



**YESHUA
AND THE
DESOLATE WOMAN:
A
STUDY
ON THE
GOSPEL TO ZION**

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The author dedicates this work to El Elyon through the name of His Son, Yeshua HaMashiach. May He reveal His Torah through Mashiach, and His Mashiach through His Torah.

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Like this study? My other works include: Yeshua and the ascent to Zion: A study on greater exodus motifs, and, Yeshua and Zion's resurrected children: A study on resurrection motifs.

Yochanan = John

Targum = Interpretation, that is an ancient paraphrase or explanation.

Tanach = Torah, Prophets and Writings.

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World Messianic Bible British Edition, public domain = WMBBE

Targum Jonathan Ben Uziel: The Chaldee Paraphrase on The Prophet Isaiah
Translated by Rev. C. W. H. Pauli 1871, public domain = TJBU

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Methodology

This study is designed for people of all levels of understanding. The Scriptures are like a woven tapestry, with many threads, creating a multi-layered picture. Sometimes there are complex associations from one verse to another and this study has sought to break down some of those connections. There are 3 main ways in which the information is presented;

If there is a need for verse(s) to be read in association with other verse(s) columns have been provided to aid the reader in being able to compare the different verses. Furthermore, where needed, "Key notes" sections have been included in the columns to help the reader think about the verse(s) and how it connects with the larger point that is being conveyed. An example is given below;

Matthew 21:13 He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers!"
(WMBBE)

Key notes;

Yeshua is citing from two places in the Prophets.

Compare the parts in bold.

What links these two verses together is a link word "House".

Yeshua is bringing to mind two contexts in the Prophets.

Isaiah 56:7 I will bring these to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples. (WMBBE)

Jeremiah 7:11 Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it," says the LORD. (WMBBE)

A second way in which information is broken down is through the use of summary points which are interspersed throughout the study. These are designed as quick reference points and to demonstrate the thought flow of the section. An example is now given;

Yeshua cites from Jeremiah and Isaiah → Brings to mind both contexts → The audience would bring to mind the surrounding context of Isaiah and Jeremiah

A third way are concluding summaries at regular intervals. They will look like the summary points. They will give you the essential information of the section;

Matthew 21:13 → Cites Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11

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ישוע המשיח

Yeshua and the desolate woman: A study on the Gospel to Zion

Did Yeshua or the apostles care about the many Prophecies of Zion? What exactly is their thinking on the many verses which deal with and focus on Zion? This study hopes to contribute to the wider discussion within the Messianic and Hebrew roots communities about the role of this central topic in the Tanach. Provided in this study are some key contexts which will enable the audience to have a much broader appreciation of the Prophecies and how Yeshua and the apostles understood their role and mission in relation to them. Each generation has different questions, and as our knowledge grows of how to understand Yeshua in the context of the Tanach, the benefit of having greater clarity about this central issue will bring us into a greater understanding of the Torah and its interpretation, and a better knowledge of how Yeshua and his apostles handled the Torah.

Zion (צִיּוֹן) has different definitions in the Tanach, Zion can mean a physical location like Jerusalem (Isaiah 52:1) or the city of David (2 Samuel 5:7) or it can be a technical term relating to His people being called Zion (Isaiah 51:16). In Pharisaic tradition there is an Earthly Jerusalem and a Heavenly Jerusalem (Taanith 5a:12) and Paul and Revelation also has this understanding.

Zion → Jerusalem → City of David → People → Heavenly and Earthly Jerusalem

There are many verses which have a context dealing with Zion, one such place is found in Galatians. In Galatians the apostle Paul speaks about Jerusalem that is “above”, there is a rich narrative that lays just below the surface which needs to be unpacked, this study will help explain some of that narrative and enable one to read the Scriptures within a Zion centered context.

Galatians 4:26 But, the Jerusalem above, is free,—the which is our mother; 27 For it is written—Be gladdened, O barren one! that wast not giving birth, break forth and shout, thou that wast not in birth-pains,—because, more, are the children of the deserted one, than of her that had the husband. (REB)

When the apostles cite or allude to specific verses one thing the audience can do is to seek out their original context, as that context can help us understand the reason for the usage of the verse(s) and help us unpack a larger narrative to which the citation points to. We begin by asking some simple questions. Why is Jerusalem barren and desolate? Why is the apostle Paul pointing to the story of Zion? What kind of connection does this have with the Gospel? Paul is making a citation from Isaiah 54:1;

“Sing, barren, you who didn’t give birth! Break out into singing, and cry aloud, you who

didn't travail with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife," says the LORD. (WMBBE)

Galatians 4:26-27 → Citation of Isaiah 54:1

Jerusalem → Desolate and barren

To understand how Jerusalem became barren and desolate we must look deeper into her story and detail the events which unfolded to cause her to become deserted and childless. Like a tapestry verses and contexts can be woven together and sometimes one set of verses are connected to others and Isaiah earlier sets out the reasons as to why Zion has come into a state of judgement;

Isaiah 5:1 Let me sing for my well beloved a song of my beloved about his vineyard. My beloved had a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. 2 He dug it up, gathered out its stones, planted it with the choicest vine, built a tower in the middle of it, and also cut out a wine press in it. He looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.
(WMBBE)

In Isaiah 5 a parable is told which likens the nation itself to a vineyard which was planted (Isaiah 5:1) and due to the nations yield of wild grapes (that is injustice and oppression, Isaiah 5:7) the vineyard's protection (its hedge and wall, Isaiah 5:5) is taken away so that the vineyard is eaten up and trampled down (Isaiah 5:5) and it then became a wasteland (Isaiah 5:6). The Most High seeing injustice and bloodshed (Isaiah 3:14-15, Isaiah 1:21-23) decides to bring about judgement upon Jerusalem.

Isaiah 5:1-2 → Nation likened to Vineyard → Judgement upon Vineyard (Isaiah 5:5-6)

This act of judgement is expressed in different ways, one such way is to describe Jerusalem as a mother who is bereaved of her children and is in mourning (Isaiah 49:21) and who needs to be comforted (Lamentations 2:1) who has been left by the Most High (Isaiah 54:7) and who has been made desolate (Isaiah 54:1). This is important imagery to grasp as the Gospel to Zion promises restoration from these judgements that have fallen upon her.

The judgement becomes a cause for distress for Zion and as a result of being in mourning promises are given to Zion that she would be comforted;

Isaiah 40:1 "Comfort, comfort my people," says your God. "Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and call out to her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins." 3 The voice of

one who calls out, “Prepare the way of the LORD in the wilderness! Make a level highway in the desert for our God. (WMBBE)

Chapter 40 of Isaiah and onward concentrates on the main themes of the consolation and restoration of Zion, this is significant when we get to the Gospels, as there is an expectation for consolation;

Luke 2:25 Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking for the **consolation** of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. (WMBBE)

Isaiah 40:1-3 → Consolation of Nation → Luke 2:25 → Awaiting that consolation

Furthermore, the Gospels all cite from chapter 40, as all the Gospels cite the words “The voice of one crying in the wilderness”;

Matthew 3:1 In those days, Yochanan the Immerser came, proclaiming in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” 3 For this is he who was spoken of by **Isaiah the prophet**, saying, “**The voice of one crying in the wilderness**, make the way of the Lord ready! Make his paths straight!” (WMBBE)

Mark 1:2 As it is written in the **Prophets**, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you: 3 **the voice of one crying in the wilderness**, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight!’” (WMBBE)

Luke 3:4 As it is written in the scroll of the **words of Isaiah** the prophet, “**The voice of one crying in the wilderness**, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight. 5 Every valley will be filled. Every mountain and hill will be brought low. The crooked will become straight, and the rough ways smooth. 6 All flesh will see God’s salvation.’” (WMBBE)

John 1:23 He said, “**I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness**, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.” (WMBBE)

Key notes;

John is pointing to the consolation of the nation.

