb: stood* is a participle, *standing*; contrast the frantic activity of chapter 13. *Mount Zion* is the heavenly counterpart of the earthly Jerusalem, where the nations gather for attack, and God, or his Messiah, appears to confound them, as in 2 Esdras 13.5-11, 34-38.”

218. Of New Testament writers, John makes the most use of Greek words for “thousand” (i.e., *chilias* in 5.11; 7.4, 5, 6, 7, 8; 11.13; 14.1, 3; 21.16, and *chilioi* in 11.3; 12.6; 14.20; 20.2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). For his use of *dodeka* (“twelve”), see 7.5, 6, 7, 8; 12.1; 21.12, 14, 16, 21; 22.2. For his use of *hekatontesserakonta tessares* (“one hundred forty-four”), see 7.4; 14.1, 3; 21.17. Aune, “Revelation,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 2318, identifies the 144,000 as “the martyr-witness cadre of the church, calculated using twelve as a multiple of twelve. The number here [in 7.4] represents the people of God but later [in 14.1] refers to martyrs.” See Caird, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 94-96. Other commentators view 144,000 as a symbol for the whole people of God. See Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 743-744; compare Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, Revised Edition, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, General Editor, Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 158-160.

219. The word for “forehead” (Greek *metopon*) is used only in Revelation in the New Testament (7.3; 9.4; 13.16; 14.1, 9; 17.5; 20.4; 22.4), although a variant reading in Luke 23.48 does use the word (see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 155-156). John uses the word *sphragidzo* (“to mark with a seal . . . to indicate ownership”; see 7.3, 4, 5, 8; 10.4; 20.3; 22.10) or *sphragis* (“seal . . . mark left by a device for certification”; see 5.1, 2, 5, 9; 6.1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 7.2; 8.1; 9.4) and the word *charagma* (“of a mark engraved on the human body . . . brand”; see 13.16, 17; 14.9, 11; 16.2; 19.20; 20.4) with “forehead” several times to emphasize identity or ownership. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 344, 380. In 14.1, though, he identifies the 144,000 as having “his Father’s name” (i.e., the Father of the Lamb; cf. 1.6; 2.28; 3.5, 21) inscribed on their foreheads (cf. 22.4; contrast 17.5). See too comments on “The Restoration of the Image in the Book of Revelation” in Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 465.

220. See Ben Witherington III, *Revelation*, The New Cambridge Bible Commentary, General Editor, Ben Witherington III (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 184-186.

221. John uses the word for “purchase” or “redeem” (Greek *agoradzo*) here twice, in verses 3 and 4 (cf. 3.18; 5.9; 13.17; 18.11). On “from the earth” (Greek *apo tes ges*), compare 6.4.

222. John here in 14.4 likens spiritual purity to sexual purity with words that he uses infrequently in Revelation, for example, *parthenos* (“virgin”; only here), *moluno* (“to defile”; here and 3.4). Compare, though, *porneia* (“fornication”; 2.21; 9.21; 14.8; 17.2, 4; 18.3; 19.2), *porneuo* (“to fornicate”; 2.14, 20; 17.2; 18.3, 9), *porne* (“prostitute”; 17.1, 5, 15, 16; 19.2), *bdelugma* (“abomination”; 17.4, 5; 21.27). Sweet, *Revelation*, 222, comments, “*Have not defiled themselves with women*: perhaps the most misunderstood words in the book. Unchastity is a regular biblical metaphor for religious infidelity (see on 2.15 and on Jezebel, 2.20), and John is preparing for the harlot-bride contrast ([chapters] 17–22). But there is a positive point. For orthodox Jews (and Christians) marriage and sexual intercourse were good, but the latter was temporarily defiling (Leviticus 15.18) and thus a disqualification for priestly or military duty (war was ‘holy’ in the Old Testament; cf. Deuteronomy 23.9-14; 1 Samuel 21.5). The men who gathered at Qumran in military and priestly guise to prepare for the final War of Yahweh were (mostly) celibate; and Christians, who also saw the Day of the Lord as imminent and themselves as metaphorically on military and priestly service (‘a kingdom and priests’, 1.6; 5.10) may have lived as celibates where possible (cf. Matthew 19.10-12)—in order to be at the Lord’s disposal without distraction (1 Corinthians 7.32-33). The next words here suggest that the point is undivided devotion, in a religious task for which purity is essential (cf. 3.4). There maleness is simply part of the military metaphor; they represent the whole church.” See as well comments by Caird, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 179; Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 266-268.

