

# **A Study of the True Cosmic Mountain of Yahweh**

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**Gloria J. Wiese**

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# **A Study of the True Cosmic Mountain of Yahweh**

## **With Emphasis on the Prophecies of Ezekiel**

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Throughout ancient history in virtually every culture, mountains have been regarded as sacred sites. Surely mountains can simply be considered as part of creation's landscape, but they can also represent mystical sacred space. Temples or towers are built on mountains, hills, and mounds that represent platforms for human-divine encounters. These elevated monuments are considered to bring the people closer to their deity, often where the god issues his decrees. From Mount Olympus for the Greeks to Mount Zaphon for the Canaanites, the dwelling place of the gods is constantly portrayed as a battleground for conflicting forces.

Simulated mountain-structures of the ancient Near East such as the ziggurat, pyramid, Mount Zaphon, and high place must also be considered as sacred sites. By a careful examination of cosmic mountain imagery we can affirm the belief that these artificial pinnacles present an opportunity for humanity to access and be accessed by spiritual forces of evil. If we peel off the façade of the fascinating phenomena that surrounds them we will be able to see them as diabolical representations of the true cosmic mountain of Yahweh as presented in the Bible.

Christians must attempt to formulate their beliefs about Yahweh's holy mountain by using only biblical motifs associated with mountain imagery rather than borrowing from extra-biblical sources – especially Canaan's mythology. To stay within the boundaries of Scripture is to readily grasp the characteristics and significance of Yahweh's true cosmic mountain. One will clearly be able to contrast the Bible's portrayal of the true cosmic Mount Zion with the mythological traditions of cosmic mountain imagery that so many contemporary scholars now presume to assimilate into the biblical text.

### **Introduction to Cosmic Mountain Imagery**

It is assumed that once a particular deity maintained a stronghold over its territory or locality, the followers could readily access the god. In the ancient Near East, each deity was assigned his locality in relation to the order of the satanically inspired mythological pantheon. When a god took on cosmic dimensions, their corresponding temple(s) were "made to symbolize, or represent, the cosmic divine abode." In a similar way, spiritual demonstrations, which varied according to the mythological beliefs, sought to utilize everyday items to project this cosmic connection in its ritual symbolism.

Thus either by means of their form, or some inner mysterious quality, earthly objects were thought to be capable of becoming charged with supernatural power, and so of establishing a link with the persons and abodes of the gods. This kind of reasoning undoubtedly lies at the basis of the use of images, which could, on account of their shape or substance, become one with the god himself.

This reflective symbolism does not stop at sacred mountains. Mountains, as well as rivers, temples, cities, and territories all appear have their counterpart in the extraterrestrial sphere. When profane space is transformed into sacred space through repetitive sacrifice, the site is secured – that is, when the ritual repeats or re-actualizes a primordial act performed initially by a god, an ancestor, or a hero – and the sacred space transcends to enter "sacred time." This suspension or transcendence of time occurs at a sacred locality on specific occasions of "cosmic regeneration" or "universal germination." Details of various cultural mythologies may vary, but the "myth is 'late' only as a formulation; but its content is archaic and refers to sacraments – that is, to acts which presuppose an absolute reality, a reality which is extra human" – or better stated, demonic.

If each temple represents an abode for spiritual encounters, then the elasticity of its imagery seems to point to a cosmic world-mountain, "so that the god who was worshipped in a particular area... was venerated at the same time as the creator of the universe." Eliade sums up the "architectonic symbolism of the Center" in archaic belief systems:

The Sacred Mountain – where heaven and earth meet – is situated at the center of the world.

Every temple or palace – and, by extension, every sacred city or royal residence – is a Sacred Mountain, thus becoming a Center.

Being an *axis mundi*, the sacred city or temple is regarded as the meeting point of heaven, earth, and hell.

Apparently, the sacred mountain represents not only the dwelling place of the god, but also the reproduction of the cosmos as a whole – particularly the mysterious yet arduous quest for the sacred Center, the navel of the world, "the zone of absolute reality."

## Simulated Cosmic Mountain-Structures of the Ancient Near East

By the time of Ezekiel's ministry in 593 BC, Sumerian ziggurats, Egyptian pyramids, and Canaanite high places were well established and functioned as artificial or imitation mountains.

The link between the mountain motif, the tower, and the Babylonian ziggurat is suggested in at least two other biblical allusions. First, in Jer.51:25 Babylon is dubbed "destroying mountain," perhaps a reference to the ziggurat. Second, E.J. Hamlin argues

that the mountains and hills to be "threshed" and destroyed in Isa.41:14-16 are Mesopotamian ziggurats, particularly the one in the city of Babylon itself.

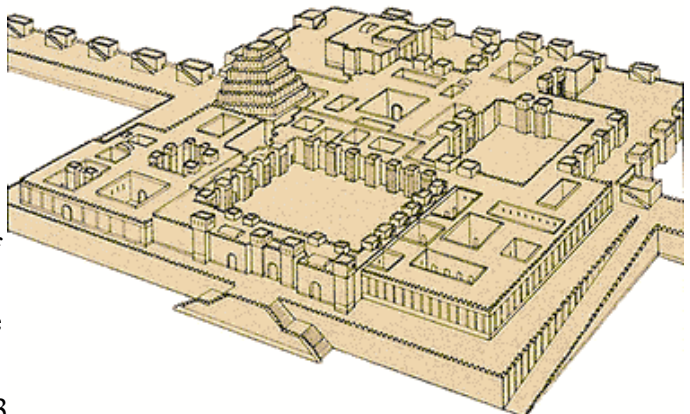
Even the names of the ziggurats reflect cosmic mountain imagery. The esoteric function of these artificial mountain-structures seems to offer humanity a passageway to the Center of the three-fold axis of heaven, earth, and hell beneath. Can they create a spiritual "stargate" where human beings can enter a fourth or multidimensional experience? They must offer some kind of mystical experience otherwise participants in this phenomena would simply discard its esoteric symbolism. They are deceptive, simulated representations meant to counterfeit the true cosmic mountain of Yahweh as presented in the Bible.

## Mesopotamian Ziggurat

A ziggurat is a purposefully constructed staged-tower. Temple ruins may have accumulated on various sites but their piled up ruins do not qualify them as ziggurats. It is only when the builders construct terraces or stages that one can designate the site as a ziggurat. The

ziggurat of Ur-Nammu (Ur) with its seven terraces may correspond to either the colors of the world as stated by the Greek historian Herodotus or to the astrological planetary spheres. The ziggurat of Marduk in Babylon is known as *E-temen-anki* ("the house of the foundation of heaven and earth"), a pyramid-like structure that according to the Akkadian *Enuma Elish* was built by the Anunnaki. Even the names of the other ziggurats appear to indicate a cosmological function that connects heaven and earth and the netherworld.

There are a wide variety of theories for interpreting the purpose of the ziggurat: a king's tomb or throne, an altar, a sacred dwelling place, an image of the whole cosmos, or even the place where the energies of the earth are concentrated. If Clements is correct that the "great Ziggurats, or stage-towers, of Sumeria... were an attempt on the part of men to build artificial mountains which



could then serve as divine dwelling-places," then the formation of the ziggurat structure began during the Sumerian era from which the Babylonians later inherited.

The main players of Sumerian belief are Anu, the supreme god of heaven, Enlil, god of the sea, and Enki, the creator and god of magic, plus other gods who personifies local elements and natural forces. Sumerians believe that the gods and goddesses rule over them, but ceremonial priests that represent these gods and goddesses facilitate complex rituals in an attempt to ascertain and fulfill the will of the gods. Priests rule from their ziggurat-temples made of sun-baked brick with an outside staircase leading to a shrine at the top. It is striking that the Sumerian belief system seems more like a code of regulations that requires complete servitude, rather than a description of pure worship of the gods. This is also revealed in the sacred ritual marriage between rulers and Inanna, the goddess of love and fertility. Such union promises to yield not only prosperity, but also the lofty demigod status.

The ziggurat was considered to be a "giant step-ladder by means of which a man may ascend... to approach nearer to the deity whom he seeks."

In whatever religious context you find them – the shamanist rite or initiation rite, mystical ecstasy or oniric vision, eschatological myth or heroic legend – ascents, the climbing of mountains or stairs, flights into the air, and so on, all these things always signify a transcending of the human and a penetration into higher cosmic levels... it is their *ascent* that sets them apart from the mass of ordinary and uninitiated souls... their contact with starry spaces makes them divine.

To ascend this artificial mountain, from the lowest to the highest terrace, is to transcend the earthly sphere and approach a cosmic otherness – the Center of the celestial world. "Attaining the center is equivalent to a consecration, an initiation." And thus, the point of communication within the three-fold axis of heaven, earth, and hell creates a center where "a break-through can occur, a passing from one cosmic zone to another."

When we come to the text in Genesis 11, the obvious question is: Is the tower (ID'g>mi migdal) of Genesis 11 a religious ziggurat? There are four uses of migdal in the Old Testament: 1) a shepherd's watchtower, the tower of Edar (Gen.35:21), 2) a vineyard watchtower (Isa.5:2; cf. Matt.21:33), 3) a military tower for defense (Jerusalem's towers, 2 Chron.26:9-15; Psa.48:12; Song.4:4; Neh.3:1; 12:39; Jer.31:38; Zech.14:10), and 4) religious towers, the migdal of Penuel and its destruction by Gideon (Jud.8:9, 17), the migdal of Shechem (Jud.9:46), and the migdal of Syene (Ezek.29:10; 30:6). Associated with the migdal at Shechem we find a Canaanite revival in the temple of El/Baal-Berith, a foreign deity at Shechem (Jud.9:4, 27, 46-49). When the people hear about the fate of Shechem they flee from the migdal to "the house (temple) of the covenant god (Baal-berith), evidently not for the purpose of defending themselves there, but to seek safety at the sanctuary of their god" – thus linking the temple of Shechem with its religious migdal. Ezekiel's pronouncement of judgment on the migdal of Syene in Egypt must allude to its religious connotation with Pharaoh's claim to be the creator-god of the Nile River (29:10; 30:6).