The time when the Most High would again return to His people.

John is then proclaiming the time of consolation to Zion, that is, the in-breaking of her restoration and glorification through the proclamation of the coming near of the Kingdom, as one of the judgements given to Zion was that the Most High had left her;

Isaiah 54:7 For a small moment I have forsaken you, but I will gather you with great mercies. (WMBBE)

Key notes;

Isaiah 54 leads on to an expectation of restoration, Isaiah 54:11-14.

Hosea 5:14-15 leads on to a hope of resurrection in Hosea 6:1-2.

Jeremiah 12 leads on to a promise for the judgement of Babylon (Isaiah 51).

He will return to His people.

Jeremiah 12:7 I have forsaken my house. I have cast off my heritage. I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies. (WMBBE)

Hosea 5:14 For I will be to Ephraim like a lion, and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I myself will tear in pieces and go away. I will carry off, and there will be no one to deliver. 15 I will go and return to my place, until they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face. In their affliction they will seek me earnestly." (WMBBE)

The Most High for a "mere moment" forsakes Zion but with the proclamation of John this situation begins to see a resolution. There are indications in different places of the eventual return of the Most High, one such place is found in Zechariah;

Zechariah 2:10 Sing and rejoice, daughter of Zion! For behold, I come and I will dwell within you, says the LORD. (WMBBE)

John comes immersing and all the Gospels recount the immersion of Yeshua, however the Gospel of Mark has an interesting detail which the other Gospels do not have. When Yeshua comes up out of the water he sees the heavens being torn apart, where could this imagery come from? The combined imagery of the heavens being torn and the Spirit descending would bring to mind the cry of Isaiah;

Mark 1:10 And, straightway, as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rending asunder, and the Spirit, as a dove, descending unto him; (REB)

Key note;

Mark is the only Gospel who talks about the heavens being "torn" apart.

Isaiah 64:1 Would that thou hadst rent the heavens, hadst come down. (REB)

The context of Isaiah 64 is about the restoration of Zion, as the Prophet laments the destruction of Zion (Isaiah 64:10-12) and expresses his desire that the Most High descends from the heavens and returns to His people, and so, with the immersion of Yeshua comes a hope that the times of restoration have come, Zion shall no longer be a ruin and thus it would be natural to then continue the proclamation of the Kingdom.

Most High leaves Zion → Isaiah 54:7 → Jeremiah 12:7 → Hosea 5:15

Most High returns to Zion → Zechariah 2:10 → Isaiah 64:1 → Matthew 3:1-3

Just as with Zechariah there are also other contexts in Isaiah which speak about the expectation of His return to Zion;

Isaiah 40:9 You who tell good news **to Zion**, go up on a high mountain. You who tell good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with strength! Lift it up! Don't be afraid! Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold, your God!" (WMBBE)

Key notes;

Isaiah 52:7 is cited in Romans 10:15.

The "good news" is the Gospel.

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news, who proclaims salvation, who says **to Zion**, "Your God reigns!" (WMBBE)

If we remember the Most High leaves His people with a promise of a return, both Isaiah 40:9 and Isaiah 52:7 speak of a time when a Gospel will be brought to Zion and this Gospel makes the proclamation that the Most High reigns in her, these contexts can help us understand why there is much emphasis in the Gospels on preaching the Kingdom.

Gospel to Zion → The Most High is revealed in her → And has returned to her

The Targum of Isaiah (a Targum is an ancient paraphrase) interprets Isaiah 40:9 and 52:7 in light of "Kingdom" language. This should be significant for readers of the Gospels as they also use "Kingdom" language in relation to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Below is a comparison between the Targum of Isaiah and some verses of Isaiah to demonstrate how phrases were interpreted. The audience would already be familiar through the Targums to the type of language that Yeshua uses;

Isaiah 40:9 Upon a high mountain get up, ye prophets, that bring good tidings unto Zion; lift ye up your voice with strength that bring good tidings to Jerusalem; lift *it* up, be not afraid, say to the cities of the house of Judah, **The kingdom of your God is revealed.** (TJBU)

Key notes;

The first century audience would be familiar with Kingdom language.

By using such language Yeshua would be bringing to mind the promises given to Zion.

Isaiah 40:9 You who tell good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who tell good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with strength! Lift it up! Don't be afraid! Say to the cities of Judah, "**Behold, your God!**" (WMBBE)

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains of the land of Israel are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that publisheth salvation, saying to the congregation of Zion, **The kingdom of thy God is revealed.** 8 The voice of thy rulers! They are lifting up their voice, together they offer praise; because with their eyes they see the mighty works which the Lord shall do, when He shall return His Shekinah to Zion. (TJBU)

The Targum of Isaiah speaks of a "revealing" of a Kingdom.

Yeshua revealed the Kingdom in his proclamation of the Kingdom.

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "**Your God reigns!**" (WMBBE)

This Kingdom language helps us understand the phrasing used in the Gospels. Examples of such Kingdom language can be seen in verses such as Matthew 6:33, 12:28, 19:24, 21:31, 21:43, etc.

Targum of Isaiah 40:9 & Isaiah 52:7 → Kingdom language → Isaiah 40:9 & Isaiah 52:7

Other places like the Gospel of Mark also uses Kingdom language.

Below is a comparison:

Mark 1:15 [and saying]—The season is fulfilled, and the **kingdom of God** hath drawn near,—Repent ye, and have faith in the glad-message. (REB)

Key notes;

Yeshua uses a phrase from the Targums.

His audience would be familiar with the term.

Isaiah 40:9 Upon a high mountain get up, ye prophets, that bring good tidings unto Zion; lift ye up your voice with strength that bring good tidings to Jerusalem; lift *it* up, be not afraid, say to the cities of the house of Judah, The **kingdom of your God is revealed**. (TJBU)

In the context of the Prophet Isaiah the Gospel is always to Zion, that is its primary audience and so it is responding to the expectations that Zion has concerning her restoration and glorification.

When Yeshua proclaims the Kingdom he is also indicating the time that the Prophets have spoken of when the Most High returns to Zion, whereas He had forsaken her. He is, through Yeshua, now returning to her. In close connection with this proclamation is a Prophecy from Isaiah 9:1-2;

Matthew 4:14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through **Isaiah the prophet**, saying, 15 “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, towards the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, 16 the people who **sat in darkness** saw a great light; to those who sat in the region and shadow of death, to them light has dawned. 17 From that time, Yeshua began to proclaim, and to say, “Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” ” (WMBBE)

Key notes;

Note the difference in language between “sat in darkness” used in Matthew and “walking in darkness” used in Isaiah.

Matthew wants the audience to bring to mind another passage of Isaiah.

The dawning of the Light is connected to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Isaiah 9:1 For there is no gloom to her who had been in anguish, In the former time, he brought into dishonour The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, In the latter time, hath he brought into honour The Lake-way over the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. 2 the people who were **walking in darkness**, Have seen a great light,—The dwellers in a land death-shadowed, A light, hath shined upon them. (REB)

In the above the Gospel of Matthew cites from Isaiah 9, however, the citation is a

combination of two places of Isaiah woven together, this is indicated to the audience by a change in wording, through doing this, Matthew is bringing to mind another place in Isaiah.