223. John uses the word for “blameless” or “unblemished” (Greek *amomos*) only here (cf. Ephesians 1.4; 5.27; Philippians 2.15; Colossians 1.22; Hebrews 9.14; 1 Peter 1.19; Jude 24).

224. On “firstfruits” (Greek *aparche*), only used here in Revelation, compare Romans 8.23; 11.16; 16.5; 1 Corinthians 15.20, 23; 16.15; 2 Thessalonians 2.13; James 1.18. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 40, remarks that *aparche* means to “make a beginning in sacrifice . . . of first portions set apart for deity . . . [and] by extension, of persons . . . [or] the [Holy] Spirit.”

225. For the phrase “on the earth” (Greek *epi tes ges*) in 14.6, see also 8.5; 9.3; 16.1, 2. In Revelation, John refers to “the earth” nearly seventy times and to “heaven” almost fifty times. NRSV; “Bible Gateway” Online.

226. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 228, describes *mesouranema* as “from the perspective of the observer ‘in the sky overhead’, midheaven.” In the New Testament, it is used only in Revelation 8.13; 14.6; 19.17. The Greek word for “fly” (*petomai*) also is used only in Revelation 4.7; 8.13; 12.14; 14.6; 19.17.

227. “Eternal gospel” (Greek *euaggelion aionion*) is used only here in the New Testament and is John’s only use of both *aionios* and *euaggelion* in the book. John’s preferred word for a lengthy or extended period of time is *aion* (see 1.6, 18; 4.9, 10; 5.13; 7.12; 10.6; 11.15; 14.11; 15.3, 7; 19.3; 20.10; 22.5). “Eternal” is to be contrasted with “the transient gospel” of the emperor cult that leads to “eternal torment.” So Sweet, *Revelation*, 225.

228. On *krisis* (“judgment”), compare 16.7; 18.10; 19.2 with 14.7. For John’s use of *krino* (“to judge,” “to pass judgment on,” “to condemn”), see 6.10; 11.18; 16.5; 18.8, 20; 19.2, 11; 20.12, 13. For his use of *krima* (“judicial verdict” or “condemnation”), see 17.1; 18.20; 20.4. Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 207-208. Here, in 14.7, *hora* (“hour”) is used with “judgment” (cf. 3.3, 10; 9.15; 11.13; 14.15; 17.12; 18.10, 16, 19). Also, compare John’s use of *chronos* (“time”) in 2.21; 6.11; 10.6; 20.3.

On John’s word for “judgment,” Sweet, *Revelation*, 226, observes, “The language is reminiscent of the Fourth Gospel, in which *krisis* (literally ‘sifting’) has two senses: sorting into already determined categories (3.19-21), and changing the categories—upsetting the old balance of power (12.31-33). Normally the New Testament makes no distinction between the final coming of Christ and the day of judgment, when the new alignments brought about by his first coming are finally ratified. But our John does separate the two, and we should be open to the possibility that he sees Christ’s final coming not simply as classificatory, like the judgment of 20.11ff., but as creative, bringing to final effect what his first coming initiated, as ‘first fruits.’”