The Hebrew term migdal is certainly used as a military tower, but in all probability it is likely to include the ziggurat-structure. Although the Hebrew text of Genesis 11 does not use the term ziggurat, migdal may be a derivative of the Hebrew term *gd* ("large"), which etymologically parallels the Akkadian *zaqaru* ("high"). The context of Genesis 11 and the background of the narrative compel us to consider a nonmilitary function of migdal.

If one looks at God's response to the building of the migdal-tower structure, one can see that its construction is disturbing to the heavenly council (Gen.11:1-6). Why? If this tower is simply a military fortification or a shepherd's tower or a vineyard watchtower, then why does God respond so harshly? Unity has many commendable assets that strengthen any given work. So why does God deem this harmonious project so threatening? The Lord explains to His heavenly council that this particular kind of unity is horrific and completely intolerable. The migdal-tower is obviously not a military fortification to defend Babylon, but a spiritual lightning rod – a religious ziggurat.

Archaeological excavations confirm that these ancient ziggurats of Babylon have two sanctuaries: one at the top and one at the base. If the Babylonian ziggurats are patterned after the Sumerian migdal, then we can reasonably conclude that the ziggurat-migdal provides a spiral staircase for the Mesopotamian gods to descend to meet their ascending followers. The ziggurat is designed to reach heaven, a tower whose top is in the heavens. The ziggurat is built to be a point of spiritual contact with the evil forces of the universe, to unify humans with the demonic, and to secure their allegiance to evil – knowingly or unknowingly worshipping the devil himself. Humanity is uniting themselves with demonic forces bent on executing Satan's diabolical plan to accelerate the fruition of the antichrist kingdom and thwart God's timetable.

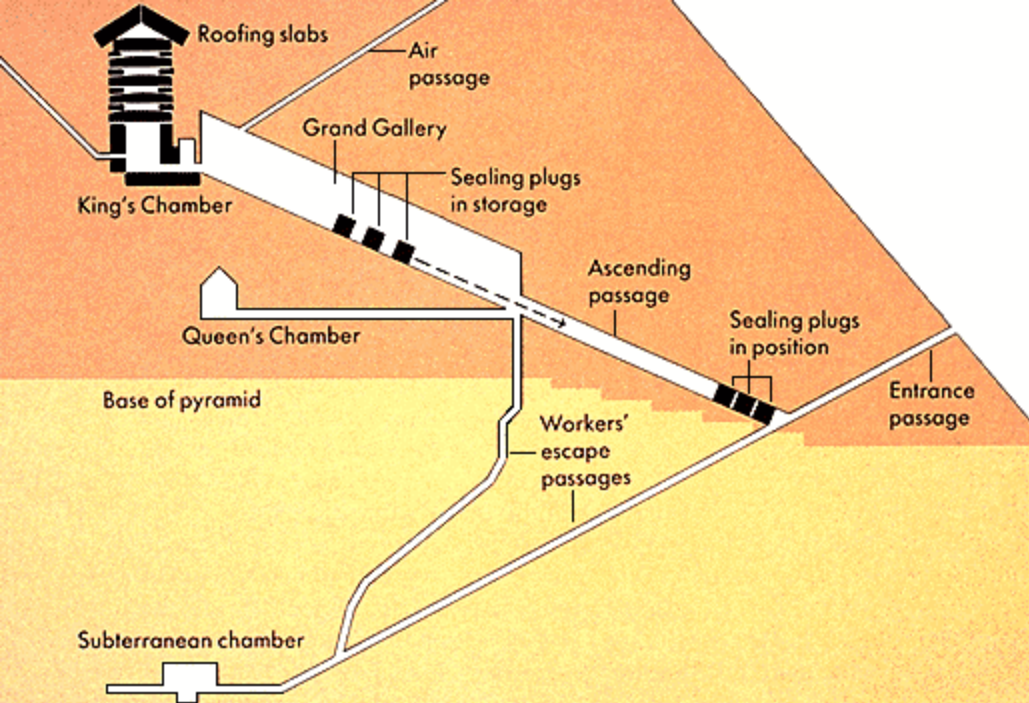
The people who gather around the ziggurat seek not a relationship with the one true God, but the heavenly realm for personal empowerment. Babel's ziggurat-tower offers a connection with spiritual forces beyond human existence, thus opening the doors for demonic spirits to legally gain access to the mind and spirit of human beings. Occultism via the ziggurat promises power and control over people and events. It purports that one can tap into its forces to manipulate one's circumstances and transcend God's sovereign rule. Resisting subjection to God, people seek to affect reality – but their power, however, is merely a delusion. The ziggurat represents humanity's vain attempt to overthrow their appointed jurisdiction and empower themselves with forces bent on destroying, not only the kingdom of God but humanity as well.

## **Egyptian Pyramid**

Thirty-five major pyramids still stand along the Nile River. The first known Egyptian pyramid is the Step Pyramid built for Zoser about 2650 BC at the site of the ancient city of Memphis, Saqqarah. It rises in a series of six giant steps. The three Pyramids of Giza (Cheops) are built for Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure about 2600-2500 BC. Each pyramid includes a large mortuary temple on the eastside and a smaller valley temple near the Nile. There is also a long passageway that links the two temples. Inside the pyramid are two chambers: the king's burial chamber, the most sacred part of the pyramid, and the queen's chamber. If a person's body could be preserved the soul could live forever. So the Egyptians mummified their dead and laid them in large tombs where they would await their transport to the next world.

To determine the exact purpose for the building of the Egyptian pyramids is difficult and complex. There appears to be three main theories: 1) the Orion theory, 2) the Divine Timeline theory, and 3) the Traditional theory. A brief overview of each of these theories will prove helpful to our discussion on cosmic mountain imagery.

The Orion theory proposes that the three Pyramids of Giza were designed in perfect alignment with the three stars in the Orion Nebula. Apparently, the purpose for building these pyramids was not to provide a burial chamber, but rather, because the air shafts inside the pyramid point directly to certain constellations they are built with some kind of astrological design. At the time the pyramid



was built, the king's chamber pointed toward Orion and Polaris, while the shafts coming out of the queen's chamber pointed toward Sirius and Alpha Draconis. The assumption would be that the deceased king and queen would be sent towards these constellations and unite with the power of their gods.

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The divine timeline theory proposes that Isaiah testifies that the Egyptian pyramid is in fact

"an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border... and it will be for a sign and for a witness" (19:19-20). Proponents also cite Jeremiah 32:30 as another proof text that God is the instigator of these artificial mountains in that he will "set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even unto this day." This theory presents the idea that salvation history, or some kind of prophetic chronicle, is revealed in the pyramid's dimensions and internal arrangement. So this theory presents the pyramid as a witness to God and in line with the biblical account.

Is the pyramid "an altar (x;Bez>mi mizbeah)" to the one true God, Yahweh? Is the pyramid "a pillar (hb'Cem; matstebah)", "for a sign (tAa 'oth) and for a witness (d[e `ed)" to Him? Would these descriptions: an altar (used 401 times in the Old Testament referring to a place of sacrifice), a pillar (a monument or memorial), a sign (a signal or distinguishing mark), and a witness (designating a testimony or evidence), be applied to the Egyptian pyramid? The divine timeline theory could probably make their case with all the descriptions, except for one – the altar. There appears to be no evidence that the pyramids were used in any way for sacrifices.

Problems abound in this interpretation of the pyramid. First, would God use pagan structures built for deified-pharaohs to proclaim His redemptive plan? God warned His people to tear down pagan altars and smash cultic pillars (Ex.34:13; Deut.7:5). Second, were not the Egyptian pharaohs engaged in the worship of a multitude of false gods? The whole Exodus event occurs not only as a miraculous deliverance of God's people, but also as an indictment against the idolatry of Egypt (Ex.7-12; Jer.43:13). Third, if the pyramids were built in alignment with the constellations, would God encourage such participation in astrology? The law and the prophets vehemently denounce any involvement in this and all forms of occultism (Deut.18:9-12). Fourth, was not Egyptian theology particularly steeped in the myth of Osiris and Isis? To use the pyramid to reflect the plan of salvation history is an attempt to syncretize the Osiris/Isis mythology with the true Messiah and His virgin birth, death, and resurrection. This interpretation pushes its Masonic-like prophecies beyond the realm of solid hermeneutics. It is ultimately an effort to discredit, confuse, and mythologize the truth of the substitutionary death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some believe that Isaiah 19:19-20 and Jeremiah 32:30 signify a future Jewish presence in Egypt, either referring to the Jews who fled to Egypt after the Babylonian invasion (Jer.44:1) or to the

Jewish high priest Onias IV, who receives permission from an Egyptian monarch to build a temple "like that in Jerusalem" in 160 BC (Josephus, Ant.XII.9, 7) – even though it was really more of a castle than a temple. In the literary context of these prophecies it is best to interpret them eschatologically, thereby referring to native Egyptians who convert to Christianity and join in a worldwide ministry with other Gentile peoples on the highway of holiness (Isa.19:20-25).

It was a victory on the part of the religion of Jehovah, that Egypt was covered with Jewish synagogues... even in the age before Christ. And Alexandria was the place where the law of Jehovah was translated into Greek, and thus made accessible to the heathen world... The importance of Alexandria and of the monasticism and anachronism of the peninsula of Sinai and also of Egypt, in connection with the history of the spread of Christianity, is very well known.