Instead of “walking in darkness” the wording is changed to “sat in darkness”, there is a reason for this change, as the Gospel of Matthew is connecting two different places together in Isaiah which would link the two contexts together. The other place can be found in the 42nd chapter of Isaiah;

Isaiah 42:6-7 “I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness. I will hold your hand. I will keep you, and make you a covenant for the people, as a light for the nations, 7 to open the blind eyes, to bring the prisoners out of the dungeon, and those who **sit in darkness** out of the prison. Have seen a great light,—The dwellers in a land death-shadowed, A light, hath shined upon them. (WMBBE)

Key notes;

The phrase “sat in darkness” used in Matthew is from Isaiah 42:7.

This would link the two separate passages of Isaiah together.

Matthew is directing his audience to bring to mind Isaiah 9 and 42.

Matthew 4:16 the people who **sat in darkness** saw a great light; to those who sat in the region and shadow of death, to them light has dawned. (WMBBE)

The context of Isaiah 42 deals with those whom have been exiled, this change of wording from “walking in darkness” to “sit in darkness” also sets up the larger citation of Isaiah 42 in the 12th chapter of Matthew;

Matthew 12:15 Yeshua, perceiving that, withdrew from there. Great multitudes followed him; and he healed them all, 16 and commanded them that they should not make him known, 17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through **Isaiah the prophet**, saying, 18 “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit on him. He will proclaim justice to the nations. 19 He will not strive, nor shout, neither will anyone hear his voice in the streets. 20 He won’t break a bruised reed. He won’t quench a smoking flax, until he leads justice to victory. 21 In his name, the nations will hope.” (WMBBE)

Matthew 4:14-16 → Isaiah 9:1-2 → Isaiah 42:7

Walking in darkness (Isaiah 9:2) → Sit in darkness (Isaiah 42:7)

The dawning of light that is seen in Isaiah 9 relates back to the judgement upon the vineyard in Isaiah 5, as the people were to go into exile (Isaiah 5:13) and the Most High brings upon His vineyard nations who will consume His vineyard (Isaiah 5:25-30), this coming of the nations to destroy His vineyard is closely connected to the dimming of light in Isaiah 5:30. The next time we see light being spoken of is in chapter 9 which the Gospel of Matthew cites (Matthew 4:13-16) in close connection, as we have seen, with Isaiah 42 which deals with being a Light to the nations and to those in exile;

Isaiah 5:30 They will roar against them in that day like the roaring of the sea. If one looks to the land, behold, darkness and distress. **The light is darkened in its clouds.** (WMBBE)

Key notes;

The light of Isaiah 5:30 returns in Isaiah 9:2.

Light is not used in-between those chapters.

Isaiah 9:2 The people who walked in **darkness** have seen a **great light**. The light has shined on those who lived in the land of the shadow of death. (WMBBE)

Light dims in Isaiah 5:30 → Light returns in Isaiah 9:2 → Isaiah 9:2 used in Matthew 4 in connection with the Gospel being preached

Isaiah 61 is a major part of the original contextual setting for the Gospel, in Luke 4, a citation of Isaiah 61 is given;

Luke 4:17 The scroll of the prophet **Isaiah** was handed to him. He opened the scroll, and found the place where it was written, 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to deliver those who are crushed, 19 and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” (WMBBE)

As we have seen in other places (Isaiah 40:9, Isaiah 52:7) the Gospel was to Zion, and so the “poor” is a technical term for Zion. If there be any doubt as to the contextual backdrop of Zion being the recipient of the Gospel in Isaiah 61 we need to look no further than the very next verse;

The Lord GOD’s Spirit is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the humble. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to those who are bound, 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3 **to provide for those who mourn in Zion**, to give to them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. (WMBBE)

Yeshua does not cite the words relating to the Day of Vengeance, as this relates to the Prophecies relating to another period of time, the Day when the Most High will judge the nations as a sacrificial judgement, as the Hebrew word for “sacrifice” (זִבְחָה) is used (Isaiah 34:6, Jeremiah 46:10, Zephaniah 1:7-8 and Ezekiel 39:17), no wonder then that Yeshua comes back to perform that sacrifice (Revelation 19:11-18, compare with Ezekiel 39:17) and so bringing recompense to what has happened to Zion.

Summary:

Galatians 4:26 → Isaiah 54:1 → Zion the barren woman

Isaiah 5:1 → Judgement of vineyard → Zion becomes barren, Isaiah 54:1

Zion in mourning, Isaiah 49:21 → Zion comforted Isaiah 40, Luke 2:25, Luke 3:4

Most High leaves, Isaiah 54:7 → Most High returns through Yeshua, Mark 1:15

Matthew 4 uses Isaiah 9 → Unites Isaiah 42 Isaiah 9 → Isaiah 42 used in Matthew 12

The Mission

That there is a close connection to the restoration of Zion and the mission of Yeshua we now go to John 6. In John 6 Yeshua cites from Isaiah 54:13;

Isaiah 6:45 It is written in the Prophets, ‘They will all **be taught by God.**’ Therefore everyone who hears from the Father and has learnt, comes to me. (WMBBE)

Key notes;

By citing from Isaiah 54 Yeshua is pointing to a context of restoration.

Isaiah 54:1 is used in Galatians 4:27.

So Yeshua and Paul are using the same chapter and pointing towards a time when Zion shall be restored.

Isaiah 54:11 “You afflicted, tossed with storms, and not comforted, behold, I will set your stones in beautiful colours, and lay your foundations with sapphires. 12 I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones. 13 All your children will be **taught by the LORD,** and your children’s peace will be great. (WMBBE)

The context is that of Zion (Isaiah 54:1) and her restoration, part of the Gospel is that her waste places are restored (Isaiah 52:9, Isaiah 49:19, Isaiah 51:3, Isaiah 61:4, etc.) her

foundations will be laid with sapphires (verse 11), her children will have shalom (verse 13) and she will be far from oppression and terror (verse 14). When Revelation speaks of renewed Jerusalem one of her foundations is sapphires;

Revelation 21:19 The foundations of the city's wall were adorned with all kinds of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper, the second **sapphire**; the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, (WMBBE)

Key note;

Revelation 21, John 6 and Galatians 4 are all pointing towards Isaiah 54 and the promises to Zion.

Isaiah 54:11 "You afflicted, tossed with storms, and not comforted, behold, I will set your stones in beautiful colours, and lay your foundations with **sapphires**. (WMBBE)

Yeshua, then, is indicating to his audience that he has come to comfort, restore and glorify Zion, as per the expectations of the Prophets. This fits in well with other passages of the Gospels which point to Zion contexts within the Tanach.

Revelation 21:19 → John 6:45 → Galatians 4:27 → All point towards Isaiah 54

Another place where we find a Zion context is in Matthew 21. In Matthew 21:5 there is a citation of Zechariah 9:9 where the wording is changed from "Daughter of Zion" to "Tell the daughter of Zion", this would bring to mind Isaiah 62:11, which would bring together the context of Zechariah 9 with the context of Isaiah 62:11, below a comparison is made;

Matthew 21:5 "**Tell the daughter of Zion**, behold, your King comes to you, humble, and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (WMBBE)

Key notes;

Zechariah 9:9 has the wording "Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout".

