

SEEKING A PLACE OF PEACE / Sunday, November 2, 2014

Unifying Topic: GOD'S DIVINE GLORY RETURNS

Lesson Text

I. **Ezekiel Has A Vision Of God's Glory In The Temple** (Ezekiel 43:1-5)

II. **God Speaks To Ezekiel From The Temple** (Ezekiel 43:6-9)

III. **God Calls Upon His People To Repent** (Ezekiel 43:10-12)

Lesson Text: And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. (Ezekiel 43:4-5, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People look for a place in which they can experience some sense of release and orderliness, away from the chaos that sometimes surrounds them. Where can such a place be found? Ezekiel's vision, given to him by God, revealed to the Israelites that God's calming presence and merciful glory is truly worshiped.

Lesson Aim: To comprehend Ezekiel's vision of God's merciful presence and glory.

Life Aim: To develop and grow in respect for the sacredness of worship settings.

43:1 Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east:

43:2 And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

43:3 And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face.

43:4 And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.

43:5 So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house.

43:6 And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me.

43:7 And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places.

43:8 In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger.

43:9 Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.

43:10 Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern.

43:11 And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.

43:12 This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.

HISTORY:

Chapter 40 THE NEW TEMPLE: This is the twenty-fifth year of Jerusalem's captivity in Babylon in which Ezekiel was brought to a high mountain in the land of Israel. In a vision God returns Ezekiel to the land of Jerusalem (v.1-2) and he sees the Millennial Temple. Some describe it as a literal Temple and some describe it as a future Temple on earth. Ezekiel describes a man, whose face shone like bronze/brass standing beside the temple, holding a measuring tape and a measuring stick in his hand (v.3). Ezekiel is told to declare all that he sees to the house of Israel (v.4). The vision of the Temple gives hope to the people of Ezekiel's time who had just seen their nation and its Temple destroyed with no hope of rebuilding it in the near future. The Temple's measurements are given and a description of how it is to be filled. The details of this vision gave the people more hope, that what Ezekiel saw had come from God and would surely come to pass in the future. He is then brought into the Temple of the outer court, where a wall surrounds the whole Temple, severed by three gates on the east (vv.5-16), on the north (vv.20-23), and on

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the south (**vv.24-27**). After this Ezekiel walked through another large gateway into the inner court, which was on a higher level. The inner court was accessible by the gates on the south (**vv.28-31**), east (**vv.32-34**), and north sides (**vv.35-37**). In the porch of the gate (east) there were arrangements for preparing sacrifices—eight tables (four inside and four outside) where the sacrifices were cut and prepared (**vv.39-43**), and then there were certain rooms set for the priest in charge of the altar (**vv.45, 46**). Within the inner court was the altar (**v.47**). The sons of Zadok were among the sons of Levi to minister to the Lord (**v.46**). The Temple itself was on a platform ten steps higher than the inner court (**v.49**). Because Ezekiel was a priest, he would have been familiar with the furnishings and ceremonies of Solomon's Temple—the burnt offering, sin offering, and trespass offering.

Chapter 41 THE HOLY OF HOLIES: Ezekiel is brought into the temple and the posts and door of the Most Holy Place are measured (**vv.1-4**). The posts were not round, but square (**v.21**). The Most Holy Place was the innermost room in the Temple (Exo.26:33, 34). This was where the Ark of the Covenant was kept and where God's glory dwelt. It was entered only once a year by the High Priest, who performed the ceremony to atone for the nation's sins. Its description encompasses the wall, the staircase, the chambers, the doors, the narrow windows, the cherubim and palm trees (*each with two faces—one of a man and one of a lion each looking at the carved palm trees all around the inner wall of the Temple*), the altar was made of wood with the temple and the sanctuary having two doors (**vv.16-23**). All were brought to forth in Ezekiel's vision to be built to the specifications and must be entirely accurate of the Master builder's plan (**vv.5-26**).

Chapter 42 ROOMS FOR THE PRIESTS: Ezekiel is led toward the north into the outer court, another building, the chambers for the priests—the holy chambers (opposite the separating courtyard and the opposite building toward the north). There are three sections to this chapter: (**First**) the chambers of the priests (**vv.12-14**); It gives the description, situation, and structure. (**Second**) The use of these chambers by the priests (**vv.13-14**); It was used by the priests when eating sacrifices (46:20), and for the storage of their garments (44:19), and (**Third**) the dimensions of the temple area (**vv.15-20**). The overall measurements of the temple represented a square of five hundred reeds. The purpose of the surrounding wall is to make a separation between the sanctuary and the disrespectful place (**v.20**). This is the culmination of chapters 40-42 for God's glory to return to the Temple!