229. On John’s use of Babylon, see 14.8; 16.19; 17.5; 18.2, 10, 21 (cf. Matthew 1.11, 12, 17; Acts 7.43; 1 Peter 5.13). “Wrath” in the phrase “the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Greek *ek tou oinou tou thumou tes porneias autēs*) is not the usual *orge* (i.e., 6.16, 17; 11.18; 14.10; 16.19; 19.15) but *thumos* (see 12.12; 14.8, 10, 19; 15.1, 7; 16.1, 19; 18.3; 19.15). Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 171-172, says *thumos* indicates a “‘passionate state of mind’, the precise quality determined by context . . . with probable overlapping of the idea in wrath, anger . . . and frequently in Revelation of God’s *orge*.” Sweet, *Revelation*, 226, adds, “*Thumos* can mean strong feeling or desire as well as anger, and this is clearly a condensed allusion to Jeremiah 51.7, ‘Babylon has been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, to make all the earth drunk; . . . her wine . . . has made them mad.’ The *cup* motif is taken up at verse 10. John adds *fornication* to make clear the allusion to Jezebel (2 Kings 9.22) and the idolatry, with its consequent immorality, which was integral to city civilization in the near East.” For John’s use of *oinos* (“wine”) in the book, see 6.6; 14.8, 10; 16.19; 17.2; 18.3, 13; 19.15. For *poterion* (“cup”), see 14.10; 16.19; 17.4; 18.6. For *potidzo* (“to give to drink”), see 14.8; for *pino* (“to drink”), see 14.10; 16.6; 18.3.

230. “Out of heaven” (*ek tou ouranou*) and “in heaven” (*en to ourano*) are frequent expressions in Revelation. See Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 730.

231. Verse 13 literally reads, “blessed [are] the dead, the ones in [the] Lord dying from now, yes, says the Spirit, so that they will rest from the labors of them, for the works of them follow after them” (Greek *makarioi hoi nekroi hoi en kurio apothneskontes ap’ arti, nai, legei to pneuma, hina anapaesontai ek ton kopon auton, ta gar erga auton akolouthei met’ auton*; NGEI). For *nekros* (“dead one”) in Revelation, see 1.5, 17, 18; 2.8; 3.1; 11.18; 14.13; 16.3; 20.5, 12, 13. Compare *thanatos* (“death”) in 1.18; 2.10, 11, 23; 6.8; 9.6; 12.11; 13.3, 12; 18.8; 20.6, 13, 14; 21.4, 8. For *apothensko* (“to die”), see 3.2; 8.9, 11; 9.6; 14.13; 16.3. Compare *apokteino* (“to kill”), see 2.13, 23; 6.8, 11; 9.5, 15, 18, 20; 11.5, 7, 13; 13.10, 15; 19.21. For *anapauo* (“rest” or “refresh with rest”), see also 6.11. On *kopos* (“labor” or “hard work”), compare 2.2. On *ergon* (“deed” or “work”), see 2.5, 6, 19, 22, 23, 26; 3.1, 2, 8, 15; 9.20; 14.13; 15.3; 16.11; 18.6; 20.12, 13; 22.12. The word for “follow” (Greek *akoloutheo*) is used four times by John in this context

(14.4, 8, 9, 13; cf. 6.8; 19.14). The “refreshment” or “rest” promised to those who follow after, labor for, and even die for the Lamb is highly intentional here (e.g., *hina*, “in order that” they will rest from their labors). Just as they “follow the Lamb wherever he goes” (i.e., even to death; verse 4), their works will follow after them (i.e., as a witness to others about their faith in Jesus). This would have been tremendous encouragement for those who were being persecuted and even put to death for their testimony about Jesus. The contrast with the torment and the lack of rest (i.e., “no rest day or night”) for “those who worship the beast and its image” (verse 11) is obvious.