But Matthew 21:5 says "Tell" or "say". Matthew is indicating to his audience another place.

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, **daughter of Jerusalem!** Behold, your King comes to you! He is righteous, and having salvation; lowly, and riding on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (WMBBE)

Matthew 21:5 “**Tell the daughter of Zion**, behold, your King comes to you, humble, and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (WMBBE)

Key notes;

Isaiah 62:11 also has the wording “say to” and “Zion”.

Both Zechariah and Isaiah use the word Zion and have a context of restoration.

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!’” (WMBBE)

The 62nd chapter of Isaiah deals with the restoration of Zion, that she will no longer be termed forsaken or desolate (Isaiah 62:4), restored of her Holiness and considered redeemed (Isaiah 62:12). So through the change of wording the Gospel of Matthew is pointing the reader to those times, indicating that the in-breaking of such events are upon them.

Matthew 21:5 → Isaiah 62:11 → Zechariah 9:9 → Restoration

In Matthew 11 Yeshua gives an answer to John's disciples if he is the one who was to come;

Matthew 11: 4 Yeshua answered them, “Go and tell Yochanan the things which you hear and see: 5 the **blind** receive their sight, the **lame** walk, the lepers are cleansed, the **deaf** **hear**, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 Blessed is he who finds no occasion for stumbling in me.” (WMBBE)

This connection between blind, lame and deaf is seen in Isaiah 35;

Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the **blind** will be opened, and the ears of the **deaf** will be unstopped. 6 Then the **lame** man will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will sing; for waters will break out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. (WMBBE)

Isaiah 35 has the context of the children of Zion going out to the wilderness (Isaiah 35:1) and travelling along a Way that the Most High prepares (Isaiah 35:8).

Yeshua is therefore indicating the in-breaking of the time of the end of the exile.

There are other places which speak of the blind and lame being regathered;

Jeremiah 31:8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and **gather** them from the uttermost parts of the earth, along with the **blind** and the **lame**, the woman with child and her who travails with child together. They will return as a great company. (WMBBE)

Key notes;

The Prophets are looking to a time when the Most High regathers His people.

When the Gospels speak of healing the blind, deaf, mute and lame it serves to inform the audience that the Most High is performing the action of restoration.

This kind of imagery is connected to a greater exodus story.

Zephaniah 3:19 Behold, at that time I will deal with all those who afflict you; and I will save those who are **lame** and gather those who were driven away. I will give them praise and honour, whose shame has been in all the earth. 20 At that time I will bring you in, and at that time I will **gather** you; for I will give you honour and praise amongst all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD. (WMBBE)

The cumulative effect of Zion's children being regathered from the ends of the Earth will make her question where they have all come from, so through indicating Prophecies of regathering Yeshua is bringing hope of restoration to the desolate woman Zion.

Isaiah 49:16 Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands. Your walls are continually before me. 17 **Your children hurry**. Your destroyers and those who devastated you will leave you. 18 Lift up your eyes all around, and see: **all these gather themselves together**, and **come to you**. As I live," says the LORD, "you shall surely clothe yourself with them all as with an ornament, and dress yourself with them, like a bride. 19 "For, as for your waste and your desolate places, and your land that has been destroyed, **surely now that land will be too small for the inhabitants**, and those who swallowed you up will be far away. 20 The children of your bereavement will say in your ears, "This place is too small for me. Give me a place to live in.' 21 Then you will say in your heart, "Who has conceived these for me, since I have been bereaved of my children and am alone, an exile, and wandering back and forth? Who has brought these up? Behold, I was left alone. Where were these?" (WMBBE)

In the Gospel of Luke there is indication of an exodus context as the Greek literally says "exodus" in Luke 9:31 when it speaks about his "departure". But given the themes of restoration, regathering and consolation to Zion this would not be out of place.

Summary:

Gospel of John cites Isaiah 54:13 → Context of restoration of Zion

Isaiah 54:11, foundation of sapphires → Revelation 21:19, foundation of sapphire

Matthew 21:5, Tell daughter from Isaiah 62:11 → Rest from Zechariah 9:9

Matthew 11:4-6, blind and lame → Isaiah 35:5-6 blind and lame

Jeremiah 31:8, Zephaniah 3:19-20, blind, lame → Zion comforted, Isaiah 49:16-19

The Plan

So then what happened? Why was there a rejection? Was this Prophesied? In Isaiah 28 the Most High reproves His people who are being sinful and pronounces a judgement upon them;

Isaiah 28:7 They also reel with wine, and stagger with strong drink. The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink. They are swallowed up by wine. They stagger with strong drink. They err in vision. They stumble in judgement. 8 For all tables are completely full of filthy vomit and filthiness. 9 Whom will he teach knowledge? To whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts? 10 For it is precept on precept, precept on precept; line on line, line on line; here a little, there a little. 11 But he will speak to this nation with stammering lips and in another language, 12 to whom he said, "This is the resting place. Give rest to the weary," and "This is the refreshing;" yet they would not hear. 13 Therefore the LORD's word will be to them precept on precept, precept on precept; line on line, line on line; here a little, there a little; that they may go, fall backward, be broken, be snared, and be taken. 14 Therefore hear the LORD's word, you scoffers, that rule this people in Jerusalem (WMBBE)

Let us notice the context which is of drunkenness (compare Isaiah 5:11), they stagger and err in vision (verse 7), they are completely drunk and as part of their judgement the Most High will give them a message (verse 9), but this message will be spoken "precept on precept, precept on precept, line on line, line on line, here a little, there a little", is there any particular reason why the judgement is worded this way?

The Hebrew behind the English has some clues to help answer this. Verse 10 is constructed with short Hebrew words, which repeat, these words are designed to mimic the drunken babble of the scoffers described in the preceding verses.

In 1 Corinthians “tongues” are spoken to those who do not believe (1 Corinthians 14:22) and just as the drunken scoffers would be spoken to in a language they could not grasp, Yeshua in the Gospels speaks in a way that the people could not grasp;

John 8:43 Why don't you understand my speech? Because you can't hear my word. (WMBBE)

The Hebrew for “message” (שְׁמוּעָה) in Isaiah 28:9 is used four times in Isaiah (Isaiah 28:9, 28:19, Isaiah 37:7, Isaiah 53:1). Three of the times it is used relates to contexts of a message that the people either do not understand or do not believe, below are two of those locations;

Isaiah 28:9 Whom will he teach knowledge? To whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts?

Key notes;

Isaiah 53:1 is cited in John 12:38 and Romans 10:16.

A message that the people would not be able to understand would be rejected according to Isaiah 53:1.

Yeshua speaks that message in the Gospels.

