

# EZEKIEL

## Hard to Heart

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*“Get Up & Write Like a Man”*  
43:1-5 & 44:1-3

Ezekiel is going to fall down at the glory of God only to be lifted up by the Holy Spirit so he doesn't miss recording anything.

Let's talk about this “glory.” After the Exodus the Israelites encamped at the base of Mt. Sinai. God's glory was sitting on top of Mt. Sinai as He gave the law to His people. The next seven chapters of the book give the detailed instructions of how the people were to build the Tabernacle. Then from chapters 38-40 Moses recorded how the Israelites carried out God's instructions for building the Tabernacle.

When the Tabernacle was completed the cloud of God's glory came over it and filled it with God's glory. So great was this revelation of God's glory, that Moses himself could not enter the Tabernacle.

God's glory stayed with Israel in the Tabernacle. This was the fulfillment of God's covenant promise to Israel that He would be their God and dwell among them.

God hung-out with His people in the Tabernacle until Solomon built the Temple that David had planned and provided for. Then His glory filled that structure. Here's how it reads in Second Chronicles.

2 Chronicles 5:12 and the Levites who were the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar,

clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets -

2 Chronicles 5:13 indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud,

2 Chronicles 5:14 so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

2 Chronicles 7:1 When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

2 Chronicles 7:2 And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house.

2 Chronicles 7:3 When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever."

Fast forward to the sixth century BC and the time of Ezekiel's prophecy. Ezekiel witnessed the presence of the Lord, His glory, **leaving the Temple**. This happened in stages as God's glory first left the Holy of Holies (10:4) and paused at the threshold of the Temple. Ezekiel described the process in detail as cherubim move with God's glory from place to place. Then in 10:18-19, the glory of the LORD left the threshold and rested above the east gate of the Temple.

God's glory then left the east gate of the Temple and rested on the mountain east of the city. This is the Mount of Olives. His glory had departed.

The Israelites would return to Jerusalem rebuild a Temple after their exile in Babylon ended around 515BC. It was called the Second Temple or Zerubbabel's Temple.

Half a millennia later, perhaps a decade before Jesus was born in Judea, the Second Temple was in such severe need of repairs that the reigning king, Herod the Great, refurbished it completely, greatly expanding its size.

**The glory of the Lord never dwelt in the Second Temple.** Neither will the Lord be present in the Temple that will be built during the Great Tribulation.

Fast farther forward to the Millennial Kingdom - the one thousand year reign of Jesus over the earth following His Second Coming. He sets foot on the Mount of Olives then comes in through the east gate of the Millennial Temple and once again the glory of God will dwell among His people.

Ezekiel 43:1 Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the east.

Ezekiel 43:2 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.

Ezekiel 43:3 It was like the appearance of the vision which I saw - like the vision which I saw when I came to destroy the city. The visions were like the vision which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face.

Ezekiel 43:4 And the glory of the Lord came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east.

Ezekiel 43:5 The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

Jesus is coming again. When He ascended into Heaven from the Mount of Olives in the first chapter of the Book of Acts the two men in white who were there said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (v11).

One author spoke of Christ's Second Coming this way:

There is nothing more clearly stated in the Bible than the fact that Jesus Christ is coming again. The second coming of Christ to this earth - His visible, literal, physical, glorious return - is explicitly referred to 1,845 times in the Bible. It is mentioned in twenty-three of the twenty-seven New Testament books.

He's coming to the Mount of Olives. Here is the description in the prophecy of Zechariah.

Zechariah 14:4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.

Zechariah 14:5 Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, And all the saints with You.

Zechariah 14:6 It shall come to pass in that day That there will be no light; The lights will diminish.

Zechariah 14:7 It shall be one day Which is known to the Lord Neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen That it will be light.

Zechariah 14:8 And in that day it shall be - That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur.

Zechariah 14:9 And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be "The Lord is one," And His name one.

Zechariah 14:10 All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses.