Traditional Egyptology suggests that the pyramids were primarily elaborate burial chambers. Their architecture reflects the ancient Egyptian belief that their kings were gods and that they built tombs, temples, and palaces as monuments to them. Even if one cannot decipher the exact purpose for the pyramids, it is important to note the development of Egyptian mythology. During the first Egyptian dynasty of Menes (3100 BC), Egyptian myth places Osiris, the fertility god, in a primeval holy mountain to bury him, and then elevates and enthrones him in the heavens with a reborn status. The ancient Egyptians believed that the pyramid held some kind of cosmic power to transport the soul of Osiris to Orion, where he would assimilate to a physical incarnation of god on earth. By participating in a ceremony, the new pharaoh is infused with Osiris' spirit. The pyramid is used to bring about the union of the new pharaoh at his coronation with the spirit of Osiris to become the form of Horus, a living embodiment of Osiris and Isis' divine son. Upon death he joins in the oneness of Osiris.

We can see that Egyptian mountain-imagery projects both burial mound and throne. So it is reasonable to believe that the pyramids symbolize the "primeval earth which arose from the primeval ocean on the day of creation and was the source of all existence... Because the primeval hill was the source of all life, the burial mound represented a center of great potency." Apparently this potency was symbolized in its triangular sides which "represented the rays of the sun which formed a ladder of light... the ramp or passageway... to heaven" – not unlike the symbolism of the ziggurat.

### **Baal's Mount Zaphon**

The worship of Baal is evident in Moab and Midian (Numb.22:41) and quickly influenced Israel (Numb.25:3-18; 4:3). Baalism spread upward toward Phoenicia and even the ancient British islands may have been influenced by it. Baal appears in many forms, such as Babylon's Bel (Isa.46:1) and other compound names: Baal-berith ("Baal who covenants," Jud.8:33; 9:4), Baal-Zebub (Ekron's "Baal of the fly," 2 Kgs.1:2-3,16), Baal-Peor ("Baal of the opening," specially named to symbolize the opening for others to join in its heinous ceremony rites, Numb.25).

Not only is there an evolution of Baal's name, but Baal also spreads his domain as displayed in the many prefixes to the names of several towns in Palestine: Baal/Baalath-Ber, "lord of the well" (1 Chron.4:33; Josh.19:8), Baalah or Kirjath-Baal, "mistress" (Josh.15:9-10; 19:44; 1 Chron.13:6), Baal-Gad, "lord of fortune" (Josh.11:17; 12:7; 13:5), Baal-Hamon, "lord of the multitude" (Song.8:11), Baal-Hazor, "Baal's village" (2 Sam.13:23), Baal-Hermon, "lord of Hermon" (Jud.3:3-9; 1 Chron.5:23), Baal-Meon, "lord of the house" (Numb.32:38; 1 Chron.5:8), Baal-Perizim, "lord of divisions" (2 Sam.5:20; 1 Chron.14:11; Isa.28:21), Baal-Shalisha, "lord of shalisha" (2 Kgs.4:42), and Baal-Tamar, "lord of the palm tree" (Jud.20:33).



Reflecting the Canaanite mythology are two mountains designated as Baal-Zaphon, "lord of the north." One is situated in Egypt on the western shore of the Red Sea, northeast of the Nile delta, near where the Israelites crossed over in their miraculous exodus (Numb.33:7; Ezek.14:2,9) and the other is considered to be the highest peak in Syria.

Similar to Osiris' grave-turned-enthronement scenario, Baal battles Mot on the heights of Mount Zaphon and he too is buried in his holy mount – only to be re-born to build his temple on Zaphon. Baal, the masculine god-force (his alter-ego goddess-force seems to be a mix between Anath, Asherah, and Astarte), is also known by his proper name, Hadad, which relates to his storm-god aspect. But Baal is simply a title that means: "lord." Baal and Yamm compete for kingship of the gods and after Yamm's defeat, Baal has his palace built on Mount Zaphon. The Baal epic then continues to describe his annual fight against Mot (the god of death and the underworld). Yet Baal maintains his residence on Mount Zaphon.

[Baal] informs Anat, his ally, to put on the face of the goddess of fertility and to hasten to him. A temple which is to celebrate and bring about fertility and cosmic harmony is to be built... Baal will seek the temple for his holy place, on the mountain which he has acquired by his victory over the forces of evil... Zaphon is a place where messages are delivered to Baal, where Baal works that a temple may be built there. It was stormed by enemies, though they were beaten back by Baal and Anat... [therefore] Baal's mountain is a place of combat in which issues of life and death are decided; it is a place which commemorates victory.

With Zaphon as the location of Baal's burial and regeneration, his battles, and his attempt to create cosmic harmony, it clearly ties into the cosmic mountain imagery of the ziggurats and pyramids.

The typical biblical understanding for Baal's dwelling place is "the mountain of the far north (!poc' zaphon)," (cf. Isa.14:13) but this geographical designation appears to be only one of zaphon's meanings. Firstly, zaphon identifies a national enemy located north of Israel (i.e. Isa.41:25; Jer.1:14; 4:6; 6:1, 22; 10:22; Jer.50:9; 51:48; Ezek.26:7; Joel 2; Zeph.2:13). These passages pertain to Assyria and Babylon, the literal foes "from the north (zaphon)," who fulfill the typology necessary to foreshadow the eschatological kingdom of darkness that threatens to encompass the true kingdom-city of God, the people of God in the latter days.

Secondly, zaphon suggests the place of "the heights" – or what Christians refer to as the heavenly or spiritual realm. The "northern heights" or heavenly battlefields are essentially the dimension that symbolizes the realm where Yahweh upholds victory and lordship (Job 37:22; Psa.48:2; Ezek.1:4ff.). From these references it appears that "heights" symbolize lordship. Yet the spiritual heights of zaphon ("the north") also indicate the place where Satan's obtrusive, tyrannical reign threatens to intrude into God's territory and spiritually dominate (Ezek.38:6-15; 39:2).

The north, then, becomes a harbinger of evil. In various mythologies it is the seat of demons... In Canaanite mythology the north was considered to be the place for the meeting of the assembly of the gods. The gods assembled on Mount *fapân*; *fapân* may be taken as a proper name. Here Baal reigned supreme. The mountain is usually identified with Mount Casius, *Jebel el Aqra`*, to the north of Ras Shamra. Kapelrud suggests that the tower for sacrifices in Baal's temple may have been called *Sapan*, a mythical connection between the mountain and the cultic shrine (p.58).

If heights symbolize lordship in the Bible, then this concept "may help us understand why shrines were first erected on heights, thereby claiming the symbol of lordship for the gods." Remarkably,



Baal's Mount Zaphon is brazenly declared to be Lucifer's headquarters. It is Lucifer himself who openly asserts:

I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights [hk'r>y: yerekah, meaning, "flank, extreme parts, recesses, sides, coasts, borders] of [zaphon]. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High (Isa.14:12-14).

This avowal not only divulges that Lucifer is Baal, but also reveals his arrogant attempt to usurp God's lordship. His plan is to: 1) broaden his authority over "the stars of God" (former angels-turned-demonic), 2) gather his own "mount of assembly" (deceived congregation of followers), 3) extend his dominion from the peak (headquarters) of Zaphon to its outermost borders [yerekah].

The struggle between Yahweh and Baal-Satan/gods of the Canaanite pantheon is played out on both a historic level (Israel's holy war mandate against Canaan) and a spiritual level (heaven's army against demonic hordes). The divine warrior-God is victorious in battle as His enemies flee before His presence (Psa.68). When Yahweh treads on the enemy territory of Zaphon, the result is deliverance for His people and a re-gathering unto Himself.

God promises to bring his people back from the north (Isa.43:6; Isa.49:12; Jer.16:15). There is no location where an earthly power can banish them from his concern (Jer.31:8). Job says that God stretches out the north over the void (Job 26:7). This statement shows that God created even the sinister places or the mountain of the gods from nothing. No evil power or god or divine assembly, therefore, has any existence co-eternal with God or any power or existence outside of God's creative power (cf. Psa.89:12).

When Yahweh conducts a march, both Amos and Micah contend that Yahweh *treads* on the "high places" of Baal. "He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and *treads the high places* of the earth-- the Lord God Almighty is his name" (Amos 4:13, emphasis mine). As does Micah: "Look! The Lord is coming from his dwelling place; he comes down and *treads the high places* of the earth" (Mic.1:3, emphasis mine).

In light of both historic and spiritual levels and Isaiah 14:12-14, we must reconsider Psalm 48:2 – the proof-text for many scholars today to equate Zaphon with Zion – and instead see that Mount Zaphon is not Yahweh's mountain at all. Psalm 48:2 deploys synthetic rather than synonymous parallelism as Yahweh is depicted as "treading" (ר;D' darak, "to tread, bend, march") on Baal-Zaphon.

Beautiful [when it is] in elevation [An nowph, the heights],

The joy of the whole earth [because it brings deliverance]

Is Mount Zion [when it treads] on the sides [yteK.r>y yerekah, recesses] of the north [!Apc' zaphon], [because it establishes itself as] the city [domain] of the great King (Psa.48:2, personal translation).

The cosmic clash of these two mountains fit well with the warrior-theme and virtual tour of Zion in rest of Psalm 48. When enemy forces gather to assault Zion, they see Yahweh in the midst of her. They attempt to flee but are shattered and destroyed by His Spirit (vv.3-7; cf. Ezek.38:11-12).