Isaiah 28:9 (WLC)

אֶת־מִי יוֹרֶה דַּעַת וְאֶת־מִי יְבִין
שְׁמוּעָה נְמוּלֵי מֶחֱלֶב עֵתִיקָי
מִשְׁרָיִם:

Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD's arm been revealed? (WMBBE)

Isaiah 53:1 (WLC)

מִי הֵאֱמִין לְשִׁמְעָתֵנוּ וְיִרְוַע יְהוָה
עַל־מִי נִגְלָתָה:

The very message that would be spoken in such a way the people would not understand is the same message that Isaiah asks “who has believed our message?” A third location where the word for “message” is used is Isaiah 28:19;

Isaiah 28:19 As often as it passes through, it will seize you; for morning by morning it will pass through, by day and by night; and it will be nothing but terror to understand the message.” 20 For the bed is too short to stretch out on, and the blanket is too narrow to wrap oneself in. 21 For the LORD will rise up as on Mount Perazim. He will be angry as in the valley of Gibeon; that he may do his work, his unusual work, and bring to pass his act, his extraordinary act. (WMBBE)

Isaiah 28:19-21 follows on from the earlier narrative from verse 9 and so it looks forward to a message that would come which the people would not understand and where the Most

High would do an unusual work and an alien task before the people. The theme of a message that scoffers and despisers would reject is also picked up in Acts and Habakkuk;

Hab 1:5 Behold, ye despisers, and look, and wonder marvelously, and vanish: for I work a work in your days, which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it to you. (YLT)

Acts 13:40 Beware therefore, lest that come on you which is spoken in the Prophets: 41 ‘Behold, you scoffers! Wonder and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which you will in no way believe, if one declares it to you.’” (WMBBE)

The judgement of Isaiah 28 also opens a connection to Isaiah 8, as the same wording is used in both chapters, through the use of “fall”, “torn”, “snared” and “captured”;

Isaiah 8:15 And many, shall stumble among them,—and **fall** and be **torn**, and **snared**, and **captured**. (REB)

Isaiah 8:15 (WLC)

וְכָשְׁלוּ בָּם רַבִּים וְנִפְּלוּ וְנִשְׁבְּרוּ וְנִקְשְׁוּ וְנִלְכְּדוּ:

ס

Isaiah 28:13 So the word of Yahweh must be to them—Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line. A little here, a little there,—That they may go and **fall** backward and be **torn** and **snared** and **captured**. (REB)

Isaiah 28:13 (WLC)

וְהָיָה לָהֶם דְּבַר-יְהוָה צִוּ לְצִוּ צִוּ לְצִוּ קוֹ לְקוֹ קוֹ לְקוֹ לְקוֹ זַעִיר שָׁם זַעִיר שָׁם לְמַעַן יִלְכוּ וְכָשְׁלוּ אַחֲרָיִם וְנִשְׁבְּרוּ וְנִקְשְׁוּ וְנִלְכְּדוּ: פ

The stone of stumbling spoken of in Isaiah 8:14 causes people to fall and be broken, this imagery is picked up by Yeshua in his parable of the tenants in Matthew 21;

Matthew 21:42 Yeshua said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The **stone** which the **builders rejected** was made the head of the corner. This was from the Lord. It is marvellous in our eyes’?”

Key notes;

Note the stone imagery in Matthew 21:42.

He who falls on the stone will be broken (wording from Isaiah 8:15 and 28:13).

Isaiah 8:15 And many, shall stumble among them,—and **fall** and be **torn**, and **snared**, and **captured**. (REB)

44 He who **falls** on this stone will be **broken** to pieces, but on whomever it will fall, it will scatter him as dust dust.”(WMBBE)

Isaiah 28 and 8 combined together as part of a message to the people.

The words “scatter him as dust” is an allusion to Daniel 2:44, the same Greek word used in Matthew is also used in the Septuagint version of Daniel 2:44. In Daniel 2:44 the “stone cut out without hands” (Daniel 2:34) “breaks in pieces” (Daniel 2:44) the other Kingdoms and then becomes a great Mountain and fills all the land (Daniel 2:35). Mountain imagery is associated with Jerusalem/Zion (Isaiah 66:20), and so this is pointing towards the expectation of a glorified and exalted Zion (Isaiah 2:1-3).

The image that the king of Babylon saw represented different kingdoms (Daniel 2:38-42), including his own kingdom (Daniel 2:38) if we remember the building material that Babylon is associated with in the Scriptures (Genesis 11:3) is brick and not stone then we get further insight as to why stone is specifically being used. The builders of Babel rejected the building material of stone over the use of brick, the Most High then uses the very material that was rejected by the builders of Babylon to establish His own kingdom.

This is interesting in light of Matthew 21:42 as there is a citation from Psalms 118:22 about a stone which the builders rejected, this then could be an allusion to the story of Babel and Babylon.

The very message which they could not grasp (John 8:43) causes a stumbling and falling fulfilling the judgement against the scoffers in Isaiah 28. As the Prophet says a strange work, and an alien task (Isaiah 28:21) did the Most High perform.

Summary:

Isaiah 28, message to make people stumble → John 8:43, did not understand message

Isaiah 28:9, Hebrew word message → Same word in Isaiah 53:1

Matthew 21:42-44, stone causes stumbling → Language from Isaiah 28:12, Isaiah 8:15

Babylon uses brick → Rejects stone → Most High uses stone to build His kingdom

Light of the nations

The message as a whole had been rejected, the Plan however had not been dashed. The Light of Zion still had to go out to the nations. Early on in the Gospels there are indications that the nations also had a special place in the Plan of the Most High.

In the Gospel of Matthew the Magi come from the “east”, the Greek word for “east” is interesting, as it can be translated as “ascension” and so what they actually saw was a star in its rising or ascension, but why would that be significant? In Numbers 24:17 Balaam gives a Prophecy of a star and a scepter that shall arise and this was interpreted in the

Targums as a messianic prophecy which fits with the picture of the Magi coming to look for a King and seeing the sign of a rising star and so finding him they present some gifts;

Mat 2:11 They came into the house and saw the young child with Miriam, his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Opening their treasures, they offered to him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (WMBBE)

Matthew 2:2, star → Numbers 24:17, star

Why these gifts? In the Prophets there is an expectation that the nations will bring certain gifts when Zion is restored;

Isaiah 60:1 “Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the LORD’s glory has risen on you! 2 For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise on you, and his glory shall be seen on you. 3 Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. 4 “Lift up your eyes all around, and see: they all gather themselves together. They come to you. Your sons will come from far away, and your daughters will be carried in arms. 5 Then you shall see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you. The wealth of the nations will come to you. 6 A multitude of camels will cover you, the dromedaries of Midian and Efah. All from Sheba will come. They will bring gold and frankincense, and will proclaim the praises of the LORD. (WMBBE)

Isaiah 60 looks forward to a time when Zion is glorified and when the nations will bring their wealth and glory to it, among what they are Propheesied to bring is “gold” and “frankincense”, this imagery is picked up in the Gospel of Matthew and it acts as a precursor for the focus on the nations (Matthew 12:21, Matthew 21:13, Matthew 28:19). By the bringing of the gifts the Magi are indicating the restoration of Zion and the time when the nations shall come to it and walk in its light.

Matthew 2:11, gold and frankincense → Isaiah 60:6 gold and frankincense

This theme of the nations bringing gifts to Zion also looks forward to the nations one day turning to the Most High and coming and offering worship at the Temple. There is evidence of this expectation later on in the Gospel of Matthew;

Matthew 21:12 Yeshua entered into the temple of God and drove out all of those who sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the money changers’ tables and the seats of those who sold the doves. 13 He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers!” (WMBBE)

The phrase “My House shall be called a house of prayer” is a citation from Isaiah 56;

Isaiah 56:6 Also the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD to serve him, and to love the LORD’s name, to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it, and holds fast my covenant, 7 I will bring these to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for **my house will be called a house of prayer** for all peoples.”
(WMBBE)

This looks forward to the Day that the nations will worship side by side with the nation Israel. When that happens it is an indication that Zion has been restored to her Glory.

