

## **THE GLORIOUS GOD RETURNS TO HIS TEMPLE**

### **Ezekiel 40-48**

This morning we've been reminded of Jesus' triumphal entry.

Celebration was significant because they were looking forward to the King's coming to establish His kingdom. *"The KING is coming!"*

Significant prophecy concerning Kingdom in final segment of Ezek 40-48

**Climax to Israel's history, and to Ezekiel, arrives when God restores His people and reestablishes fellowship with them.**

Evidences of change include building of the temple, coming of Messiah, and the presence of God's glory in their midst

These events occur during our Lord's Millennial Kingdom on earth.

**That's what God's people were waiting for when Jesus entered Jerusalem!**

Did you see the front page of the *Weekly World News* last week? **"Never-before-published PROPHECIES from the Holy Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Nostradamus, Edgar Cayce and the Lost Ark: THE SECOND COMING 1998!" "Scholars warn of fiery end of world in September . . . and the return of Jesus Christ!"**

Never fear! *The Bible* doesn't connect the 2nd coming of Christ with end of the world. When he comes, He comes to establish His kingdom on earth, and set up a center of worship in Jerusalem. Then He'll reign for 1000 years.

**Don't be surprised if you hear many more of these prophecies in coming months and years.**

One of our professors predicted at time of the "6 day war" in 1967 that since Israel was back in Jerusalem, times of the Gentiles was over so Christ would come for His church before summer vacation was over;

One respected writer was sure 2nd coming must occur by 1988, so rapture must occur at least by 1981;

"88 reasons Christ must come in 88";

"89 reasons Christ must come in 89."

At that time I predicted many major predictions of the rapture in '93; and of Christ's coming in 2000.

A Buddhist group in Garland Texas predicted Christ's coming last week;

Now Weekly World News announces prophecies that Jesus will come in September! }

**There WILL be more!**

One result: world's beginning to think it's a joke! ***Only quacks think Jesus is going to come again!***

Make no mistake about it! Scripture is clear! **Jesus WILL come again! But NOT when everyone expects!**

So when will He come? I don't know. There is always a risk in trying to be more specific than Scripture!

Yet such people abound. Everyone wants to know the secret.

God already told us: ***NO ONE knows!*** Stop trying to guess! ***Expect He may come SOON; and LIVE LIKE IT!***

**Ezek. 40-48 tells us what it'll be like when He *does* establish His kingdom.**

## VISION OF THE RESTORED TEMPLE 40-42

Comforts those who saw destruction of old temple.  
When captives rebuilt city, those who knew old temple wept at new one

**Ezra 3:10-13.**<sup>10</sup> *When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the LORD, as prescribed by David king of Israel. <sup>11</sup> With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD: "He is good; his love to Israel endures forever." And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. <sup>12</sup> But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. <sup>13</sup> No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.*

They remembered the good old days!

**Hag. 2:3:** asks who remembers what it used to be like. Then asks if new building seems "like nothing" in comparison? *'Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?*

God assures them He is with them; He will fill new house with HIS glory

**2:6-9 => John. 1:14).** *"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the*

*heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land.* <sup>7</sup> *I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and **I will fill this house with glory,*** says the LORD Almighty. <sup>8</sup> *'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the LORD Almighty.* <sup>9</sup> ***'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,'*** says the LORD Almighty. *'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty."*

*This temple will cause rejoicing. No one will lament the loss of the old one!*

*This temple is different than the one they knew; than any ever built!*

*Description doesn't fit temple built when they returned from exile*

*This temple facilitates *millennial* worship — after their Messiah comes!*

**The SIZE of the restored temple:** *MUCH* larger than previous ones!

*Man came to reveal what God was going to do — had rod to reveal measurements of new city.*

*Structure was 500 rods long by 500 wide — approx. 1 sq mi*

*— much greater than any temple had ever been.*

*If you're familiar with topography of Jerusalem, =>*

*It won't fit!*

**This temple has to be built by God!**

No place where temple of such vast dimensions could be built.

Problem may be resolved by changes predicted at Messiah's coming (Is 40:4-5; Zech 14:4-9)

It has to be established *during millennium*.

## **RETURN OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD 43:1-12**

Most significant event predicted is the return of God's glory to temple

When glory departed (10-11), God left His people without His presence.