### **Canaan's Corresponding High Places**

The imagery and symbolism of Mount Zaphon is reflected in microcosmic proportions in the sexual-fertility rituals of the Canaanite "high place" (bamah). According to Scripture, bamah seems to litter the ancient land of Canaan. These Canaanite establishments are built on mountains (1 Sam.9:13-25; 1 Kgs.11:7; 2 Kgs.16:4; 17:9-10; Ezek.20:28-29), but they also dwelt in towns (1 Kgs.13:32; 2 Kgs.17:29; 23:5), in the bustling city of Jerusalem (2 Kgs.23:8), and in the valleys (Jer.7:31; 32:35; Ezek.6:3).

Such a survey [of the biblical texts, especially 2 Kings 23] shows that in the closing years of the monarchy period many types of cult centre were thought of as bamoth – small gate shrines, royal centres to foreign gods, large public shrines, local rustic shrines and even Topheth [where child sacrifices were made to Molech]. Their situations are as varied as their cults – on hills, in cities and settlements, by the city gate and in a valley. The inescapable conclusion is that by this period bamoth was a general word for a small shrine... Their demise is lost in the obscurity of the post-exilic era. All that can be said is that they disappear from both the literary and archaeological evidence at the time when Judaism began to emerge.

It is certain then, that the term "high place" means something much more than just a physically elevated sacred site. Because they are described as being constructed and destroyed, such a possibility indicates that "they were man-made structures requiring considerable effort to build or to demolish."

Although it is still difficult to ascertain the exact composition of bamoth (plural), most theories develop around the Old Testament text and little archaeological evidence. To assume, as Albright, that the bamah are funeral installations can be dismissed by the bamah's distinct architectural traits.

Nothing found at these sites suggests that the activity conducted here was funerary or commemorative in nature; the artifacts point only to sacrifices, libations, sacred meals, and the like... to identify bamoth specifically as funerary or commemorative "cairns" Albright must first establish the connection between the bamah phenomenon and such practices. Evidence for this connection can be found only in the biblical texts, for it is here alone that we learn of the existence of a cultic phenomenon with this name.

Therefore, the evidence that is available seems to indicate that the open-air bamoth are probably artificial, truncated, cone-shaped structures that have stairs leading to a flat oblong platform on the top.

The following are definite features characteristic of bamoth: 1) the messabah, a commemorative upright stone that signifies an unholy alliance, 2) the Asherah, the mother-fertility goddess of the Canaanite pantheon, 3) the altar for animal and child sacrifice, 4) pagan priests, 5) burning of incense, 6) a stairway that led to an oval platform, and 7) additional rooms. The rituals performed in Canaanite worship involve excesses in alcohol and sexual deviation. The worship of Baal is essentially a drunken orgy in which the Canaanite priests and other participants indulged a frenzy of

perversity and violent behavior. Such a precarious ritual is their attempt to arouse Baal to send his semen-rain on their crops.

The following chart displays the peculiarities of the Canaanite ritual system and God’s prohibition and commands for the destruction of its demonic order.

<b>Canaanite Ritual System</b>	<b>Scriptural Prohibition</b>	<b>Destruction of the System</b>
Open-air Structure  1Kgs.11:7; 13:2  2 Kgs.17:9-17	Lev.17:1-5	Numb.33:52; Deut.12:2  1 Kgs.13:2; 2 Kgs.17:11  Jer.19:5; 32:35; Ezek.6:3-6
Messabah (stone pillars)  1 Kgs.14:23; 2 Kgs.3:2;17:10	Ex.23:24;34:13  Deut.12:3; 16:21-22	Deut.7:1-5; 12:2-7  2 Kgs.18:4; 23:14  Hos.3:4; Mic.5:13
Asherah  1 Kgs.14:23; 16:33;  2 Kgs.13:6; 17:10-16; 21:3-7	Ex.20:1-6; 23:24; 34:13  Deut.16:21-22	Deut.7:1-5; 12:2-7  Jud.6:25-30; 1 Kgs.15:13  2 Kgs.18:4; 23:4-5, 14  Isa.17:8; 27:9; Jer.17:2; Mic.5:14
Animal & Child Altar for Sacrifice  2 Kgs.12:3; 14:4; 15:4; 16:3-4; 21:3-6; 2 Chron.14:3	Lev.17:7; 18:21	Deut.7:1-5; 12:2-7  2 Kgs.23:15
Pagan Priests  1 Kgs.12:31-32	Lev.19:31  Deut.18:9-12	2 Kgs.23:5
Burning of Incense	2 Kgs.22:17	Lev.26:27-35  2 Kgs.23:5; Isa.17:8;

1 Kgs.22:43 2 Kgs.12:3; 14:4; 15:4; 16:4 Jer.44:17, 25		27:9 Jer.7:9; 11:12-13; 18:15; 32:29; 48:35
Stairs leading to oval platform	Ex.20:25-26	
Additional rooms for cultic prostitution, sacrificial meals 1 Sam.9:22; 1 Kgs.14:24	Lev.17:10	2 Kgs.23:7

Through a careful etymological analysis of the word bamah, these Canaanite high places have similarities to the symbolism of the cosmic mountain imagery of the ziggurats and pyramids of ancient history. Vaughan concludes that the meaning of bamah is reflected in three senses: topological, cultic, and anatomical senses. To this I would add a fourth sense: the spiritual level of bamah. It is true that bamah is simply a location (topological level), but it is also a platform for rituals in operation (cultic level). It is imperative that one takes the concept of bamah a step further in order to analyze the human experience in taking part in the occult ritual (anatomical level). Ultimately, one must then form a conclusion about the participant's mystical encounter with the demonic realm (spiritual level).

#### hm'B' Bamah

<b>Spiritual Level:</b> Canaanite Ritual in its Mystical Dimension	A cognate of bamah is found in Akkadian and Ugaritic and implies: "ridge, heights, lofty spot"
<b>Anatomical Level:</b> Canaanite Ritual in its Human Experience	In Ugaritic bamah means: "rib-cage, middle-of the body, flank"  of a person or animal
<b>Cultic Level:</b>	Ugaritic and archaeology convincingly

Canaanite Ritual in its Operation	argues that bamah infers a "cultic platform and by extension, altar and sanctuary"
<b>Topological Level:</b> Canaanite Ritual in its Location	The biblical text and archaeological evidence locates bamah in the "hillside, town, city, valley"

Bamah are "high places" because they are impregnated with spiritual forces. " 'Height', 'what is higher' becomes transcendent, super-human. Every ascent [spiritually] is a breakthrough... a passing to what is beyond, an escape from profane space and human status." The Canaanites tap into demonic forces when participating in the occult rituals in bamah. Participants in these rituals align themselves with the demonic realm and seal their allegiance through sexual-fertility ceremonies and death-ritual covenants. "The transcending of the human condition by entering a sacred place [in the case of Canaan, bamah], by some ritual consecration, or by dying, is expressed concretely as a 'passage', a 'rising', an 'ascension'." So bamah's open-air platform is not only constructed for occult rituals, it also represents and actualizes the inner spiritual experience of those who adhere to Canaan's belief system.

When addressing the bamoth, it is important to clarify the three scriptural references that appear to legitimize their use by the Israelites (1 Sam.9-10; 1 Chron.16:39; 1 Kgs.3:4). In 1 Samuel 9-10, Samuel along with the prophets of God, anoint Saul as the leader over Israel at the high place of Gibeah. Why would Samuel and the prophets do this at a bamah when the Scripture so clearly condemns their use? The answer lies in the convoluted character of Saul. Who is Saul? Where did he come from? And why, of all places, was he anointed at the bamah of Gibeah to be leader over Israel?

When the Israelites made their initial entry into Canaan, the Gibeonites of Canaanite-Hivite origin, used pretense to deceive Joshua into making a pact with them (Josh.9:3-21; 11:19; cf. 1 Chron.1:13). Because of their clever sting operation, Joshua consigns them to servitude (9:21), yet the Gibeonite men maintain their status as mighty warriors (gibborim, Josh.10:2). The city of Gibeon is allotted to Benjamin and becomes a Levitical city (Josh.18:25; 21:17). It is during the Judges era that Benjamin advances their association with Gibeon (now referred to as Gibeah) to a hideous level of fidelity (Jud.19-20) – and enters into covenant-marriage with them (Jud.19-21; 1 Chron.8:29-33). From this alliance comes its most famous descendent: Saul of Gibeah (1 Sam.11:1).

Though Joshua had established Shiloh as the community center for the Levitical priesthood (Josh.18:1; Jud.18:31), by the time of Samuel, the priesthood of Eli and his sons Hophni and Phinehas veer off into Baalism (1 Sam.2:12-22). Such an abomination in the sanctuary opens the way for the Philistines to defeat Israel and capture the ark of the covenant. This signifies the evacuation of Yahweh's presence from Shiloh (4:1-22). The ark makes its way around Philistia but ends up in Kiriath Jearim (or Baalah), a Gibeonite city (4:1-7:2). They take it to Abinadab's house "on the hill" (ba gib`eah) and consecrate his son Eleazar to guard the ark of the Lord where it stays for twenty years (7:1-2; cf. 2 Sam.6:3). Even Moses' tabernacle and the bronze altar are placed at the high place of Gibeon (1 Chron.21:29; 2 Chron.1:2-6). These references may infer something

suspicious about the religious practices of the Gibeonite cult. If the Gibeonites are rooted in Canaanite Baalism and are at the same time aligned with the tribe of Benjamin, they may be suspect in introducing a counterfeit priesthood, a false "anti-kingdom" if you will, that threatens to infiltrate and destroy the true theocratic kingdom of God. What leaves us hanging is an astonishing gap in any reference to the ark from its time in Kiriath-Jearim until David takes it from Abinadab's house "on the hill" (ba gib`eah) and brings it to Jerusalem (2 Sam.5:25-6:3).