Matthew 21:13, House of prayer → Isaiah 56:7, House of prayer for all nations

This kind of expectation can be seen in Isaiah chapter 11;

Isaiah 11:10 It will happen in that day that the nations will seek the root of Jesse, who stands as a banner of the peoples; and his resting place will be glorious. (WMBBE)

Or as interpreted by the Septuagint and the apostle Paul;

Romans 15:12 Again, Isaiah says, “There will be the root of Jesse, he who arises to rule over the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles will hope.” (WMBBE)

Isaiah 11:10 comes after a context of restoration where justice is again established (Isaiah 11:1-5) and there is no more destruction in His “Holy Mountain” (Isaiah 11:6-9), Holy Mountain is another name for Jerusalem (Isaiah 66:20), and so Paul is pointing towards the evidence of the repentance of the nations as evidence that the times of restoration has begun to in-break in the present age.

Summary;

East → Can be translated as ascension → Connected to Numbers 24:17

Gold and incense → In-breaking of Isaiah 60:6

Matthew 21:13, for all nations → All nations will worship the Most High, Isaiah 56:7

The woman gives birth

The apostle Paul speaks of Jerusalem who is “above” and that is a “mother” of us all, the inclusion of the nations then form part of the restoration of Zion, the nations become her children, this notion of a mother who is above who gives birth is also used in the Gospel of John.

John 3:7 Don't marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.' (WMBBE)

John 3:7 Do not marvel, that I said unto thee: Ye must needs be born from above. (REB)

The Greek word which is normally translated “again” in the phrase “born again” can be translated as “above”. Is there a mother who is going to give birth who is above? The answer is yes, and that is Zion.

John 3:7 Do not marvel, that I said unto thee: Ye must needs be born from above. (REB)

Key note:

Yeshua is indicating the time of Zion giving birth.

Galatians 4:26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is the mother of us all. (WMBBE)

The context of the conversation is that of a woman, womb and giving birth;

John 3:4 Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” (WMBBE)

This isn't the only context in the Gospel of John which speaks of a woman giving birth;

John 16:21 A woman, as soon as she is about to bring forth, hath, grief, because her hour hath come; but, as soon as she hath given birth to the child, no longer, remembereth she the anguish, by reason of the joy, that a human being into the world hath been born. And, ye, therefore, now, indeed have grief; but, again, will I see you, and your heart shall rejoice, —and, your joy, no one, shall force from you. (REB)

Given that Zion imagery is the background for John 3, could there be any allusions to Zion here?

In Isaiah 66 Zion is presented in the imagery of a woman who travails and then gives birth to her children, then just a few verses away the phrase “and your heart shall rejoice” is used;

John 16:21 A woman, as soon as she is about to bring forth, hath, **grief**, because her **hour** hath come; but, as soon as she hath given birth to the **child**, no longer, remembereth she the anguish, by reason of the joy, that a human being into the world hath been born. And, **ye**, therefore, now, indeed **have grief**; but, again, will I see you, **and your heart shall rejoice**,—and, your joy, no one, shall force from you. (REB)

Key notes;

Just like the conversation in John 3, Yeshua is alluding to the context of Zion giving birth.

He places the disciples in the role of a woman giving birth, bringing to mind Isaiah 66.

Their “heart shall rejoice” when the “child” (compare Acts 4:27) is born.

Compare Revelation 12 also.

Isaiah 66:8 Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as **Zion travailed**, she gave birth to **her children**. (WMBBE)

Isaiah 66:14 You will see it, **and your heart shall rejoice**, and your bones will flourish like the tender grass. The LORD’s hand will be known amongst his servants; and he will have indignation against his enemies. (WMBBE)

This imagery would place the disciples acting out the role of Zion being grieved and going through travail whilst Yeshua is rejected and crucified. The imagery of those who do the Will of the Father being called the mother of Yeshua should not be problematic either, as Yeshua himself uses this very imagery;

Matthew 12:47 One said to him, “Behold, your mother and your brothers stand outside, seeking to speak to you.” 48 But he answered him who spoke to him, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” 49 He stretched out his hand towards his disciples, and said, “Behold, my mother and my brothers! 50 **For whoever does the will of my Father** who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and **mother**.” (WMBBE)

John 3, imagery of Zion giving birth → John 16, disciples portrayed as Zion giving birth
→ Matthew 12, Yeshua calls his disciples his “mother”

This would not be the only place the disciples are placed within the imagery of being Zion.

The apostle Paul also places himself within the imagery of being a mother;

Galatians 4:19 My **little children**, of whom I am **again** in **travail** until Messiah is formed in you— (WMBBE)

Paul calls his audience “my little children”, indicating that he gave birth to them, he also

uses travailing imagery.

In Galatians 1:15 Paul uses the language of “my mother's womb” and being “separated”, there is a context that is closely connected to this kind of terminology within a birth narrative, below is a comparison;

Galatians 1:15 But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through his grace, (WMBBE)

Isaiah 49:1 Listen, islands, to me. Listen, you peoples, from afar: the LORD has called me from the womb; from the inside of my mother, he has mentioned my name. (WMBBE)

In the context of Isaiah 49 in verse three the subject is Israel;

Isaiah 49:3 He said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” (WMBBE)

Could the apostle Paul be applying the collective application of Isaiah 49:1-3 to himself? That is, is he performing the role of the servant Israel, and performing the function of Zion? There is some evidence to suggest that he is in fact doing this very thing;

Isaiah 49:6 Indeed, he says, “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give you as a light to the nations, that you may be my salvation to the end of the earth.” (WMBBE)

In verse 6 it is still speaking of the nation, Israel, they are to perform a special task of bringing light to the nations, would the apostle Paul have understood the “servant” of verse 6 to be plural?

Acts 13:47 For so has the Lord commanded us, saying, ‘I have set you as a light for the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.’ (WMBBE)

Key notes;
Paul is interpreting the “my servant” as plural and applying it to himself and others.
His ministry is performing the role of being a Light to the nations.

Isaiah 49:6 Indeed, he says, “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give you as a light to the nations, that you may be my salvation to the end of the earth.” (WMBBE)

In Acts 13:47 the apostle Paul cites from Isaiah 49:6 and uses the word “us”, this would mean he is interpreting the “servant” of Isaiah 49 plural whilst taking on the function of the servant role for himself and others. That he is closely associated with Isaiah 49 is also shown in Corinthians, as he cites from Isaiah 49:8;

2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says, “At an acceptable time I listened to you. In a day of salvation I helped you.” Behold, now is the acceptable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. (WMBBE)

Key notes;

Together with Acts 13:47 Paul is pointing to Isaiah 49 and indicating that his ministry is fulfilling the words of Isaiah.

The context is gathering Zion's children.

Isaiah 49:8 The LORD says, “I have answered you in an acceptable time. I have helped you in a day of salvation. I will preserve you and give you for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritage, (WMBBE)

If then the apostle Paul is applying Isaiah 49:6 to himself and others, and thereby performing the function of the servant then it becomes reasonable that in John 16 the disciples are also placed within the imagery of Zion giving birth. This may also put more meaning behind the words in Romans 2 where the apostle Paul chides his fellow kinsmen for not being a light (compare Isaiah 42:6-7) to those in darkness;

Romans 2:19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide of the blind, a **light** to those **who are in darkness**, (WMBBE)

Key notes;

Paul's ministry was supposed to provoke his fellow kin to emulate his activity, (Romans 9:11-13).