232. John’s imagery here, as throughout the entire book, is rich and vibrant. For “white” (Greek *leukos*), see Note 212 above. For “cloud” (Greek *nephela*), see 1.7; 10.1; 11.12; 14.14, 15, 16. For “golden” (*chruseos*), see 1.12, 13, 20; 2.1; 4.4; 5.8; 8.3; 9.13, 20; 14.14; 15.6, 7; 17.4; 21.15 and compare his use of two other words for “gold” (*chrusion* in 3.18; 17.4; 18.16; 21.18, 21; and *chrusos* in 9.7; 17.4; 18.12, 16). For *stephanos* (“crown” or “wreath”), see 2.10; 3.11; 4.4, 10; 6.2; 9.7; 12.1; 14.14. For *drepanon* (“sickle”), see 14.15, 16, 17, 18, 19. For *ozus* (“sharp”), see 1.16; 2.12; 14.14, 17, 18; 19.15.

For other scriptures that refer to the Son of Man as “sitting” or “seated” (Greek *kathemai*), see Matthew 19.28; 25.31 (*kathidzo* here; cf. Revelation 3.21; 20.4); 26.64; Mark 14.62; Luke 22.69. The word *kathemai* occurs frequently in Revelation, about thirty times. Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 511. Aune, “Revelation,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 2323, 2327, notes that “clouds serve as divine vehicles (Psalm 68.4; 104.7; Isaiah 19.1; 2 Esdras 13.3) and as a means of heavenly ascent (Acts 1.9) and descent (Revelation 1.7; Daniel 7.13; Matthew 24.30; 26.64). . . . The *white cloud* functions as a throne and is also associated with the figure of *the Son of Man* (Daniel 7.13; cf. 1.7; 1.13), a common title for Jesus in the Gospels.”

Sweet, *Revelation*, 229-230, notes that “the chief model [for the harvest here] is Joel 3.13, the nations have gathered outside Jerusalem, and God pronounces judgment . . . a single harvest (of grapes), and a single picture of judgment. But John, no doubt following Jesus’ parable of the seed growing secretly (Mark 4.28f.), has taken the first line to refer to the grain harvest. The harvester, *one like a son of man*, suggests as at 1.13 both the human figure of Daniel 7.13, who supersedes the beasts, and ‘the Son of man’, whose coming on the clouds is to be followed by the gathering of his elect (Matthew 24.30f).”

233. The Greek words for “to bring in a crop” or “to reap” (*theridzo*) and “gathering of crops” or “harvest” (*therismos*) are used in Revelation only in this context (14.15, 16). Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 169. The word for “to become ripe” is *xeraino* (“to wither” or “to dry up”) and occurs in Revelation here at 14.15 and 16.12.

234. The connection here between “fire” (Greek *pur*; used twenty-five times in Revelation), “altar” (*thusiasterion*; cf. 6.9; 8.3, 5; 9.13; 11.1; 16.7), and “temple” (*naos*; see Note 216 above) is clear. Compare John’s statement in 15.5 where he saw the opening (Greek *anoigo*; used twenty-five times in Revelation) of “the temple of the tent of witness in heaven” (literally, “the temple, the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven,” Greek *ho naos tes skenes tou marturiou en to ourano*; NGEI). John uses *skene* (“tent” or “tabernacle”) two other times in Revelation 13.6 and 21.3 (cf. the verb form, *skenoo*, “to live” or “to dwell” in 7.15; 12.12; 13.6; 21.3). On “the angel

who has authority over fire,” Aune, “Revelation,” *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 2327, remarks, “In Jewish tradition various angels superintend particular aspects of the world, including wind (7.1), water (16.5; *1 Enoch* 66.2), and the bottomless pit (9.11); see also *1 Enoch* 60.11-22.” For word frequencies above, see Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 77-78, 877.

235. On verses 19-20, see Caird, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 192-195; Keener, *IVP Biblical Background Commentary*, 759-760; Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 281; Sweet, *Revelation*, 232-233.

236. The Greek word for “endurance” or “patience” is *hupomone* (cf. 1.9; 2.2, 3, 19; 3.10). The NRSV translates these occurrences as “patient endurance” and in 13.10 and 14.12 as “endurance.” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 366, gives the meaning as the “capacity for resolute continuance in a course of action, endurance, perseverance, steadfastness . . . [or] persistence in awaiting realization of something, expectation.”