*Now He returns.*

**Ezekiel sees the same vision of God he saw in the beginning. 43:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> *Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, <sup>2</sup> and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory. <sup>3</sup> The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when he came to destroy the city and like the visions I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown. <sup>4</sup> The glory of the LORD entered the temple through the gate facing east. <sup>5</sup> Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.*

Again He is impressed with God's glory and falls down before Him.

Once the glory of the Lord returns, He will never again depart —because the nation will never again profane the Lord's Name

**43:6-7** *While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple. <sup>7</sup> He said: "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever. The house of Israel will never again defile my holy name -- ...."*

They will never again be a laughingstock before the pagan nations.

*His name will be exalted among them forever.*

Israel had forgotten God's greatness and glory—even though He lived in their midst. They needed a reminder of Who God is and how great He is. His presence would remind them of How great He is!

WE sometimes lose sight of God. We need to spend time with Him and focus on Him; remember His greatness and glory.

## **ORDINANCES CONCERNING WORSHIP 43:12-46:24**

The sacrifices are presented as a REMINDER of Christ's death.

Much like the Communion service we celebrated this morning reminds us of Christ's death for us.

This sacrificial system reminds them of what Christ's death has done.

The system is totally different than the (O.T.) Levitical system

Basic requirements to worship a holy God haven't changed.

But furniture and ritual has changed radically.  
*Some of the most important elements in the old system are gone.*

**No ark of the covenant.**

**No mercy seat.**

**No Day of Atonement**

**The altar of burnt offering** – *where sin was dealt with* – is now **the centerpiece** of their worship –

*The memorial of the sacrifice of the Lamb is central.*

**Laws affect FOUR MAIN AREAS of their life:**

**1. Altar of burnt offering 43:13-27**

Blood sacrifices will again be presented in the millennium.

Sacrifices don't contradict Christ's work on cross;  
 they *remember* it!

Jesus' blood has *always* been *only* basis for  
 salvation, *even in O.T!*

**2. Regulations concerning ministers 44**

God demands firm standards for worshiping Him  
 44:1-4

Those who serve in the temple have to be purified  
 44:5-8

Levites, who turned away from God to worship  
 idols, serve in temple, but not as priests **44:10-14**

*"The Levites who went far from me when Israel went astray and who wandered from me after their idols must bear the consequences of their sin. <sup>11</sup> They may serve in my sanctuary, having charge of the gates of the temple and serving in it; they may slaughter the burnt offerings and sacrifices for the people and stand before the people and serve them. <sup>12</sup> But because they served them in the presence of their idols and made the house of Israel fall into sin, therefore I have sworn with uplifted hand that they must bear the consequences of their sin, declares the Sovereign LORD. <sup>13</sup> They are not to come near to serve me as priests or come near any of my holy things or my most holy offerings; they must bear the shame of their detestable practices. <sup>14</sup> Yet I will put them in charge of the duties of the temple and all the work that is to be done in it.*

Sons of Zadok minister as priests, because they remained faithful.

*<sup>15</sup> "But the priests, who are Levites and descendants of Zadok and who faithfully carried out the duties of my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, are to come near to minister before me; they are to stand before me to offer sacrifices of fat and blood, declares the Sovereign LORD. <sup>16</sup> They alone are to enter my sanctuary; they alone are to come near my table to minister before me and perform my service.*

Standards of purity and holiness for priests are strict! 44:17-31

By *their* holiness and purity they teach people what God requires **44:23** *They are to teach my people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.*”

As a “Kingdom of priests,” the entire church ought to live that way today.

Leaders must demonstrate what godly living looks like, so they can lead God’s people in HIS ways!

### **3. Division of the land 45:1-17**

Inheritance boundaries are changed — New topography; old divisions won’t work.

### **4. Offerings and sacrifices 45:18-46:24**

Some O.T. feasts established by Moses will be restored.

Others will no longer be observed.

e.g., Feast of Trumpets will no longer be celebrated.

Looked forward to Israel’s regathering to reside in land again,

They’re there; no reason to look forward to going there!

Don’t celebrate Day of Atonement; Israel will already be purified.

All the offerings will be restored.

These offerings *never were* the basis of salvation!

They are *a memorial* of the work Christ already completed.

There will be a prince, who is different than Messiah.

He will lead in the celebration of the Passover.