The Gospel is still tied to the function of the nation and its role for the nations.

Isaiah 42:6 “I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness. I will hold your hand. I will keep you, and make you a covenant for the people, as a **light** for the nations, 7 to open the blind eyes, to bring the prisoners out of the dungeon, and those who **sit in darkness** out of the prison. (WMBBE)

There are contexts which he sees himself performing that very role (Acts 13:47, Acts 26:18, Acts 26:23).

It would then give justification for him to use birthing and travailing language in Galatians and the reason why he calls them “my little children”.

Acts 13:47, Light to the nations → Isaiah 49:6, Light to the nations → Provoke his kinsmen to emulate his ministry

Paul in Galatians 4 connects Jerusalem above (Galatians 4:26) to Sarah (Galatians 4:31), but he is not the only one who makes this connection;

Isaiah 51:2 Look to Abraham your father, and to **Sarah who bore you**; for when he was but one I called him, I blessed him, and made him many. 3 For the LORD has comforted Zion. He has comforted all **her** waste places, and has made her wilderness like **Eden**, and **her** desert like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in them, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. (WMBBE)

The Prophet Isaiah speaks about Sarah and Zion in close connection, possibly equating the two, the imagery would certainly dovetail, as Zion is portrayed as a barren woman just like Sarah was a barren woman.

Galatians 4:26 But, the Jerusalem above, is free,—the which is our mother; 27 For it is written—Be gladdened, O **barren one**! that wast not giving birth, break forth and shout, thou that wast not in birth-pains,—because, more, are the **children of the deserted one, than of her that had the husband**. (REB)

Paul uses an allegory of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, he then links Isaiah 54:1 to the allegory, in Isaiah 54:1 there are two women being spoken of, one who is “barren” and “deserted” and one who “had the husband”, these two women relate to Sarah and Hagar, Sarah is the one who was “barren” and “deserted” whilst Hagar is presented as the woman who “had the husband”, furthermore, the “barren one” is linked to Jerusalem, so Paul is interpreting Isaiah 54:1 in terms of Sarah and Hagar.

Sarah barren → Jerusalem Above barren

Abraham takes Hagar → Jerusalem deserted by Husband

Is there any other reasoning as to why Paul would make a connection between Jerusalem and Sarah?

In Isaiah 51:3 the waste places and wilderness of Zion will become “like Eden”, this is interesting, as Sarah is also connected to Eden;

Genesis 21:12 Sarah laughed within herself, saying, “After I have grown old will I have **pleasure**, my lord being old also?” (WMBBE)

The Hebrew behind the English translation pleasure and Eden is similar, the spelling of Eden in Hebrew is עֵדֶן and pleasure is spelt אֶדְנָן combined with the imagery of a barren woman this could further support the case that Isaiah is also making the connection between Eden and Sarah;

Genesis 21:12 Sarah laughed within herself, saying, “After I have grown old will I have **pleasure**, my lord being old also?” (WMBBE)

Genesis 21:12 (WLC)
 וַתִּצְחַק שָׂרָה בְקִרְבָּהּ לֵאמֹר אֶחְרֵי בְלִתִּי הֲיִתְהַ-
 לִי עֵדְנָה וְאֶדְנָי זָקֵן:

Isaiah 51:3 For the LORD has comforted Zion. He has comforted all her waste places, and has made her wilderness like **Eden**, and her desert like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in them, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. (WMBBE)

Isaiah 51:3 (WLC)
 כִּי־נָחַם יְהוָה צִיּוֹן נָחַם כָּל־חֲרָבֹתֶיהָ וַיִּשֶׂם
 מִדְּבָרָהּ כְּעֵדֶן וְעַרְבָתָהּ כְּגִן־יְהוָה שְׁשׂוֹן וְשִׁמְחָה
 יִמְצָא בָּהּ תוֹדָה וְקוֹל זִמְרָה: ס

In Revelation renewed Jerusalem is also connected to Eden;

Revelation 22:1 He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. On this side of the river and on that was the **tree of life**, bearing twelve kinds of fruits, yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (WMBBE)

The description of the renewed Jerusalem contains tree of life imagery responding to the expectations in Isaiah 51 (and Ezekiel 36:35) of Jerusalem becoming the new Eden. This renewed Jerusalem descends downwards (like it is being planted, compare Genesis 2:8);

Revelation 21:1 I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and the sea is no more. 2 I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, **coming down** out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. (WMBBE)

Eden is planted, downward motion → Renewed Jerusalem descends downward
 Tree of life imagery in Eden → Tree of life imagery in Renewed Jerusalem

This then links back up with what Paul says in Galatians about Jerusalem “above” and this looks forward to the time of a glorified Jerusalem. One example of this is Revelation where the nations will walk in the Light of Zion and the kings of the earth will bring their glory

and honour to it, this is responding to expectations in Isaiah;

Revelation 21:24 The **nations** will walk in its **light**. The **kings** of the earth bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. (WMBBE)

Key note;

We already have seen in John 6:45 there is a context of restoration.

Isaiah 60:3 **Nations** will come to your **light**, and **kings** to the brightness of your rising. (WMBBE)

Chapter 60 of Isaiah speaks of the glorification of Zion and so Revelation picks up the wording about it and applies it to renewed Jerusalem, another example of this is Isaiah 60:19;

The **sun** will be **no more** your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon give light to you, but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your **glory**. (WMBBE)

Revelation 21:23 The city has **no need for the sun** or moon to shine, for the very **glory** of God illuminated it and its lamp is the Lamb. (WMBBE)

This restored Jerusalem has twelve gates and twelve foundations, the twelve gates have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on them and the twelve foundations have the names of the twelve apostles on them, further, the city is connected to a mountain and the city has a light associated with it;

Revelation 21:10 He carried me away in the Spirit to a great and **high mountain**, and showed me the **holy city, Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her **light** was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 having a great and high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written on them, **which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel**. 13 On the east were three gates, and on the north three gates, and on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on **them twelve names of the twelve Emissaries** of the Lamb. (WMBBE)

As we have seen in Revelation 21:24 (as with verse 11) the nations will walk in the Light of renewed Jerusalem, this would tie together with the imagery the apostle Paul ascribes to his ministry that we have seen in Acts, this imagery then can help interpret the Gospel of Matthew;

Matthew 5:14 You are the **light** of the world. A **city** located on a **hill** can't be hidden. (WMBBE)

A city that is on a “hill” that gives light to the world, what city could this be except the restored Jerusalem? Yeshua is speaking to his disciples (twelve at that time) which links up numerically with the imagery of the twelve foundations having the names of the twelve apostles. The Greek word for “hill” is the same Greek which is used in Revelation 21:10 where John is taken to see the Holy city (Zion in the Tanach is connected to “hill” or “mountain” imagery, Isaiah 66:20, Joel 3:17, Zechariah 8:3 etc.) and so this connects back to the theme of the restoration of Zion.

Matthew 5:14, Light of the world → Acts 13:47, dovetails with Paul's imagery

If then the disciples are the Light of the world, then how much more so is Yeshua? The language which he applies to his disciples in Matthew 5:14 he also applies to himself and in the restored Zion the Lamb is indeed its Light;

John 8:12 Again, therefore, Yeshua spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.” (WMBBE)

Revelation 21:23 The city has no need for the sun or moon to shine, for the very glory of God illuminated it and its lamp is the Lamb. (WMBBE)

The phrase “walk in darkness” may be an allusion to contexts like Isaiah 60:1-3 where the nations are no longer going to walk in darkness, however there are other contexts which use similar language like Isaiah 9:1-2 which we have seen being used in Matthew. Psalms 82:5 also uses the phrase (which is interesting because Psalms 82 is cited just two chapters away, John 10:34) and places like Isaiah 50:10, a full treatment however is beyond the scope of this study.