It is critical to note that it is at the bamah of Gibeah that Saul is anointed as leader or commander (1 Sam.9:16; 10:1) of the "anti-kingdom" (1 Sam.8-10). Samuel's dramatic, albeit symbolic, gesture of anointing Saul as the anti-kingdom's pseudo-prince is distinctly dramatized at the bamah of Gibeah. The irony is revealed in Samuel's simultaneous denouncement (1 Sam.8:1-22; 10:17-19; 12:13-17) and as one would suspect, in the condemning content of the prophecies coming from the group of prophets as they expose the bamah for its representation of the anti-kingdom (1 Sam.10:9-16; 19:23-24). Even Saul's vicious actions toward Gibeon (2 Sam.21), may be explained by an attempt to make Gibeon his capital city, "the centre of his kingdom and to authenticate his rule from the religious point of view by means of the ark-sanctuary established there." So we can see that Samuel and the prophets "use" the bamah of Gibeon to "anoint" the wicked appeal of the people, thereby demonstrating Israel's rejection of Yahweh and insistence in inaugurating the anti-kingdom. A life in alignment with bamoth is evidenced in the tormented life of Saul.

This leads to the second passage that gives the impression that Israel may use bamoth. David has taken the ark of the covenant from Kiriath-Jearim to the house of Obed-Edom, then finally to his tent in the city of David (2 Sam.6:10-12). Oddly, David installs Abiathar as priest in his tent but leaves Zadok as priest at the bamah of Gibeon (1 Chron.16:39). Yahweh does not judge this situation until David takes a census of his mighty army (2 Sam.24; 1 Chron.21). When God sends a plague that spreads throughout Israel, an angel of the Lord commands David to buy the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite to erect an altar (1 Chron.21:18-28). In the following verses it is clear that David's fear of the angel of the Lord is connected to his uneasiness about Gibeon's bamah and he soon comes to this remarkable revelation:

The tabernacle of the Lord, which Moses had made in the desert, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time on the high place at Gibeon. But *David could not go before it to inquire of God, because he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the Lord.* Then David said, "*The house of the Lord God is to be here, and also the altar of burnt offering for Israel*" (1 Chron.21:29-22:1, emphasis mine).

The angel of the Lord ultimately judges David's use of bamoth. David is to prepare his son to extract all aspects of worship away from Gibeon's false anti-kingdom to Jerusalem's true kingdom (1 Chron.22:2-29:20). Alignment with bamoth only proves to be a stumbling block to the worship of the one true God.

The third passage that appears to legitimize the use of bamoth is the story of Solomon in 1 Kings 3:4. However, the context of 1 Kings 2-3 reveals the legacy of Israel's battle with religious syncretism and the reality of its affects on Solomon and Israel. What we see in this period is spiritual fragmentation: Solomon nurtures affectionate devotion to Yahweh, but still "offered sacrifices and burnt incense on the high places" – most notably at the Gibeonite bamah (1 Kgs.3:2-4). Blenkinsopp may be correct in connecting Saul's bamah of Gibeon and the sacrificial offerings by Solomon:

"The great stone which is in Gibeon" (2 Sam.xx.8) has sometimes been identified with the altar upon which Solomon offered sacrifices as recorded in 1 Kings iii.4. While this is hypothetical, it may find

support in the reference to "the great stone" set up by Saul after his victory over the Philistines. This constituted the first altar erected by him to Yahweh and was certainly in the Gibeonite region (1 Sam.xiv.33-5; cf.v.31).

The excuse given that the temple had not yet been built may explain Solomon's actions, but it does not justify him (1 Kgs.3:2; 2 Chron.1:3). The bamoth, especially the one at Gibeon, represents the anti-kingdom, the kingdom of false spirituality that infiltrated the ranks of the sanctuary – the designated meeting place of Yahweh with His people (1 Sam.9:12-25). It is imperative that Solomon builds the true temple of Yahweh and destroys the syncretism of the bamoth for it is at the bamoth of Gibeon in particular, that Satan's Canaanite pseudo-kingdom accesses the seed of the righteous. Does Solomon do this? He constructs the magnificent temple in Jerusalem (1 Kgs.5:1-9:9), but in his senior years he builds bamoth for numerous idols (1 Kgs.11:1-8). Alignment with bamoth proves once again that it will only obstruct and destroy one's relationship with Yahweh.

If these ancient Near Eastern bamoth-structures really did provide a means to transcend human existence in order to connect with the three-fold axis of the heavenly, earthly, and underworld, then this would explain the dangerously demonic trigger-mechanisms that infect the spiritual health of God's people. If they create a spiritual "stargate" where human beings and demonic entities can move from one spiritual zone to enter another, then the human experience at the bamoth is at odds with the law of God as revealed in the Scripture. Because Israel did not carry out the holy war mandate, the Canaanite bamoth offered to replace true worship and in due course desecrate the dwelling place/meeting place of Yahweh with His people. Ezekiel pronounces God's judgment on the mountain-shrines that covered the land of Israel:

This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: I am about to bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. Your altars will be demolished and your incense altars will be smashed; and I will slay your people in front of your idols... They will loathe themselves for the evil they have done and for all their detestable practices (6:3-4, 9).

Baalism seeped into the very fabric of Yahwistic worship practices and therefore heaven responded with severe judgment.

## **The True Cosmic Mountain of Yahweh**

Mountains can simply be a physical reality, but they can also be a symbolic literary motif or represent a mystical sacred space. Although the ziggurat, pyramid, and bamoth all presume to be simulated, albeit diabolical representations of the true mountain of Yahweh as presented in the Bible, in reality they are multifaceted pinnacles for humans to be accessed by the forces of evil. In contrast, what does Yahweh's true cosmic mountain "look" like? What is its significance? And how does *the Bible* describe its characteristics? Does the Bible describe Mount Zion as "the meeting place of the gods"? Does it portray Zion as "the battleground of conflicting natural forces"? Does the biblical text describe Mount Zion as "the meeting place of heaven and earth, the place where decrees are issued"? Is Mount Zion, as so many contemporary scholars now assume, really Baal's Mount Zaphon? Before we attempt to answer these questions, let us first lay a foundation using only biblical motifs associated with mountain imagery rather than relying on Canaanite mythology.

Let us begin our study of biblical mountain imagery with the paradigm found in the Edenic linkage to the holy mount of God (Ezek.28:13-15). Lucifer's attempt to usurp the divine order sends him



reeling from his post in the heavenly abode (vv.16-17) and in effect disconnects humanity from their connection with the sacred mount. Since the luciferic incident in Eden, a pattern develops where faithful believers experience spiritual encounters on various physical mountains (i.e. Mount Ararat in Gen.8:4-12 and Mount Moriah in Gen.22:1-5). However, mountain imagery achieves its clearest expression in the sacred mountain of Yahweh as it is displayed in two separate mountains that reflect one unified image. The first is Mount Sinai (or Horeb) and the second is Mount Zion. If we link Sinai with Zion we will gain an appreciation for redemptive history on a higher, cosmological plane and grasp its significance on a progressive, eschatological level.

### **The Goal of Mount Sinai: Mount Zion**

As the Israelites make their way out of Egypt, Yahweh instructs them to encamp by the sea directly opposite a mountain called Baal Zaphon (Ex.14:2). It seems humorous that Yahweh deliberately parades a demonstration of His omnipotence right in front of Baal's residence. Baal appears as the impotent onlooker, the helpless witness to God's sovereign deliverance of His people through the Red Sea. Mount Sinai then becomes "a beacon to the slaves of Egypt, a symbol of a new kind of master and a radically different relationship [with God]... Sinai is not the final goal of the Exodus, but lying between Egypt and Canaan, it does represent YHWH's unchallengeable mastery over both. This miraculous deliverance brought Israel to a mountain called Sinai, but Yahweh states His real intention: "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and *brought you to myself*" (Ex.19:4, emphasis mine). Mount Sinai, the mountain of God (Ex.3:1; Numb.10:33), and its analogous covenant of law establish a suzerain-vassal love-relationship between Yahweh and Israel (Deut.6::1-5; 7:7-9; 10:12-13; 11:1, 13, 22-23; 13:3; 30:6, 20).

To believe that he alone is lord is to do his will; to do his will is to enthrone him in lordship. The belief in the one true God, the love of God, and the observance of his commandments are inextricable; they are all ways of stating one fact, his suzerainty... at the core of the covenant relationship lies a twofold love, the mysterious love of YHWH for Israel and the less baffling love of Israel for YHWH, her benefactor... [The commandments] are the words of the language of love, the fit medium in which to respond to the passionate advances of the divine suzerain... The love of God moves Israel to embrace the norms of Sinai.

The relationship is much more than dutiful, it is personal and highly intimate. The vassal's obedience to the suzerain's commands spring from a deep sincere love for Him.

If the goal of Exodus is Mount Sinai, the establishment of suzerain-vassal kingdom relations, then by extension the aim of Mount Sinai is Mount Zion. Moses affirms this in his song: "You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance – the place, O Lord, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, your hands established" (Ex.15:17). Mount Zion will symbolize the impact that the suzerain-vassal love-relationship has on all earthly affairs. Intimacy with Yahweh commences the suzerain-kingdom's transforming power throughout all the earth.

