

Ezekiel 43 • Where is the Glory of the Lord?

Introduction

Starting at chapter 37 in the vision of the valley of the dry bones, Ezekiel has been told that there will be a re-gathering of all of Israel to its homeland. This process began in 1948 when Palestine was declared the independent nation of Israel by the United Nations. The fact that the re-gathering has taken place from "all the nations" precludes any previous return, such as the return of the Jews from Babylon. Chapters 40-48 tell what will happen in the land after the return of the Lord. Satan will be disbanded from the earth, all of Israel's enemies will have been defeated, there will have been catastrophic geological changes in the earth, including Israel, causing Mt. Zion to rise and waters to flow out of the temple area. There will be a rebuilding of a new temple, called "Ezekiel's Temple." Chapter 43 tells of the return of the Lord to the temple.

^{9:3}Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed in linen at whose loins was the writing case.

^{10:1}Then I looked, and behold, in the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim something like a sapphire stone, in appearance resembling a throne, appeared above them. ²And He spoke to the man clothed in linen and said, "Enter between the whirling wheels under the cherubim and fill your hands with coals of fire from between the cherubim and scatter them over the city." And he entered in my sight.

³Now the cherubim were standing on the right side of the temple when the man entered, and the cloud filled the inner court. ⁴Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple, and the temple was filled with the cloud and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD. ⁵Moreover, the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks.

^{10:18}Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. ¹⁹When the cherubim departed, they lifted their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them; and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD's house, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them.

^{11:23}The glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city.

[Read & Review Ezekiel 9:3; 10:1-5, 18-19; 11:23]

(Note: there are two "cherubs" involved. There are the cherubs on the lid of the ark of the covenant, and there are the cherubs who are angelic beings.)

These passages comprise a vision that Ezekiel had while in Babylon of the departure of the Shekinah glory which had been present since the Tabernacle. Now that the Shekinah departs, the temple (and the people) are no longer protected and swift destruction ensues. This was part of the judgment upon Israel for their abominations.

The following verses take place in the future during the Millennial Kingdom. The glory of the LORD, which in this case is the Lord Jesus, returns to a new temple.

¹Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing toward the east; ²and behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the east. And His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. ³And it was like the appearance of the vision which I saw, like the vision which I saw when He came to destroy the city. And the visions were like the vision which I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell on my face. ⁴And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate facing toward the east. ⁵And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house.

⁶Then I heard one speaking to me from the house, while a man was standing beside me. ⁷He said to me, “Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever. And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their harlotry and by the corpses of their kings when they die, ⁸by setting their threshold by My threshold and their door post beside My door post, with only the wall between Me and them. And they have defiled My holy name by their abominations which they have committed. So I have consumed them in My anger. ⁹Now let them put away their harlotry and the corpses of their kings far from Me; and I will dwell among them forever.

¹⁰“As for you, son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the plan. ¹¹If they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the house, its structure, its exits, its entrances, all its designs, all its statutes, and all its laws. And write it in their sight, so that they may observe its whole design and all its statutes and do them. ¹²This is the law of the house: its entire area on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.

[Read 43:1-12]

Q: From what direction was the glory of the Lord coming?

A: From the east. Compare this with Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31-32; Acts 1:9-11.

“But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

—Matthew 24:29-31

But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;

—Matthew 25:31-32

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

—Acts 1:9-11

Q: From what direction does the glory of the Lord come into the “house” (also called temple)?

A: Through the east gate. (Note: Today in Jerusalem the east gate of the old temple compound has been sealed. That was because of a misinterpretation of this passage. Muslims shut the gate to keep the Lord from coming in! Unfortunately, the east gate referred to in Ezekiel is a new east gate, not the same one as the glory went out of. Why? Because Ezekiel’s describing a whole new temple!)

Q: How do we know that the events of verse 5 did not take place in (1) Zerubbabel’s temple (at the return of the exiles; cf. Ezra 3:8-10) or in (2) Herod’s temple?

A: First of all, there’s no indication in Scripture that the Shekinah ever came into Zerubbabel’s temple (see Ezra 6:13-15). Second, regarding Herod’s temple, the Lord Jesus indeed came from the Mt. of Olives through the East Gate (the only way in from that direction; see Matthew 21:1-11) and into the temple compound, but His presence was rejected. Thus the glory never came into Herod’s temple either in the manner experienced in the Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple. The glory of the Lord Jesus would leave the temple, leave Jerusalem, and ascend into heaven at Bethany.

Q: Where was the Shekinah when Jesus ministered on earth?

A: Look up Matt. 17:1-2 and John 1:14.

Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

—Matthew 17:1-2

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

—John 1:14

Q: So, where does the “glory” abide now?

A: Look up Rev. 1:12-16.

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

—Revelation 1:12-16

Q: Is any of that glory imparted to believers?

A: Look up Acts 6:8, 15 regarding Stephen.

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

—Acts 6:8

And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.

—Acts 6:15

Q: On earth, where is the glory of the Lord to dwell now?

A: Look up 1 Cor. 3:16 and 6:19.

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

—1 Corinthians 3:16

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

—1 Corinthians 6:19

Q: What prevents the “glory of the Lord” from being seen in us today?

A: Namely, sin. But also, where our hearts are in relationship to the Lord, and whether or not we are filled with the Spirit.

Q: What does the glory of the Lord want to do for every believer?

A: Be seen!

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Q: How can “the glory” be seen in us believers?

A: Make a list: (here are some suggestions)

1. Put away every sin
2. Put away every doubtful thing
3. Love as Christ loved
4. Pray without ceasing
5. Be cleansed by the washing of water with the Word
6. Make all relationships Christ-like, characterized by love
7. Live by faith alone, regardless of the consequences

In other words, “*Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect,*” and “*Be holy, for I am holy.*”

Application: *In what ways have we allowed other things into our temple that vie to replace God totally or in some way? What do we need to do personally to put our temple in proper order?*