Zechariah 14:11 The people shall dwell in it; And no longer shall there be utter destruction, But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

It's hard to be dogmatic about the exact sequence of events *at* and *immediately following* the Second Coming. Here are a few details.

- After His Second Coming, and before the Millennium begins, Jesus must judge the nations. He's going to identify believers and nonbelievers who have survived the ravages of the Great Tribulation. Nonbelievers will be cast into Hades to await the second resurrection and their final eternal judgment. Believers will enter into the Millennial Kingdom as its first human citizens. In Matthew twenty-five this is described as separating the sheep from the goats.
- In his prophecy, in chapter twelve, Daniel tells us there will be an additional length of time between the end of the Great Tribulation at Christ's coming and the beginning of the kingdom on earth. He speaks of

an additional 30 days, then of an additional 45 days. Nowhere are we told why these additional days are necessary, but we can certainly speculate that they are needed to complete the judgment of the nations we just mentioned as well as gather Israel to their Messiah.

- At some point Jesus will come to the Temple that has been built, the Millennial Temple, and enter it through the east gate.

The Millennial Temple, by the way, **will not be a refurbished Tribulation Temple**. We learn from Ezekiel that the Millennial Temple will not be built on the site of the first and second Temples. It will be in a new location, which earlier was described by Ezekiel as “the separation.”

Several passages of Scripture tell us that at the Lord’s Second Coming there will be a great earthquake that upsets the topography of Israel (Isaiah 40:1-5, Ezekiel 38:18-22, Revelation 16:17-21, Zechariah 14:2-10).

It is reasonable to suppose that the Tribulation Temple will be destroyed by the final earthquake at Jesus’ appearing in glory, or by the final military invasion of Jerusalem during Armageddon.

Engineers have determined that the Millennial Temple being described by Ezekiel is much too large to fit on the current Temple Mount site. It will be on a new site, called “the separation.”

I came across some fascinating historic information regarding the Mount of Olives. Let me read something to you.

The Jewish calendar was extremely important in the religious life of the nation. The entire religious cycle of Jewish worship is based upon beginning the calendar on the correct day.

Accordingly, the Jewish calendar is based on a series of monthly cycles. The Feasts of the New Moon, Passover, Tabernacles and others were based on when each month began.

The appearance of the new moon was the key. The Sanhedrin (the highest ruling body in Israel) had the sole authority to decide when the new moon appeared. A special

court of three was delegated the task to test witnesses who would testify that they had seen the new moon.

Once a determination was made by a court of three, a fire signal went out to inform the Jewish people everywhere of the new month. The fire signals began at the Mount of Olives.

The Junior Jewish Encyclopedia said this about the fire signals:

“In ancient times, before astronomical calculations were made mathematically exact, the people of Judea watched the skies for the appearance of the new moon. As soon as it was spotted by witnesses, great bonfires were lit on the hilltops to speed the news. Burning torches signaled from mountain to mountain, beginning with Jerusalem’s Mount of Olives and on as far as the Babylonian frontier.”

As Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives, **it was the greatest signal fire of all history!** His disciples went from there spreading the news of His life, death, and resurrection to the darkest parts of the globe.

When Jesus returns to the Mount of Olives, it will again be a great signal to the world.

Another interesting fact about the Mount of Olives. Perhaps you knew this but it was news to me.

From Biblical times until today, Jews have been buried on the Mount of Olives. The necropolis on the southern ridge... was the burial place of the city's most important citizens in the period of the Biblical kings. There are an estimated 150,000 graves on the Mount, including tombs traditionally associated with Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi...

Let’s talk about the east gate. It is sometimes referred to as the Golden Gate. It was the main gate to the first and second Temples. It was through this gate that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as the crowds hailed Him as King.

Ezekiel mentions this east gate again in chapter forty-four.

Ezekiel 44:1 Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it was shut.

Ezekiel 44:2 And the Lord said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.

Ezekiel 44:3 As for the prince, because he is the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way."