237. The nuances of John’s use of *exo* (“outside”) and *exothern* (“outside” or “on the outside”) in these passages is subtle but important. Sweet, *Revelation*, 230, suggests, “Its [i.e., God’s winepress] being *trodden outside the city* evokes the terrible picture of Yahweh’s vengeance in Isaiah 63.1-6. But *outside the city* also evokes the crucifixion, and the death of the first witness, Stephen (see Hebrews 13.12-14), . . . and Isaiah 63.1-6 is perhaps being reinterpreted in the light of the slaughtered Lamb (5.5f).” Compare, too, Sweet’s comments on 11.1-14, *Revelation*, 184, where he suggests, “*Ekbale exothern* (‘throw outside’) also hints at the results of bearing witness: as for Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 4.29), the man born blind (John 9.14), the son of the vineyard-owner (Mark 12.8, Matthew 21.39, Luke 20.15), and Stephen (Acts 7.58). ‘Outside the city’ was perhaps a watchword for the Christian vocation, cf. Hebrews 13.11-14 (which may point to the true interpretation of Revelation 14.20).” See also Caird, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 192.

238. In 20.9, in their final battle against God and his people, John indicates that Gog and Magog “surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city” (Greek *ekukleusan ten parembolen ton hagion kai ten polin ten egapemenen*, literally, “they encircled the camp of the saints and the city having been loved”; NGEI). The expression “camp of the saints” is unique to John, but on the use of *parembole* (“camp”) with reference to believers in Jesus, compare Hebrews 13.11, 13 (see Note 161 above). The word for “encircle” or “surround” (*kukleuo*) is used only here and in John 10.24. On John’s use of *agapao* (“to love”) in Revelation, see 1.5; 3.9; 12.11; 20.9 (cf. *agape*, “love,” in 2.4, 19). For the phrase “beloved city,” compare Sirach 24.11.

239. Compare the use of *polis* (“city”) with reference to “Babylon” in 16.19; 17.18; 18.10, 16, 18, 19, 21. The city that God and his Lamb have overthrown and supplanted with the “new” city, the heavenly Jerusalem, is “the great city” (*he polis he megale*) or “the mighty city” (*he polis he ischura*). For a good discussion of the cities of Revelation and of the new Jerusalem as place and as people, see Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 126-143; also on new Jerusalem as the bride of Christ, see Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 676.

240. See comments in Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 887. The phrase “the holy city, the new Jerusalem” (Greek *ten polin ten hagian Ierousalem kainen*) is unique to Revelation. But on

“new Jerusalem,” compare 1 Esdras 6.9. For John’s use of *kainos* (“new”; cf. Note 154 above), see 2.17; 3.12; 5.9; 14.3; 21.1, 2, 5. For “holy city” in reference to Jerusalem, compare Nehemiah 11.1; Isaiah 52.1; Daniel 9.16; Zechariah 8.3; Tobit 13.9; Prayer of Azariah 1.5; 2 Maccabees 3.1; also Matthew 4.5; 27.53; Revelation 11.2. In Revelation, John uses *hagios* (“set apart for dedication to the interests or expectations of deity, holy, sacred, consecrated,” Danker, *Concise Lexicon*, 3-4) about twenty-four times. See Moulton and Geden, *New Testament Concordance*, 13-14.

241. On references to the new Jerusalem as *polis* (“city”) in this context, compare 21.10, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23; 22.14, 19.

242. See, for example, Matthew 16.21; 20.18; 23.37; Mark 10.33; Luke 10.30; 13.4, 33, 34; Luke 18.31; 21.20; 21.24; 23.28; 24.47; John 4.20, 21; Acts 1.4, 8; 8.26; 22.18; 23.11.