LESSON:

Ezekiel 43:1-5 Ezekiel Has A Vision Of God's Glory In The Temple

43:1 **Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east:**— The remainder of this vision (and the book) is concerned with the final message that Ezekiel is to convey to his people. Ezekiel is brought out again to the passageway through the outer wall leading to the east; he returns to the east gate.

43:2 **And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.** In Ezekiel 11:23 God's glory stooped over the Mount of Olives, to the east of Jerusalem, before leaving the city. The prophecy states that the glory would also return from the east. Now, Ezekiel sees the glory of the God of Israel as prophesized, coming from the east and hearing the voice of the God of Israel sounding like a noise of many waters. He couldn't help but see the earth shining with God's glory.

43:3 **And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city:**— Not that Ezekiel destroyed the city but, he was the one to pronounce God's Word of its destruction. Ezekiel is comparing this vision with a series of visions he has seen before. This vision in which Ezekiel saw before appeared as a series of visions beginning in chapters 8-11 relating particular to the evils of Jerusalem among those yet not exiled. It began when Ezekiel in a vision was transported from his home in Babylon to the Temple. He says in 8:4 "*And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain (valley).*" In chapter 9 a team of seven angels came: six carried out the execution of the unfaithful in Jerusalem at God's command. And only one angel is assigned the job of protecting the faithful. God is graphically presented as departing from the Temple in 8:4; His glory is over the northern gate. It then moved to the door (9:3), then to the south side of the Temple (10:3), to the eastern gate (10:18, 19; 11:1), and finally to the mountain east of the Temple (11:23), probably the Mount of Olives. Therefore, due to the nation's sins, God's glory had departed.

43:3b **...and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face.** Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah were priests called to the prophetic office. In chapter 1 of Ezekiel verse 3: "*...as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.*" This is where Ezekiel's first

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vision occurred where God calls him to be a prophet. Nebuchadnezzar had installed a new king, Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's uncle. The captives were settled in Babylon along the Chebar River, a branch from the Euphrates. Ezekiel gives us a spectacular view of this vision of what he sees and what caused him to fall on his face.

⁴...a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. ⁵ Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. ⁶ Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. ⁷ Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. ⁸ The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. ⁹ Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward. ¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. ¹¹ Thus were their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two wings of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies - Ez.1:4-11.

Ezekiel goes on and on and concludes with **verse 28c** "...*This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.* So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking." This, to me was soooo awesome!!! Ezekiel fell to the ground, overwhelmed by the holiness of God, and of his own sinfulness and insignificance. Eventually, every person will fall before the Lord, either out of reverence and awe for His mercy or out of fear for His judgment.

43:4 And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. This same God who judged the fall of Jerusalem then, now comes back full of forgiveness and grace. He comes into the house by way of the east gate, the same way His presence had left.

43:5 So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. God's Spirit took him; raised him up, and brought him into the inner court and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house, taking up residence.

Ezekiel 43:6-9 God Speaks To Ezekiel From The Temple

43:6 And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. Ezekiel begins to hear the Lord speak specifically to him from the Temple, while the man that had been measuring, stood beside Ezekiel.

43:7 And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. God called unto Ezekiel as the "*Son of man*", expressing the frailness and low estate of man after the fall; identifying the divineness of God and the humanness of man. He announces to him that the temple must be holy and free from whoredom, that is, temple prostitution. The Jerusalem Temple is pictured as the throne of God; the place where the soles of God's feet touches; the place where He will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel; the place where His holy Name will dwell and be honored. This will not be a place (His Temple), where He will be defiled. He won't put up with it! Neither from His children nor the kings, the whoredom (idolatry) they practiced, nor the carcasses of their kings in high places will defile His House! God's holy Name was defiled by Israel and their kings through whoredom, murders, and idolatries of all kinds. The King of Glory claims the Millennial Temple as His place to dwell; where He will reign as both King and Priest (Zech.6:9-13). There will be no ark and no mercy seat. Upon Christ's return, all wickedness will be destroyed and worship restored.

