

# Zaphon

- The sacred mountain of the god Baal or Baal-Hadad in Canaanite religion. Identified as Jabal al Aqra located near the mouth of the Orontes River in the border region between the modern states of Syria and Turkey.
- Zaphon was used in Canaanite literature to refer to a “cosmic mountain par excellence in Northwest Semitic regions” (Niehr, H., “Baal-Zaphon,” Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible Online, van der Toorn, Becking, and van der Horst, ed., [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2589-7802\\_DDDO\\_DDDO\\_Baal\\_Zaphon](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2589-7802_DDDO_DDDO_Baal_Zaphon), accessed 1/19/22)
- Mount Zaphon (or Mount Sapan) is the ancient name of a famous peak known today as Jebel Aqraa, which means “Bald Mountain” in Arabic, a reference to the unforested limestone summit visible from great distances. the highest mountain in Syria, located on the Mediterranean coast near the mouth of Orontes River. This was one of the holiest sites for the Canaanites because it was here that the great storm god Baal-Hadad was believed to dwell.
- Jebel Aqra, properly Jebel al-’Aqra , also known as Mount Casius, is a limestone mountain located on the Syrian–Turkish border near the mouth of the Orontes River on the Mediterranean Sea. Its Turkish side is also known as Mount Bald.

## Psalm 89:12 –

“Zaphon and Amanus you created; Tabor and Hermon rejoice in your name.(New American Bible)”

7442 [e]	8034 [e]	2768 [e]	8396 [e]	1254 [e]	859 [e]	3225 [e]	6828 [e]	
yə·ran·nê·nū.	bə·šim·kâ	wə·ḥer·mō·wn,	tā·bō·wr	bə·rā·tām;	'at·tāh	wə·yā·mīn	ṣā·pō·wn	
· יִרְנְנוּ:	בְּשִׁמְךָ	וְחֶרְמוֹן	תְּבוֹר	בְּרֵאתֵם	אַתָּה	וַיָּמִין	צָפוֹן	12
rejoice	in Your name	and Hermon	Tabor	have created them	You	and the south	The north	
V-Piel-Imperf-3mp	Prep-b   N-msc   2ms	Conj-w   N-proper-fs	N-proper-fs	V-Qal-Perf-2ms   3mp	Pro-2ms	Conj-w   N-fs	N-fs	

“Zaphon and Yamin you created them; Tabor and Hermon joyously praise your name.”

## Psalm 48:2 –

7227 [e]	4428 [e]	7151 [e]	6828 [e]	3411 [e]	6726 [e]	2022 [e]	776 [e]	3605 [e]	4885 [e]	5131 [e]	3303 [e]
rāḇ.	me-lek	qīr-yat.	ṣā-pō-wn.	yar-ke-tê	ṣī-yō-wn	har-	hā-'ā-res	kāl-	mə-šō-ws	nō-wp	ya-péh
רב:	מלך	קִרְיַת	צָפוֹן	יַרְכְּתֵי	צִיּוֹן	הַר-	הָאָרֶץ	כָּל-	מִשׁוֹשׁ	נוֹף	יָפֵה
great	of the King	the city	of the north	[on] the sides	Zion	[is] Mount	the earth	of all	the joy	in elevation	Beautiful
Adj-ms	N-ms	N-fsc	N-fs	N-fsc	N-proper-fs	N-msc	Art   N-fs	N-msc	N-msc	N-ms	Adj-msc

NIV – “Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth, like the heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King.”

ESV – “beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King.”

NAS – “Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion in the far north, The city of the great King.”