When Yahweh re-appoints Israel as His king-priests at Sinai, He sets up a transportable tabernacle to be their meeting place. But it is not until after David's conquest of the Jebusite fortress that Mount Zion's imagery and theology begins to develop. Mount Sinai is the foundation and commencement of Israel's journey to Mount Zion. Israel's march from Sinai is directed toward the establishment of Yahweh's throne at Zion (Psa.68:1-17). To put it more succinctly, "Sinai has not so much been forgotten as absorbed... The transfer of the motif from Sinai to Zion was complete and irreversible, so that YHWH came to be designated no longer as 'the One of Sinai,' but as 'he who dwells on

Mount Zion' (Isa.8:18)." So Yahweh leaves Sinai (Deut. 33:2; Jud.5:4; Hab.3:3) to take up residence in enemy territory, the land of Canaan (Ex.15:17; Psa.78:54). With David's transfer of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, Mount Zion then becomes the Great King's chosen abode (Psa.78:68-69; 132:13). Zion becomes Yahweh's divine capitol city (Psa.46:5; 48:2-3, 8-9; 87:2).

Salvation history reveals that "through time and the movement of Israel into the Promised Land, Zion displaces Sinai as God's dwelling place on earth. The movement of the mountain of God from Sinai to Zion tracks with the progress of redemption." Scripture focuses on the historicity of Sinai and its symbolic emphasis on deliverance from evil, while it depicts Zion as being cosmic in character and its symbolic emphasis on transformation through Yahweh's conquest over evil. Israel's historical experience with Yahweh as its liberator is memorialized at Mount Sinai, yet a "who-so-ever-will" encounter with Yahweh is advanced to a grander cosmic scaffold in the symbol of Mount Zion.

What brings the national experience of Yahweh to an international level? The Davidic Covenant. The next step to formulating our conception of Zion theology must integrate the pre-existing motif of Sinai with the Davidic tradition as revealed in the Davidic Covenant.

This Davidic covenant, then, is distinct in kind from the Sinaitic. The focus of the Mosaic covenant sealed at Sinai is twofold: history and morality... In the case of the Davidic covenant... [it] fixes attention to that which is constant beneath – or perhaps I should say, above – the flux of history... Jerusalem and, as we shall see, especially Mount Zion, are a sign that beneath and beyond the pain and chaos of the realm we call history, there is another realm, upheld by the indefectible promise of God.

The symbolism of Mount Zion points to a reality that is above linear earthly history (or what Eliade calls "profane time") into the realm of eternal life. Because of this, Zion takes on primal paradisiacal characteristics that demonstrate a concrete yet immeasurable bearing on the universe.

### **Integrating Sinai with the Davidic Tradition**

Building on the foundation of the Mosaic Covenant and staying within the framework of the Davidic Covenant, the prophets begin to develop Zion theology, a theology that paints a vivid portrait of Yahweh's cosmic mountain. Zion exhibits eternal characteristics and radiates eschatological significance. Even if the Israelite understanding of the Davidic tradition of 2 Samuel 7 focused on human government, the prophets clearly expound on this eternal kingship-covenant in terms of Yahweh's cosmic governance from Zion.

This "kingdom" must be placed in the category of an "anticipative" realization in proper keeping with the entire scope of Old Testament experience. The shadow-kingdom of Israel was real. God was reigning in their midst. But it was nonetheless only a shadow of the reality to come... David's line anticipated in shadow-form the eternal character of the reign of Jesus Christ. While God actually was manifesting his lordship through David's line, this human monarchy was serving at the same time as a typological representation of the throne of God itself. David's reign was intended to anticipate in shadow-form the reality of the messianic Redeemer who was to unite with finality the throne of David with the throne of God.

The historical conquest of the Jebusite fortress "signified Yahweh's right of possession of the land of Canaan" and connects David's throne with Yahweh's throne. Ultimately, "Yahweh's holy mountain

must refer to the whole land of Palestine, if not the whole world, which is signified by Mount Zion as a world-mountain" and the King-Priest, Son of David-Son of God reigning over all.

The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam.7:13-16) identifies three basic motifs of the cosmic Mount Zion:

<b>Davidic Covenant</b>	<b>Zion as Yahweh's Cosmic Mountain</b>
Yahweh's Mediator-Priest will build a "house" (tyIB; bayith) for God's Name	Zion is a theological institution that utilizes Yahweh's priestly order of Melchizedek-Zadok. Zion secures the spiritual transformation of the faithful vassal-remnant into a city-temple.
Yahweh's King reigns over a "kingdom" (hk'l'm.m; mamlakah) that will endure forever	Zion is an eschatological kingdom that symbolizes Yahweh's kingship. Zion projects the redemptive reign of God in the earthly realm.
Yahweh's Son will establish His lordship or the "throne" (aSeKi kicce') of His eternal kingdom	Zion is a cosmological symbol that represents Yahweh's lordship. Zion reflects the divine governance of His cosmic holy mount in the heavenly realm.

Let's look more closely at the characteristics of Mount Zion, the majestic cosmic mountain of Yahweh.

## **Characteristics of Yahweh's Cosmic Mountain: Mount Zion**

### **1. Yahweh's Cosmic Mountain: A City-Temple under the Priesthood of Melchizedek-Zadok**

The cosmic mountain of Zion is founded on the divine Father-Son dynasty: "I will be his father, and he will be my son... Your house (tyIB; bayith)... will endure forever before me" (2 Sam.7:14a, 16a). The Davidic Covenant directs its fulfillment to a messianic king's intimate Father-Son relationship with God. When David offers to build a permanent house (bayith) for Yahweh, God's response infers a clever play-on-words. It will be through the dynasty (bayith) of David's Son/God's Son that an everlasting dwelling place (bayith) will be constructed (2 Sam.7:11-14). "House" is a metonymy, a figure of speech that implies "dynasty." The builder of this bayith-complex is Jesus Christ who is both Son of David and Son of God (Amos 9:11; Matt.:1:1; Lk.1:32-33; Acts 2:29-36; 15:13-17; Rom.1:3-4; Heb.1:5; 3:4-6). Interpreting the Davidic Covenant in this way makes it easier to see that God's chastening of Solomon in rending the kingdom does not extinguish the overarching perpetual covenant that is inaugurated and realized in Christ (2 Sam.7:14; 1 Kgs.11:13, 32-36; 15:4; 2 Kgs.8:19; 19:34; 20:6).

As the Davidic-throne succession falters and eventually ceases, the prophets' message is placed within an eschatological framework. They foretell of a worldwide movement, a second exodus from every nation that will stream to Mount Zion. Israel's historical exodus to Mount Sinai parallels this "who-so-ever-will" cosmological exodus to Mount Zion – where "geography is simply a visible form of theology."

The God the Father-Son of God dynasty is portrayed in horticultural imagery. The great Davidic dynasty will sprout up from a "tender sprig" planted on Mount Zion.

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it; I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches (Ezek.17:22-23).

The fruitful messianic Branch on Yahweh's cosmic mountain provides "who-so-ever-will" a shelter – a place to call home (2 Sam.7:10; Isa.11:1; Jer.23:5; 33:15; Zech.3:8; 6:12; cf. Matt.13:32). The Branch-event signals the gathering of all nations to Zion. A scattered remnant responds to the new worldwide exodus and enters the highway of holiness that leads them on an exuberant journey to Mount Zion (Isa.11:1-16; cf. Isa.19:23-25; 27:12-13; 35:8-10). Ezekiel portrays this "who-so-ever-will" exodus as an essential part of the true cosmic mountain experience:

For on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord, there in the land the entire house of Israel will serve me, and there I will accept them... I will accept you as fragrant incense when I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will show myself holy among you in the sight of the nations (Ezek.20:40-41; cf. 11:17; 28:25; 34:13; 39:28).

The three-fold purpose for this gathering to Yahweh's cosmic mountain is to be cleansed from defilement, to experience spiritual transformation, and to be taught God's laws and receive the Spirit's empowerment to obey (Isa.2:1-3; Mic.4:1-3).

For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws (Ezek.36:24-27).

Yahweh's high and lofty cosmic mountain is not only a secure home, it is also a life-changing meeting place where decrees are issued and spiritual empowerment is provided.

Even though the term "Zion" never appears in the book of Ezekiel, his message relays the significance of Zion's expansion and completion of the temple imagery begun in the Mosaic era. The departure of the shekinah glory from Jerusalem's temple is similar to the departure of the glory from the tabernacle when Philistia captured the ark (Ezek.8-10; 1 Sam.4:21). There is an "abomination of desolation" because the enemy has entered the sanctuary of the Lord. This happens a third time when the Jews refuse Christ as Messiah and Jesus announces: "Look, your house is left to you desolate" (Matt.23:38) and the temple is razed in AD 70 (cf. Dan.9:26-27). Amazingly, Jesus foretells of yet

one more departure – one more abomination of desolation in the temple of God in the last days (Matt.24:15; 2 Thess.2:3-4).

When the glory of the Lord went up from Jerusalem it "stopped above the mountain east of it," thus placing Yahweh's concentrated presence in – of all God-forsaken locations – Babylon (Ezek.11:23). Ezekiel's vision testifies to the profound truth that the glory of God will forsake the sacred-turned-apostate temple, but He will not forsake the faithful remnant, the devout that dwell on Yahweh's holy cosmic mountain in the midst of unholy territory. The Lord says, "Although I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone" (Ezek.11:16). The biblical concept of Yahweh's cosmic mountain is clearly a sanctuary-dwelling place where the faithful enjoy intimate covenant relations with Him any where, any time, in the midst of any circumstance.