Yeshua a Light → Disciples a Light → Zion a Light

When we look to Acts this aspect of being a Light to the nations is further confirmed;

Acts 26:15 “He said, ‘I am Yeshua, whom you are persecuting. 16 But arise, and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose: to appoint you a servant and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will reveal to you; 17 delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom I send you, 18 to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance amongst those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ (WMBBE)

This language of opening of eyes is an allusion to Isaiah;

Isaiah 42:6 I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness. I will hold your hand. I will keep you, and make you a covenant for the people, as a **light** for the nations, 7 **to open the blind eyes**, to bring the prisoners out of the dungeon, and those who sit in darkness out of the prison. (WMBBE)

But this should not be surprising as the apostle Paul already attributes Isaiah 49:6 to himself and others and this further connects the imagery of the disciples to being a Light to the nations, that is, fulfilling the function of Zion to be a Light to the nations. Bringing this kind of imagery into the picture would also bring to mind the regathering of Zion's children who would have gone into exile and into the darkness of the nations and the return of the blind in other passages (Isaiah 35:5, Jeremiah 31:8, etc.).

Summary:

John 3:7, translated as above → In reference to Jerusalem above

John 16:21, woman giving birth → Allusion to Isaiah 66:8, 14

Acts 13:47, Paul connects himself to Zion → Isaiah 49:6, Light to the nations

2 Corinthians 6:2, acceptable time → Citation of Isaiah 49:8, acceptable time

Romans 2:19, Paul chides his kinsmen → Paul's ministry is the Light to the nations

Sarah connected to Eden → Eden connected to Jerusalem → Renewed Jerusalem/Eden

Jerusalem → Light to the nations → Disciples Light to the nations

All Israel shall be saved

Could this understanding also help us interpret the wording of apostle Paul in Romans 11?;

Romans 11:25 For I don't desire you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you won't be wise in your own conceits, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, 26 and so all Israel will be saved. Even as it is written, "There will **come out** of Zion the Deliverer, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. 27 This is my covenant with them, when I will take away their sins." (WMBBE)

There is a curious word change in the citation that Paul makes when he cites from Isaiah 59, he changes "come to" to "come out", as we have seen changing words to bring in additional passages is not out of the ordinary, below the verses are compared with each other;

Romans 11:26 and so all Israel will be saved. Even as it is written, "There will **come out** of Zion the Deliverer, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. (WMBBE)

Key note;
Why is there a change from "come to" to "come out"?
Paul is indicating something

to his audience.
Isaiah 59:20 "A Redeemer will **come to** Zion, and to those who turn from disobedience in Jacob," says the LORD. (WMBBE)

To date there is no known variant of Isaiah 59:20 (whether that be in the LXX or in the Targums or the Dead Sea scrolls) which would agree with what Paul has written, but if what has been proposed so far about the Gospel coming to Zion, then in Paul's mind the Deliverer has already come to Zion and so that part has taken place, the phrase "out of Zion" does have precedent elsewhere in the Tanach, but are there any clues to help us locate the right phrase from the correct passage? For that we turn to Romans 3;

In Romans 3:10-12 there is a citation of Psalms 14:1-3, additionally there is a citation in Romans 3:17 of Isaiah 59:8;

Romans 3:10 As it is written, "There is no one righteous; no, not one. 11 There is no one who understands. There is no one who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned away. They have together become unprofitable. **There is no one who does good**, no, not so much as one." (WMBBE)

Psalms 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt. They have done abominable deeds. **There is no one who does good**. 2 The LORD looked down from heaven on the children of men, to see if there were any who understood, who sought after God. 3 They have all gone aside. They have together become corrupt. There is no one who does good, no, not one. (WMBBE)

Romans 3:17 **The way of peace, they haven't known**. (WMBBE)

Isa 59:8 A **way of peace they have not known**, And there is no judgment in their paths, Their paths they have made perverse for themselves, No treader in it hath known peace. (YLT)

Isaiah 59, as we have seen, was again directly cited in Romans 11 by Paul, it was a context that he had kept in the background of his thinking all the way back from chapter 3, could the same be true for Psalms 14?

Romans 3:12 → Psalms 14:1

Romans 3:17 → Isaiah 59:8

There are some keywords which could link how Paul cites Isaiah 59 in Romans 11 back to Psalms 14;

Romans 11:26 and so all Israel will be saved . Even as it is written, “There will come out of Zion the Deliverer, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob . (WMBBE)	Psalms 14:7 Oh that, out of Zion , were granted the salvation of Israel! When Yahweh bringeth back the captives of his people, Jacob , shall exult, Israel, be glad. (REB)
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Psalms 14 has the words “salvation”, “out of Zion” and “Jacob” which correlates to the wording in Romans 11:26 of “saved”, “out of Zion” and “Jacob”, if this is correct, then the apostle Paul is connecting Isaiah 59:20 together with Psalms 14:7.

This, then, would explain the change of wording from “to Zion” to “out of Zion”, but how would the Deliverer come “out of Zion”? One suggestion is through Zion giving birth, if read in this way, this could help explain the birthing imagery of Galatians;

Galatians 4:19 **My little children**, of whom I am again in **travail** until Messiah is **formed in you**— (WMBBE)

That is, the apostles, performing the role of Zion, travail in birth until he is formed in those to whom the Gospel is being preached. As, also, we have seen in the Gospel of John birthing imagery was also associated with the apostles.

Whether through a journey through the wilderness or through the resurrection, Zion will have her children restored to her and with the return of the in-dwelling Presence of the Most High through Yeshua, Zion will no longer be forsaken and desolate, as the Prophet Isaiah says;

You will **not** be called **Forsaken** any more, nor will your land be called **Desolate** any more; but you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD delights in you, and your land will be married. (WMBBE)

Summary;

Psalms 14 and Isaiah 59 → Used in Romans 3 → Used later in Romans 11

Romans 11:26 → Combination of Psalms 14 and Isaiah 59

Mashiach born in believers → Jacob turns to the deliverer

Conclusion

Not every context has been explored and the reader is encouraged to look more deeply at the kinds of associations and connections that have been studied.

Hopefully this study has motivated the reader to look more deeply into the context of Zion and its implications for our understanding of the Gospels, Epistles and Revelation and how it can affect our understanding of the ministry of the apostles. The Gospel is thoroughly entwined with the story of Zion and what is promised to her and through Yeshua may what has been promised to her come to its full manifestation soon!

ישוע המשיח

EVER WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW ZION FITS INTO THE GOSPELS, EPISTLES AND REVELATION? OR WHO EXACTLY WAS THE GOSPEL DIRECTED AT? OR HOW WOULD THEY HAVE INTERPRETED THE MANY PROPHECIES ABOUT ZION? IN THIS STUDY DISCIPLE NAZARENE LOOKS AT SOME CONTEXTS AND PROPHECIES THAT SPEAK ABOUT ZION AND HOW THEY LINK UP WITH WHAT YESHUA AND HIS APOSTLES ARE SPEAKING ABOUT.