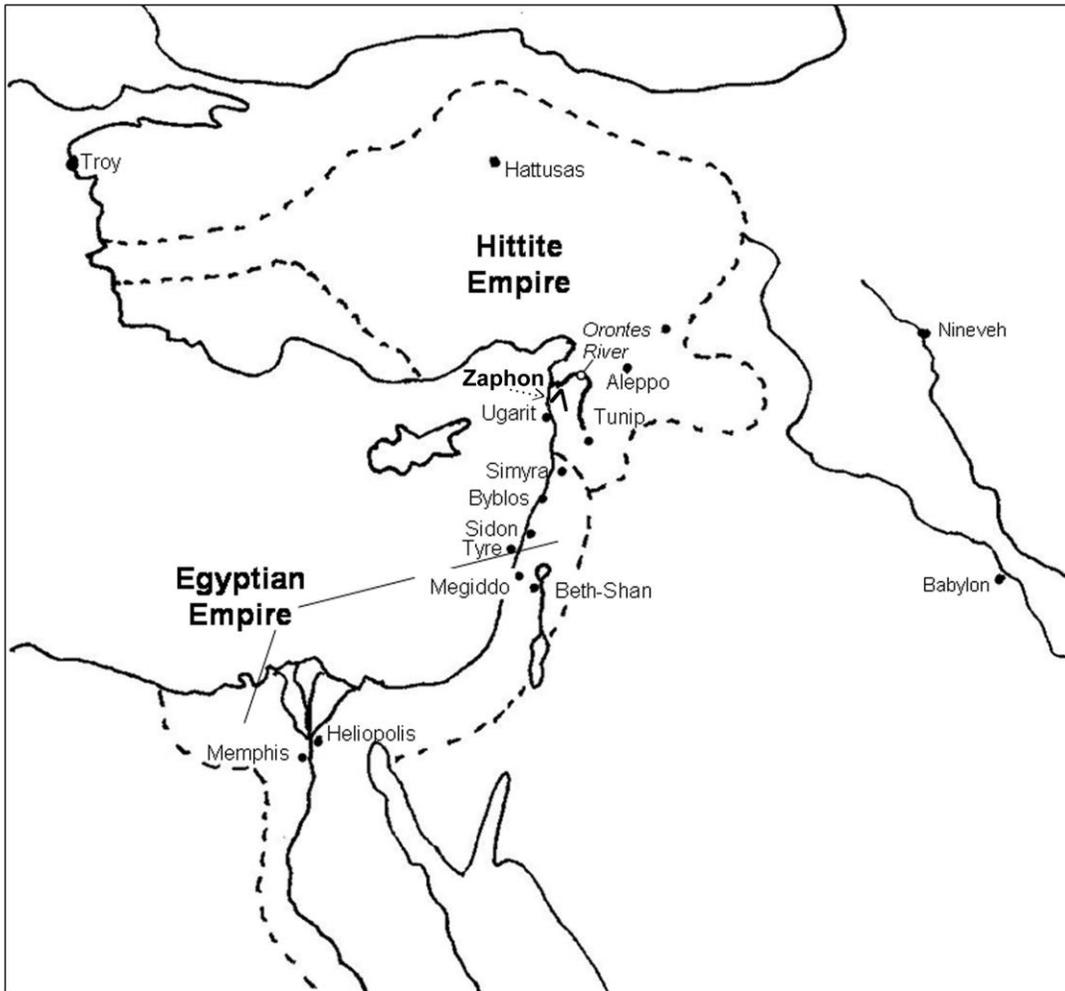
## Isaiah 14:13 –

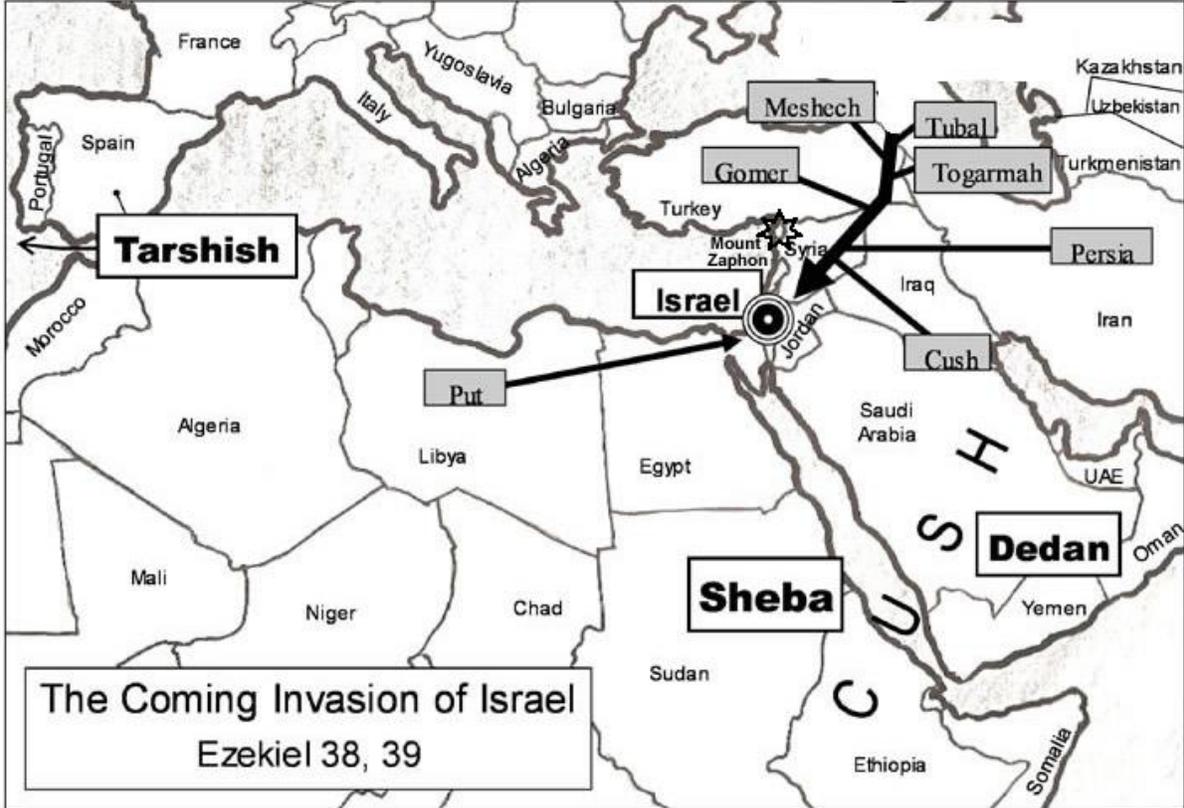
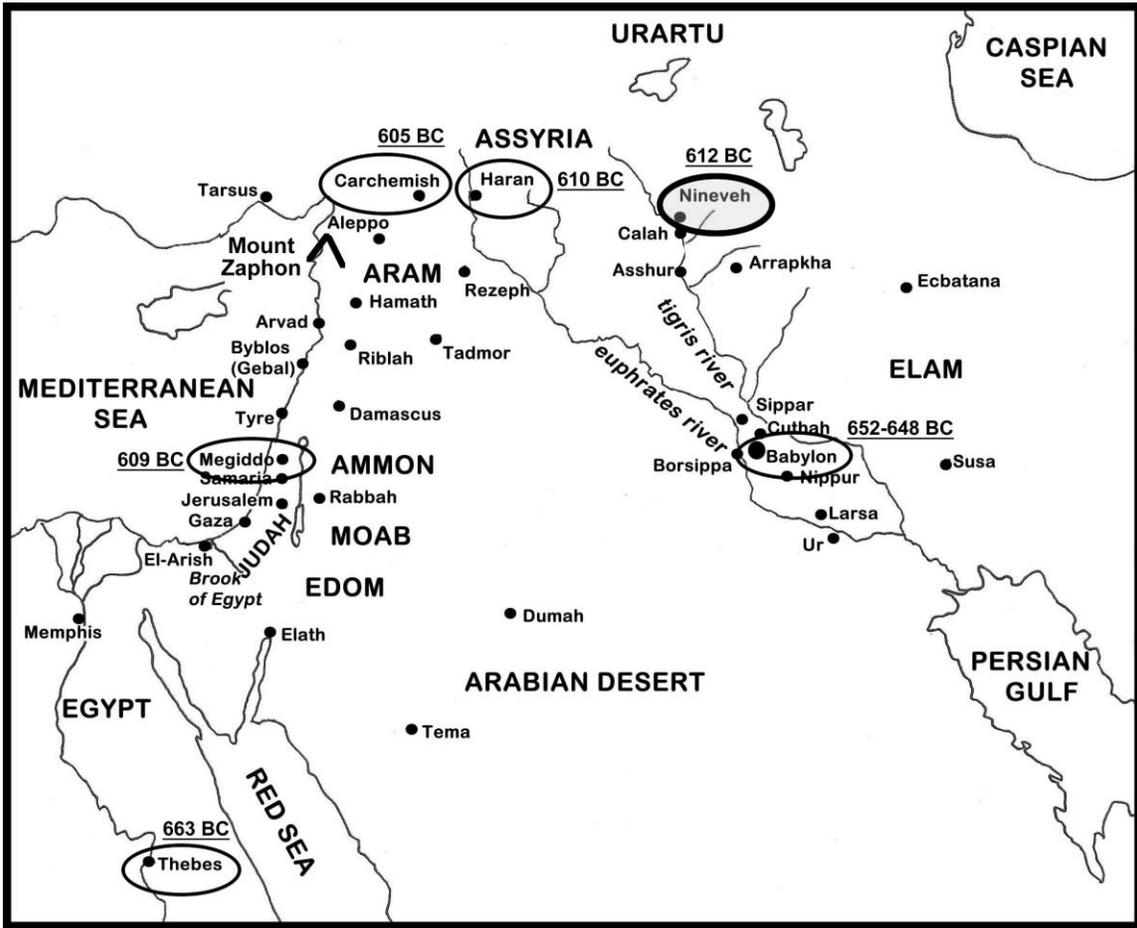
410 [e]	3556 [e]	4605 [e]	5927 [e]	8064 [e]	3824 [e]	559 [e]	859 [e]
'êl	le-kō-wk-bê-	mim-ma-'al	'e-'ē-leh,	haš-šā-ma-yim	bil-bā-bə-kā	'ā-mar-tā	wə-'at-tāh
אֵל	לְכוֹכְבֵי-	מִמַּעַל	אֶעֱלֶה	הַשָּׁמַיִם	בְּלִבְבְּךָ	אָמַרְתָּ	וְאַתָּה
of God	the stars	above	I will ascend	into heaven	in your heart	have said	for you
N-ms	Prep-l   N-mpc	Prep-m   Adv	V-Qal-Imperf-1cs	Art   N-mp	Prep-b   N-msc   2ms	V-Qal-Perf-2ms	Conj-w   Pro-2ms