He offers sacrifices for *himself*, as well as for others.

The prince serves as governor and priest.

His position is between the Priest and the people.

He comes nearer to God than others, but can't enter interior court

He governs, but doesn't have full authority of the King.

### **VISION OF THE LAND 47-48**

Finally he describes what *the land* will be like during millennium:

#### **River from the temple 47:1-12**

A river flows out of the temple,...

The water produces life along its banks.

When it comes to Dead Sea, it produces life there also; many fish will live there (for the first time!).

#### **Borders of the land 47:13-23**

Their borders will be enlarged.

#### **Divisions of the land 48:1-29**

Land divided among tribes, according to new limits.

#### **Gates of the city 48:30-35a**

City will have three gates on each side; named for 12 tribes.

#### **Description of the city 48:35b**

New name is placed on the city: "*The Lord is there!*"

**Main characteristic of the millennium** is what was missing in the rest of the book: **the LORD is present!**

**The result of the events** in climax of the story is theme of the book: ***“they shall know that I am the Lord!”***

Israel will know Who is God

God’s name will be exalted among all nations and He will receive glory

### **WHAT LESSONS DO WE LEARN THAT RELATE TO OUR LIVES TODAY**

The same God who sent judgment, sends restoration.

God sometimes has to deal with His people today as He did with Israel.

When we fail to trust Him, and disobey His Word, He disciplines us

When we trust Him and obey His Word, He delights to bless us

### **SUMMARY OF EZEKIEL**

The book began with the revelation of **God’s glory**.

Revelation of God’s glory helps him keep perspective (1).

Then we learned about **character of messenger**, a man ready to obey whatever God asked, no matter how difficult it might be for him (2-3).

**Rebellion and idolatry** provoked God to jealousy.

. The glory of God couldn’t tolerate such abominations **God’s glory left** and allowed them to suffer consequences of sin.

God sent **announcements of judgment** to warn people to repent(4-19).

*What was the purpose of these judgments?* To teach them Who God is!

**They failed to honor God** before the pagan peoples around them

**God glorifies Himself**, before Israel *and* nations, to teach Who He is.

The **judgments affected neighboring nations**, who never recognized God.

They made fun of His people and looked down on their God.

Their interest was to exploit Israel's weakness for their own gain,

God teaches them **He is God. There are *no other gods* like Him** (25-32).

God demonstrated **His faithfulness** to promises – of blessing *and* cursing.

The turning point of the book, the fall of Jerusalem, raised a new question: *Was everything lost?*

Captives in Babylonia thought so!

Pagan nations thought so too!

*After* all the destruction, God affirms: *"I will open your graves and will bring you up from the grave and will bring you back into your land!"* God wasn't done with them.

Israel took its punishment and then learned about God through restoration.

God would demonstrate before all nations what He is like.

He would gather His people from all nations where they were scattered

He would judge nations that mistreated them and made fun of their God.

Then He would give them a new heart, to follow His commands (33-39)

After the preparation, God gives them back their inheritance in the land.

He constructs a new temple.

The glory of God comes back to His temple to live among them (40-48)

Ezekiel begins in God's presence; watches the glory depart; and ends with His presence in the land again.

The result of all that takes place:

***"THEY WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD!"***

**Israel's problems occur because they lost sight of God's glory.**

They became so used to having God around, they lost their perspective. They stopped trusting Him.

They stopped paying attention to Him. Eventually, they turned away from Him.

They forgot what a mighty God we serve!

**Christians are capable of that too!**

Paul tells us that *WE* are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God LIVES IN God's children today.

He warns us not to *forget* ("don't you KNOW?" that your body is the *temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?!!*")

Our concept of God as "a friend who sticks closer than a brother" can predispose us to ignore the implications of the glory of God for OUR lives too!

God is more than *just* a friend; a buddy!

He IS ALMIGHTY GOD—the CREATOR of the universe!

He deserves our respect, our reverence, our worship!

*Such an attitude of true worship should transform our life!*

If we lose sight of the greatness and glory of God, He may have to teach us WHO HE IS, just as He did with Israel!

**HE'S THE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE!**

Let's worship Him in Spirit and in truth, with all our being! — as we look forward to Jesus' coming.

The King IS coming?

*Are you ready for His coming? Are you waiting to welcome Him?*

**=>    *What If It Were Today? #245***