43:8 In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger. In other words, "*they put their idol altars right next to mine with only a wall between them and me. They defiled my holy name by such detestable sin, so I consumed them in my anger.*" The "*threshold*" is the way of entrance into the house. When God referred to "*their*" threshold and "*their*" post were what the Israelites erected by God's threshold and posts; and the wall between God and "*their*" erection was defilement and an abomination

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to Him. It's like setting up another entrance God has not commanded to be beside His.¹ Even the huge, thick, wall could not keep the idols the Israelites had in their own quarters from coming to the notice of God. God dwelled in the Most Holy Place. God wanted to be with them all the time. Their unfaithfulness to Him brought the separation.

43:9 Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever. The Israelites had engaged in idolatry by allowing the tombs of kings to be in or near the sacred temple area. When they worshipped false gods, or had idols, they committed spiritual adultery. He's saying, Now is the time! It's that time for repentance! Once they put away those things He will dwell in the midst of them forever on a continuous basis.

Ezekiel 43:10-12 God Calls Upon His People To Repent

43:10 Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. Once you are ashamed of what you have done, follows repentance. Once they put away those things, then comes repentance. Ezekiel was to show Israel the architectural plans for the house in which the angel had showed to him. It all comes down to Ezekiel showing the house the prophet had seen with its measurements, its gates, courts, chambers, walls, etc. which the man (angel) took him through and he observed. It is the house where the voice of God was heard and His glory shone and filled the place up. As the Israelites see what God's house is supposed to look like, then they might be ashamed of their iniquities; their filthy practices. Every detail of this gloriousness should produce repentance. They were to take note and understand by measuring the pattern likewise, where they see their defects and correct them.

43:11 And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. Well then, it's according to the people's response. If they are ashamed, then, Ezekiel is to describe to them **the structure**—the form and fashion (outer and inner details) of the house; the goings and comings (exists and entrances) of the house; and **the regulations**—all forms (procedures), ordinances (rules), and laws (regulations) to them. Afterwards, Ezekiel was to write all this down in their sight that they might observe all, keep, carry out, and follow the whole form and ordinance.

43:12 This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house. God had brought forth the law of the Temple to be presented to the house of Israel. These rules are to be comprehended upon the whole territory round about the top of the mountain. Holiness is the basic law of God's Temple. There is to be no trace of defilement anywhere near or in His Temple. Just as God is holy, His people are to be holy.

SUMMARY:

The arrival of God's glory in His Temple inaugurates a new era in the relationship of God and His people, and it becomes the focus of the remainder of the vision. The action takes place in the gate facing east, the main temple entrance in the vision, and the equivalent to the gate of the old temple from which God had previously departed. Ezekiel sees God's glory and hears it, describing its sound as a noise of many waters, and its brilliance causing the earth to shine with His glory. The appearance was what he had seen before when God destroyed the city of Jerusalem, and what he had seen at the river of Chebar where he had fallen on his face at the awesomeness and holiness of God. He saw God's glory enter into the Temple and fill it on the east, as he was brought by the Spirit into the inner court (v.1-5).

God began to speak to Ezekiel from the Temple, as the angel stood by. God calling him Son of man denotes God's divineness and his humanness, for Ezekiel was seeing the place of God's throne and the place where the sole of His feet will stand—God's dwelling place, the Temple, where He will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel. In that place will be no idolatry and no bodies of any kings sharing His domain, no other entrances erected up for their bodies. What the Israelites had done had polluted His dwelling place. God's Name and Temple will be holy! Now, they were to put away all these things in order for God to dwell in the midst of them forever (v.6-9).

¹ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/ezekiel/45.html>
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Ezekiel was to tell them of the Temple that they might be ashamed of their sins. Get them to go over the layout and become the pattern God had measured. And if they are ashamed, show them the whole plan of the Temple: its ins and outs, proportions, regulations, and laws. Draw a picture, meaning, write it down so they can see the design and meaning and live by its design and intent. The radius of the Temple included the top of the mountain and everything around it. And yes, all was to be holy. That was the meaning of the law of the Temple! (vv.10-12).

APPLICATION:

Ezekiel has set a picture for us. When God's glory returned, God sought a place of peace. In order for God's glory to dwell in us, there cannot be any defilement of spiritual adultery; nothing that defiles His Name; nothing that turns Him away. Chaos may be all around us, but where He is, in us, we will be able to sense His release of peace. Even writing these words down caused me to see God's holiness compared to the humanness of me. I worship and praise His awesomeness! For Ezekiel, this had to be scary as He gazed upon this vision; depressing to know the people had not been obedient to an awesome God, and fulfilling to know that God's glory was to return to the Temple; that God had not forgotten about them!