6828 [e]	3411 [e]	4150 [e]	2022 [e]	3427 [e]	3678 [e]	7311 [e]
ṣā-pō-wn.	bə-yar-ke-tê	mō-w-'êḏ	bə-har-	wə-'ê-šêb	kis-'î;	'ā-rîm
צָפוֹן:	בְּיַרְכְּתֵי	מוֹעֵד	בְּהַר-	וְאָשֵׁב	כִּסְאִי	אֲרִים
of the north	On the farthest sides	of the congregation	on the mount	and I will sit	my throne	I will exalt
N-fs	Prep-b   N-fdc	N-ms	Prep-b   N-msc	Conj-w   V-Qal-ConjImperf-1cs	N-msc   1cs	V-Hifil-Imperf-1cs

NIV – “You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon.”

ESV – “You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north;’”





“But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation. Thus shall you say to them: The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens. It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens. When he utters his voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the earth. He makes lightnings for the rain, and he brings out the wind from his storehouses.” (Jeremiah 10:10-13)

- Isaiah 14:4-20 seems to parallel exactly how Athtar overthrew Baal Hadad and enthroned himself atop Mount Zaphon in the Baal Cycle of Ugarit.

“There was [a] text... concerning ‘Baal and Anat’ with which Isaiah must have been familiar. The story at this point concerns finding a replacement for Baal who has just died at the hands of Mot, the god of sterility and the dead. It is suggested that Athtar succeed to the throne of Baal but he soon proves to be inadequate and has to step down to become god of the underworld. The text is as follows:

‘Then Athtar the Awesome climbed Mount Zaphon,  
Ascended the throne of Ba’al the Almighty.  
But his feet did not reach the footstool,  
His head did not touch the headrest.  
Then, Athar the Awesome spoke,

. . . . .

‘I cannot serve as king,  
From - [http://www.christadelphianbooks.org/agora/art\\_less/i13.html](http://www.christadelphianbooks.org/agora/art_less/i13.html)  
I cannot dwell on the heights of Zaphon!’  
So, Athtar the Awesome descended,  
Stepped down from the throne of Ba’al the Almighty.  
He became king of the Underworld,  
Lord of the River of the Dead.’

(Victor Matthews, Don Benjamin, Old Testament Parallels 166).

There are some striking similarities between this text and Isa 14:12-15... a couple of strong parallels which more than suggest that Isaiah knew this Canaanite myth and was using it as part of his taunting proverb about the king of Babylon:

Both texts mention ascending to an exalted throne.

Isaiah mentions the “sides of the north” which is the Hebrew word “zaphon” and this is used in the Canaanite text as Mount Zaphon.

Isaiah mentions hell (Heb sheol) and the pit (Heb bowr) while the Canaanite text talks about the Underworld.

Isaiah mentions Lucifer (Heb Helel) which means the morning star or Venus: the Canaanite god Ashtar or Athtar is associated with Venus. [“Before the sun revolves, a very large star named Venus, which varies its course alternatively, and whose alternative names in themselves indicate its rivalry with the sun and moon — when in advance and rising before dawn it receives the name of Lucifer, and being another sun and bringing the dawn, whereas when it shines after sunset it is named

Vesper, as prolonging the daylight, or as being deputy for the moon..." — Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis*. "In the seasonal Canaanite rite of the dying god, "a substitute is sought for Ba'al in his eclipse, and Athtar the Fierce, originally the god manifest in the bright Venus star and secondarily associated with vegetation, is proposed since his brightness might be thought to qualify him for the place of Ba'al, whose potent advent is signalized in lightning. But the attempt is abortive" — John Gray, *Near Eastern Mythology*.] Isaiah mentions that Lucifer is the "son of the morning." The Canaanites also had a god named Shachar which means 'Dawn' and he was the father of Athtar. Therefore Athtar (Lucifer) was literally a son of Shachar (Morning) to the Canaanites. Isaiah is using the Canaanite myth of Athtar's inability to reign in Baal's place and he is using it to deride the King of Babylon. The links are undeniable and it is a wonderful twist of this false religion to use it as a taunt." (TY)