Although "Ezekiel never uses Zion in any sense, and never uses the name Jerusalem in a positive context... he uses other terminology to speak of future blessings – city, mountain, hill, and sanctuary." Ezekiel receives a vision of the inauguration of the new temple on the cosmic mountain of Yahweh. "In visions of God he took me to the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain, on whose south side were some buildings that looked like a city" (Ezek.40:2). He goes to great lengths to describe the sanctuary as a city set on a high mountain (cf.Psa.48:1; Matt.5:14; Rev.21:10). Not only will Yahweh return to Zion, His return to the new Jerusalem results in its transformation into "the City of Truth... and the mountain of the Lord Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain" (Zech.8:3). Ezekiel 40-48 closes with renaming this mountain-city-temple as: Yahweh Shammah, the Lord is there (Ezek.48:35). Therefore the old city of Jerusalem symbolizes those who adherent to the Judaistic letter of the law; the new heavenly city-temple symbolizes those who enjoy the grace and liberty found in Christ (Gal.4:21-31). Believers "have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God... You have come to God, the judge of all men... to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant" (Heb.12:22-24; cf. Heb.11:10, 16).

When Christians come to Jesus Christ, the living Stone, they become like living stones that are being built into a spiritual house; they become a holy priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God (1 Pet.2:4-5). So the imagery of the new city-temple includes a new holy priesthood in the New Covenant. Did the Old Testament prophets foresee a new priesthood in the future Zion? They did characterize the eschatological remnant as a dedicated few that worship Yahweh with a new heart under a new covenant (Joel 2:32; Zeph.3:12-13; Jer.31:31-34; Ezek.11:18-21). Israel's restoration is not to her homeland, but to Yahweh as a spiritually cleansed, faithful community (Ezek.20:32-36; 36:24-33; 37:22-26). The restoration is inclusive of all nations, both Jew and Gentile (Zech.9:7; 14:16; Isa.66:19; Dan.7:27; 12:1-3).

Ezekiel saw the new priesthood of believers. In the middle of Ezekiel's vision of the city-temple-mount, Yahweh lays down three basic regulations regarding the temple (Ezek.44:5). First, the uncircumcised in heart may not even enter the sanctuary (v.9). Second, the Levitical priests of the same strain as the house of Eli may serve the people in the temple complex to fulfill their ministerial duties, but are not allowed to come near to God Himself (vv.10-14; cf. 8:5-18; 22:26-29; 33:31-32; 43:8-10; 1 Sam.2:12-22; 3:11; 1 Kgs.2:27). Third, only those of the Zadok priesthood may minister before Yahweh and carry out in ministry only that which He has instructed (vv.15-16; cf. 1 Sam.2:31-3:4). In this city-temple-mount God makes a distinction between the defiled, compromised priesthood of Eli of Shiloh and the faithful, holy priesthood of Zadok (qAdc' Tsadowq "righteous").

Is Ezekiel advocating a re-establishment of the same legalistic rituals only under a new hierarchy?

On the contrary... in the centre of Ezekiel's temple is his vision of a new reality, a mystical glimpse into the divine world... In the new community, risen from the dry bones of the old with a new spirit and new heart, the outward forms of worship will be penetrated and their inner meaning revealed.

The true meaning of the worship of Yahweh will finally penetrate into a new community that has received a new heart and a new spirit. They will experience a new reality: insight into the divine world where Christ is High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (qd,c,-yKil.m; Malkiy-Tsedeq/Zadok). In Genesis 14, Melchizedek is both the king of Salem (the future Jerusalem) and the priest of God Most High. In Hebrews 7, the "order of Melchizedek" is the order of the priesthood to which Christ belongs. It is not by blood lineage but through spiritual lineage (Heb.5:6; Psa.110:1ff.). Ezekiel includes the priesthood of Zadok as active participants in the new temple complex – their inclusion also is not based on bloodlines but through spiritual adoption into the family of God.

[Christ] has made us to be a kingdom and *priests* to serve his God and Father-- to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen (Rev.1:6).

You have made them to be a kingdom and *priests* to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth (Rev.5:10).

Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be *priests* of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years (Rev.20:6, emphasis mine).

The order of Melchizekek-Zadok is one that is chosen by God, one that exalts righteous and holy living. It includes people called to be "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (1 Pet.2:9) to serve God in his holy city-temple cosmic mountain. Zion is therefore a theological institution that utilizes Yahweh's priestly order of Melchesidek-Zadok. The cosmic mountain of Yahweh secures the spiritual transformation of the faithful vassal-remnant into a city-temple.

## **2. Yahweh's Cosmic Mountain: An Eschatological Kingdom that Inaugurates the Redemptive Transformation of the Heart**

The holy city-temple-mount has a King. In Him all nations can receive redemption and experience sanctification through Zion's installment of the Davidic Shepherd-king.

I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel (Ezek.34:14)

The messianic Davidic-Shepherd is sent to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel to Himself (Matt.15:24; cf. 12:30; Ezek.34:15-16, 23-24; Jer.23:3-5). The Gentiles are included into His sheepfold as well (Isa.56:8; Jn.10:16; 12:32). Ezekiel portrays the gathering of Jews and Gentiles as the joining together of two sticks "on the mountains of Israel":

Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on and say to them... "I will *gather* them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, *on the mountains of Israel*. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms... They will be my people, and I will be their God. *My servant*

*David will be king* over them, and they will all have *one shepherd*. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees" (Ezek.37:20-24, emphasis mine).

F.F. Bruce confirms that "Jesus' calling of disciples around Himself to form the 'little flock' who were to receive the kingdom (Luke 12:32; cf. Daniel 7:22, 27) marks Him out as the founder of the New Israel." He is God's servant, the Davidic Shepherd-King who installs His twelve apostles to represent a new organism with its own structure and authority, and commissions them to begin their universal mission as the New Israel of God (Mk.3:14-15; Lk.22:29-30; Gal 6:16). Only when Yahweh is acknowledged as the Messiah, the new David, the Great Shepherd, will the "who-so-ever-will" – including both Jew and Gentile believers – come into the kingdom of the new theocratic order of the New Covenant. Zion is therefore an eschatological kingdom that symbolizes Yahweh's kingship. The cosmic mountain of God projects the redemptive reign of Yahweh on the earth.

The concept of the kingdom of God remains to be one of the most controversial topics within Christian doctrine. Swirling around this concept is a broad range of definitions, from social activism to apocalyptic thinking, from seeking political worldwide utopia to Christianizing culture, and from an inner mystical communion to simply supporting the Church as an institution. Some adhere to a "dominion now" kingdom, others view the kingdom to be ushered in a future millennial reign of God, while still others support the reality of a present kingdom that is not yet fully consummated. The phrase "the kingdom of God" does not occur specifically anywhere in the Old Testament. However, the key to tying in an Old Testament understanding of kingdom theology with the cosmic mountain imagery is to focus on the ruling activity of God rather than on an abstract notion of a kingdom.

It was Yahweh's sovereign action on which the attention of Old Testament writers focused, and it was the manifestations of his sovereign power that called forth their worship. Even when later writers did come to speak of the kingdom of God or of heaven, they did so chiefly in order to describe the rule of God.

If we define the kingdom of God to simply mean the reign of God, then the anticipatory progression of the concept of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament will be clearly seen in Zion's cosmic mountain. Yahweh's holy mountain will be positioned within the omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent realm of the Shepherd-King who reigns through the vassal-administration of His kingdom's image-bearing citizens.

Israel begins as an individual person (Jacob), then is transformed into a corporate nation (beginning with Moses, through the era of the kings) that eventually becomes ensnared by idolatry and fails in their mission to the nations (by their exile to Assyria and Babylonia). The end of the monarchy signals the dismal failure of Israel to usher in the kingdom of God on the earth. Even when the exilic Jews return to Israel they did not generate any sign of a kingdom economy. The kingdom did not arrive until John the Baptist, the last of the great Old Testament prophets, paves a highway for Messiah to usher in the reign of heaven on earth. The kingdom is now at hand.

A messianic individual fulfills the role of Servant-Israel to reconcile the world to God (cf. Isa.42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12). Isaiah's Servant-Israel is Ezekiel's Davidic Shepherd-King who inaugurates His kingdom on earth and consummates it in His eternal reign. As the divine Servant-Israel and Shepherd-gatherer, Christ brings all nations to His Mount Zion-kingdom to create a new



citizenship with its own heavenly capital, the New Jerusalem, the City of God in the heavenly sphere. The new Israel includes all nations, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, rich and poor, dark and fair skinned. If there is any exclusion, it is because one chooses to reject the free offer of citizenship in the new Israel of God. Sadly, the majority of the first ones whom Jesus invites reject His offer (Matt.23:37-38; cf. 8:11-12; 21:43). This sober indictment proclaims that the true Israel embraces only those who receive Jesus as their messianic Shepherd-King.

If Israel is the Old Testament paradigm for the Church then the theocratic rule of historical Israel is also a paradigm for the theocratic reign of the kingdom of God in Christ. The Davidic-Solomonic kingdom and its Zion theology typify the glorious kingdom that comes only through a supernatural event that breaks into history and inaugurates a higher, spiritual order. Jesus fulfills the prophetic hope of the cosmic mountain-kingdom by proclaiming: "the gospel of the kingdom of God... saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel'" (NKJV, Mk.1:14-15) and "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent" (NKJV, Lk.4:43). Explaining and manifesting the kingdom is preeminent in Jesus' heart and mind for it reflects the prophetic establishment of Zion's mountain.

We must not make the same mistake as the Jews of Jesus' day. The kingdom of God is not a political kingdom (Jn.18:36; Rom.14:17) just as Mount Zion is not merely a physical mountain. Rather, the kingdom of God is an invisible spiritual realm: "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you" (Lk.17:20-21). Whatever expression is the preferred rendering of the Greek, "within you" or "in the midst of you," the force of the language concludes that the kingdom simply cannot be located or localized because the character of the kingdom must reflect the glory from which it exists – an eternal cosmic mountain-realm. Just as Ezekiel prophesied, Jesus transfers the kingdom from a piece of significant real estate to the soft, fleshly heart of born again believers. A person must be born again – they must possess the kingdom's Spirit in order to see and enter the kingdom of God's presence (Jn.3:3-5).