According to several sources I researched, the current east gate of the Second Temple was sealed centuries ago and remains sealed today. Here's an example of what you'll find if you search it out.

It is interesting that this gate is the only one of the eight gates in Jerusalem that is sealed. The Arabs believe that since the Jews expect that Messiah would come through this gate... they would try to prevent any possibility of His return.

... in 1517 when the Turks conquered Jerusalem under the leadership of Suleiman the Magnificent. He commanded that the city's ancient walls be rebuilt, and in the midst of this rebuilding project, for some unknown reason, he ordered that the Eastern Gate be sealed up with stones.

Legends abound as to why Suleiman closed the Gate. The most believable one is that while the walls were being rebuilt, a rumor swept Jerusalem that the Messiah was coming. Suleiman called together some Jewish rabbis and asked them to tell him about the Messiah. They described the Messiah as a great military leader who would be sent by God from the east. He would enter the Eastern Gate and liberate the city from foreign control.

Suleiman then decided to put an end to Jewish hopes by ordering the Eastern Gate sealed. He also put a Muslim cemetery in front of the Gate, believing that no Jewish holy man would defile himself by walking through a Muslim cemetery.

This is interesting, but as we've said, the Millennial Temple will *not* share the same locale as the current Temple ruins. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* notes this and says,

Some have thought that the "Golden Gate" of Jerusalem, now sealed, is the gate spoken of here. However, the dimensions of the "Golden Gate" do not correspond with Ezekiel's gate, which is still future.

The point of verses one through three of chapter forty-four seems to be that when Jesus returns only He will use the east gate of the Temple - no one else. He will initially enter the Temple through it and it will be His to use exclusively.

Ezekiel was overcome. He “fell on [his] face” at the vision of the return of the Lord to the Temple.

**The Holy Spirit lifted him up!** Instead of being prone, the Spirit wanted him upright and able to witness the moment when the “glory of the Lord filled the temple.”

We often think that the most powerful manifestations of God in our midst will overcome us, knock us down, render us incapacitated. That certainly can happen. I can't help but think of Saul in the Old Testament being overcome by the spirit of prophecy. Or Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road being overcome by Jesus.

But here there was a powerful manifestations of the presence of God in which the Lord specifically wanted his prophet to be on his feet, on duty, witnessing and recording everything.

It can be hard for us individually and corporately to stay balanced in this area of God manifesting Himself to us by His Spirit.

- On the one hand we see all manner of excesses in which the Holy Spirit gets blamed for fleshly, weird behaviors.
- On the other hand we can be so quick to quench anything that is out of the ordinary even though it may fit within biblical parameters.

Every now and then a movement will occur in which the Holy Spirit seems to be doing remarkable things. Problem is, some of those things are simply unbiblical. The explanation put forth by the proponents is that when the Spirit moves, initially there will be excesses. This, they say, is to be expected.



In other words, **anything goes!**

No, when it's really the Holy Spirit, it won't violate anything biblical. It may be unusual but it won't, **it can't**, be unbiblical.

Here's something to consider. Jonathan Edwards was a great preacher, theologian, and missionary. He's considered a hero in the Puritan heritage and by those who adhere to Reformed theology. He was pretty conservative.

He was also involved in a notable revival. Listen to this tidbit, from a D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones essay on that revival.

[Edwards] had to defend a number of unusual and remarkable phenomena that occurred in the revival of the 1740'S. He had to defend, and does defend, the fact that even the body may be affected. Edwards' wife, on one occasion, exhibited the phenomenon which is known as levitation. She was literally carried from one part of the room to another without making any effort or exertion herself. Sometimes people would swoon and become unconscious in meetings.

Does that sound unbiblical? Not really - at least not the 'levitation.' After all, aren't there several instances of Bible characters being supernaturally transported from one physical location to another?

We don't want to go all Corinthian, but neither do we want to become 'quenchers.'

*May our Lord lead and guide as He manifests Himself to us in these Last Days!*