243. Note Matthew 12.5, 6; 26.61; 27.40; Mark 14.58; 15.29; John 2.19-21. Compare use of *naos* by Paul (1 Corinthians 3.16, 17; 6.19; 2 Corinthians 6.16; Ephesians 2.21) and by John (Revelation 3.12; 7.15; 11.19; 21.22).

ZION QUOTATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:
MATTHEW 21.4-5 AND JOHN 12.14-15 FROM ZECHARIAH 9.9 AND ISAIAH 62.11

Zechariah 9.9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
 Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
 righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
 on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
(ESV)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Sion!
 Proclaim, O daughter Ierousalem!
Behold, your king comes to you,
 just and salvific is he,
meek and riding on a beast of burden
 and a young foal.
(NETS)

Isaiah 62.11

Behold, the Lord has proclaimed
 to the end of the earth;
Say to the daughter of Zion,
 Behold, your salvation comes;
behold, his reward is with him,
 and his recompense before him.
(ESV)

For see, the Lord has made it to be heard
 to the end of the earth;
Say to daughter Sion,
 See, your Savior comes to you,
having his own reward
 and his work before him.
(NETS)

Matthew 21.4-5

This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

Say to the daughter of Zion,
Behold, your king is coming to you,
 humble, and mounted on a donkey,
 and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.
(ESV)

John 12.14-15

And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
 sitting on a donkey's colt!
(ESV)

ZION QUOTATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:
ROMANS 9.33 AND 1 PETER 2.6 FROM ISAIAH 28.16; 8.14; AND PSALM 118.22-23

Isaiah 28.16

Therefore thus says the Lord God,
Behold, I am the one who has laid
as a foundation in Zion,
a stone, a tested stone,
a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation:
Whoever believes will not be in haste.
(ESV)

Therefore thus says the Lord,
See, I will lay for the foundations of Sion
a precious, choice stone,
a highly valued cornerstone
for its foundations,
and the one who believes in him
will not be put to shame.
(NETS)

Isaiah 8.14

And he will become a sanctuary
and a stone of offense
and a rock of stumbling
to both houses of Israel,
a trap and a snare
to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
(ESV)

He will become your holy precinct,
and you will not encounter him
as a stumbling caused by a stone
nor as a fall caused by a rock,
but the house of Jacob is in a trap,
and those who sit in Ierousalem
are in a pit.
(NETS)

Psalms 118.22-23

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
(ESV)

A stone which the builders rejected,
this one became the chief cornerstone.
This was from the Lord,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
(NETS)

Romans 9.33

As it is written,
Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offence;
and whoever believes in him
will not be put to shame.
(ESV)

1 Peter 2.6

For it stands in scripture:
Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him
will not be put to shame.
(ESV)

ZION QUOTATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:
ROMANS 11.26-27 FROM PSALM 14.7 AND ISAIAH 27.9; 59.20-21

Psalms 14.7

Oh, that salvation for Israel
would come out of Zion!
When the Lord restores
the fortunes of his people,
Let Jacob rejoice,
let Israel be glad.
(ESV)

(Psalm 13.7)

Who shall give out of Zion
the deliverance of Israel?
When the Lord returns
the captivity of his people,
Let Iakob rejoice
and Israel be glad.
(NETS)

Isaiah 59.20-21

And a redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,
declares the Lord.

And as for me, this is my covenant with them,
says the Lord . . .
(ESV)

And the one who delivers will come
for Zion's sake,
and he will turn impiety away from Iakob.

And this is the covenant to them from me,
said the Lord . . .
(NETS)

Isaiah 27.9

Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob
will be atoned for,
and this will be the full fruit
of the removal of his sin . . .
(ESV)

Because of this the lawlessness of Iakob
will be removed.
And this is his blessing,
when I remove his sin . . .
(NETS)

Romans 11.26-27

And in this way all Israel will be saved,
as it is written,
The deliverer will come from Zion,
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob;
and this will be my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.
(ESV)

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