To enter the kingdom of God is to come to Mount Zion, to be delivered from the power of darkness, translated into the kingdom of the Son, and be transformed by His love (Col.1:13). Gowen calls this experience "eschatological forgiveness." Ezekiel likens eschatological sanctification to the delicate spiritual operation of removing a heart of stone in order to replace it with a heart of flesh (36:26).

The problem is that in history the responsive, truly human heart has turned to stone; something of humanity has been lost so that love, obedience, and knowledge of God are no longer possible. This is more appropriately called re-creation than new creation. To become truly human again, able to make the choice to follow God, must also be accompanied by the gift of the spirit to empower one to act on those choices.

Zion's promise of human transformation is one of internal change through the circumcision of the heart. Transformed citizens of the kingdom of God rule and reign with Christ from the true cosmic mountain. They enjoy the blessings of God's presence, share in building God's city, and rejoice in the abundant life of Zion (Isa.33:13-16; Psa.24:3-4).

### 3. Yahweh's Sacred Mountain: Cosmological Governance through the Lordship of the Prince of Peace

Zion is also a cosmological symbol that represents Yahweh's lordship. Zion reflects the divine governance of His cosmic holy mount in the heavenly realm. God tells Ezekiel that His city-temple-mount "is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever" (43:7). Zion is positioned as the cosmic center of the nations with countries all around her (Ezek.5:5; 38:12). The Davidic Shepherd-King is Zion's "prince forever" (Ezek.37:25). "The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all" (Psa.103:19).

Ruling over divine governmental administration is none other than the Son of David-Son of God, the Davidic "Prince of Peace" (Isa.9:6; Ezek.34:24) who reigns forever in the presence of the Lord (Ezek.44:3;45:7; 45:16-17, 22; 46:2-12). The reign of the Prince of Peace is established through His death (Dan.11:22; Hos.3:4) and resurrection when God exalts Him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior (Acts 5:31). "I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open... All the glory of his family will hang on him" (Isa.22:22, 24). "They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations" (Psa.145:11-13).

When the Prince of Peace begins to demonstrate Zion's kingdom power over evil, the Pharisees accuse Him of operating under the power of another prince: Beelzebub (Baal-zebub), the prince of demons (Matt.12:24). Yet His government inauguration proved that this false prince over the world system had no hold on him (Jn.14:30). "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out" (Jn.12:31). Before the Prince of the holy cosmic mountain of God "the prince of this world now stands condemned" (Jn.16:11).

Even though the cosmic Mount Zion reigns supreme and assures victory over the enemies of God, biblical imagery still portrays Zion to be the battleground of conflicting forces (Dan.8:25). A worldwide alliance of anti-Christian nations form to make a dramatic assault against the peaceful, holy mount of God (Ezek.38:1-23). The Lord tells Ezekiel to "set your face against Gog," an apocalyptic, albeit somewhat cryptic title to describe the hordes aligned with the antichrist prince of demons (32:2; 39:1; cf. Dan.8:11).

As believers take up residence in Zion, the spirit of the world resists this awesome reality all day, every day. "The kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it," but it is a bitter fight to throw off the pressures of the world that violently strip us of God's presence (Matt.11:12). Believers are to learn to vigorously lay hold of the presence of God's kingdom through decisions and actions that are based on biblical convictions. Paul and Barnabas encourages us to forcefully press into God's presence: "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Spiritual vitality is available to those with the humility and tenacity to press into the Lord. To lay hold of the kingdom of God is to experience righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit – in spite of the battle with conflicting forces of evil (Rom.14:17). Believers reign on God's cosmic mountain because of His presence.

Jesus' preaching of the gospel of the kingdom is accompanied by authoritative teaching, healing all kinds of sickness and disease, along with a powerful deliverance ministry (Matt.4:23-24). He

explicitly says, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt.12:28).

The presence of the Kingdom of God was seen as God's dynamic reign invading the present age without transforming it into the age to come... The meaning of Jesus' exorcism of demons in its relationship to the Kingdom of God is precisely this: that before the eschatological conquest of God's Kingdom over evil and the destruction of Satan, the Kingdom of God has invaded the realm of Satan to deal him a preliminary but decisive defeat.

Yahweh's cosmic mountain-kingdom is not manifest merely in word, but in power (1 Cor.4:20). Therefore, knowledge about Mount Zion and all its theological implications is not evidence of authentic kingdom living. Simply researching, discussing, and teaching about it does not produce victorious kingdom living. When we lay hold of the timeless truths of Yahweh's cosmic mountain-kingdom, we encounter the supernatural power of God. "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it" (Lk.16:16). To press into the kingdom is like pushing aside evil obstruction and – under duress – pressing into the presence of God. God's cosmic holy mountain is omnipresent. He is always everywhere actively present. We then must learn to refuse to succumb to the spirit of the world and press into His presence everywhere and at all times (Psa.139:7-10).

So pressing into the presence of God will bring bittersweet results. There will be immense pleasure in abiding in Him as well as intense resistance from the kingdom of darkness. Walking in the Spirit means invading enemy territory – even the recesses of Mount Zaphon. The fact that it is on Mount Zion that Yahweh will defeat the nations reveals the guarantee of its inviolability (Isa.31:4-5; Mic.4:11-13; Zeph.3:8-13; Ezek.38:17-23). Though assaulted by evil forces, God's cosmic mountain remains secure because of the serenity and immutability of the presence of the Lord in its midst (Psa.46:3, 6; Ezek.48:30-35).

Towards the end of Ezekiel's vision of the city-temple-mountain of God, he see the healing river of Zion flowing to the nations (Ezek.47:1-12). So the blessing of God "is not limited to victory of hostile armies, but extends also to the bestowal of all blessing and fertility from the temple where Yahweh is to be found. With this we must connect the belief in the fertilizing river which flowed through Zion to bless the land." Jesus' disciples appear to join with Ezekiel in the river of Zion as they are sent to all nations to preach this message: "'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons" (Matt.10:7-8; cf. 28:18-20). The Holy Spirit visibly manifests the cosmic kingdom of God on the earth. The observable demonstrations issued from Mount Zion aren't weird or paranormal. It is evidence that Yahweh's cosmic mountain reigns supreme. The gospel of the kingdom is to be preached and actively verified by supernatural, Spirit-led ministry (Mk.16:17-18). Citizens of the New Jerusalem go about the kingdom's business. Their ministry breathes refreshment, inexpressible joy, and incomprehensible peace to the weary and heavy laden.

Mount Zion's joy is merely another divinely appointed avenue for deliverance. "When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them'... and we are filled with joy" (Psa.126:1-3). When God reveals Himself in life's pathways, He makes us full of joy in His presence (Acts 2:28; Psa.16:11). Joy in God's presence is like medicine (Prov.17:22a). It is supernaturally therapeutic and therefore life changing. Joy is another sign of cosmic mountain manifestations on the earth.

Daniel also saw the cosmic mountain of the Great Shepherd-King. He saw the cosmic Mount Zion becoming a great mountain that filled the whole earth (Dan.2:35). Daniel declares: "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdom and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever" (2:44). When Jesus comes to announce the arrival of the kingdom, in reality He inaugurates the plan of God that originates in the Edenic connection to the cosmic mountain at the beginning of creation. He affirms that the divinely appointed goal of all the prophecies about Yahweh's cosmic mountain is now in full operation. The Church of Jesus Christ may actually press into the presence of Yahweh's cosmic mountain – this side of eternity.

## **Conclusion**

Ancient cultures throughout the history of the world esteem physical and artificial mountains as sacred sites for human-divine encounters. The details may vary as to their form and mythology, but they seem to provide a point of contact with evil entities that unfortunately seals an unholy allegiance to Satan. Artificial cosmic mountain-structures, such as the Sumerian ziggurats, Egyptian pyramids, and Canaanite high places are complex simulations meant to counterfeit the true representation of the biblical cosmic mountain of Yahweh.

So this is my attempt to construct an understanding cosmic mountain imagery using only biblical motifs rather than relying on Canaanite mythology. By linking Mount Sinai with Mount Zion we can clearly see salvation history progress to eschatological and cosmological levels. Mount Zion's imagery and theology really begins to develop in the Davidic Covenant. This important covenant is where Zion theology integrates the pre-existing motif of the Mosaic Covenant. Expounding on the framework of the Davidic Covenant, we can see how all the prophets develop a stunning portrayal of Yahweh's cosmic mountain. Zion displays radiant eschatological characteristics that have eternal significance. Yahweh's cosmic mountain is a city-temple that flourishes under the priesthood of Melchizedek-Zadok. It is also an eschatological kingdom that inaugurates the redemptive transformation of the hearts of its citizens. Lastly, Yahweh's sacred mountain is a realm of cosmological governance through the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

John saw Yahweh's cosmic mountain in all its glory. It looked like a city, a Holy City called the new Jerusalem, with foundations, walls, streets, and gates (Rev.21:2, 12-21). It looked like a great and high mountain that shone with the glory of God (v.10). It looked more like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband, the Lamb of God, than it looked like a temple (vv.2, 9). In fact, there is no temple in this brilliant city "because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (v.22). It looked like a throne that issued forth the river of the water of life for the healing of the nations (22:1-2). "The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads" (vv.3b-4). It sounds as though John experienced the same tour of Yahweh's cosmic mountain that Ezekiel received while exiled in Babylon.

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