

The Glory Departs

Review:



Last week we saw God's presence, the Shekinah glory, descended upon the altar and take up occupancy in the Temple.



*Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and **the Glory of the LORD filled the house.***
2 Chronicles 7:1

This was proof of God's blessing upon the nation of Israel when His presence, the **Shekinah Glory**, stood over the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies. As long the Glory was present, God was blessing Israel.

God had declared the reason for this blessing upon the nation in Psalms 96 verse 3, for Israel was to:

Declare His Glory among the heathen, His wonders among all people.

Far too many people in the world around us and, sadly, in many churches, make the mistake of believing that God has abandoned the Jewish people. Their relationship is fixed for eternity because it is based upon the promise of God. Leviticus 26:40-42

*⁴⁰ If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; ⁴¹ And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: ⁴² Then will **I remember my covenant** with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.*

God never breaks His word.

However, God's blessing on, and response to, the Jewish people is conditional upon their behavior as a nation in glorifying Him (vv. 27-28).

²⁷ And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; ²⁸ Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

It was with a heavy and reluctant heart that God had to fulfill the chastisement portion of the covenant.

By 592 B.C., action was required and could not be avoided. God could not do otherwise without breaking His word. By ignoring the warnings of the prophets and by ignoring the warnings of the Scriptures, Israel brought about its own chastisement.

KEY PRINCIPLE for the people of God – for Israel and now for the Church.

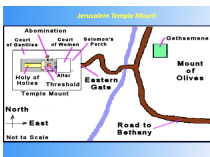
If God's people hurt or diminish His Glory, God must respond. He is holy and cannot allow any tarnishing of His holiness.

Ezekiel the prophet was permitted to witness God's judgment and record the departure of His Glory from the First Temple and from the Land. God used the visible Shekinah Glory to portray His actions because He is an invisible God. This event is recorded in chapters 8 through 11 of Ezekiel.

The cause of the chastisement is given in chapter 8 verses 17-18:

*Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that **they commit the abominations which they commit here?** for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke Me to anger; and, lo, they put the branch to their nose, therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.*

Ezekiel 8:17-18



Ezekiel was to be a witness to testify that God was just and righteous in leaving the Temple and departing from the nation.

In chapter 10 verse 4, God began His reluctant departure from the Temple.

*Then the Glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and **stood over the threshold of the house;** and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD's Glory.*

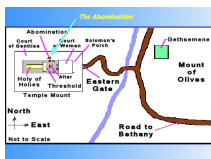
Ezekiel 10:4

Rather than an ascent straight up to heaven, God demonstrated to Ezekiel, and to all people thereafter, that He reluctantly departed from Israel. God did not do this in a vindictive or delighted fashion; or rather, He did it with regret, hesitation, for He had a deep love for Israel.

The Glory Departs

In Ezekiel 8:3 we read:

And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.

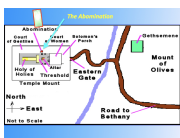


Here He showed the cause of His wrath, for it was the violation of the covenant which necessitated God's withdrawal from the nation.

. . . the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.

Ezekiel 8:3

Recall from our previous class that the Shekinah Glory of God was in the Holy of Holies over the threshing floor of Araunah on Mount Moriah. **But now it (8:4).**



*And, **behold,** the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain.*

The Glory was pointing to the cause of God's righteous jealousy. God then asked the question,

Son of man, seest thou what they [Israel] do? Even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary [lit. Holy place]? But turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abomination. Ezekiel 8:6

Perhaps the greatest sin in this entire affair is that the leaders thought that

The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth. Ezekiel 8:12

Sadly, toady, Christians and their church leaders may ignore sin in the church, acting as if God does not notice the sin or that He has not walked away from them.

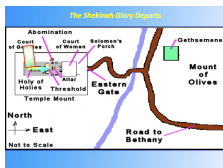
But God never sleeps, is weary, or misses what is happening in His creation. His eyes are always upon His people.

This record in Ezekiel serves to teach future generations that God does indeed notice His people's sin and their disobedience. The record tells us that even when it hurts God, He fulfills His covenant. **God's word and His holy nature require it.**

Regardless of God's emotion and love for His people, His righteousness and holiness must overrule. As God departed from His beloved nation by the visible departure of the Shekinah Glory, He showed His love for them.

God always uses chastisement, with the purpose of turning the repentant one back to a full blessed relationship with Himself. God is not vindictive; rather, He seeks the best for His people.

His departure (see *Figure 4*) was a progressive movement from the Holy of Holies out to Mount Olivet.

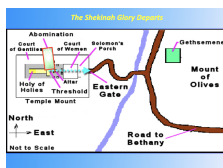


Then the Glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD's Glory. Ezekiel 10:4

[CLICK]

God not only started to depart from Israel, but He began a process that would portray the seriousness with which He viewed the people's distrust of Him.

Those who turned from God and believed that He "*seeth not*" (Ezekiel 9:9) were slain. It was so serious that when Ezekiel tried to intercede for the people (Ezekiel 9:8), God turned a deaf ear. Israel had passed the "point of no return" by their sin.



To The East Gate

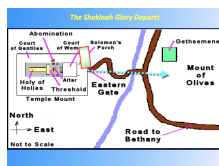
From the Holy of Holies, the Glory proceeded to the threshold of the Temple and from there to **[CLICK]** "*the east gate of the LORD's house*" (Ezekiel 10:18,19). Here God speaks of their iniquity and of His action (Ezekiel 11:1-12). Israel learns that they will be taken from the Land and placed into captivity, for without the presence of the Glory, Israel is no longer in the position of blessing. Even at this time of great judgment and despair, God offers hope.

Therefore say, Thus saith the LORD God; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little refuge in the countries where they shall come. Therefore say, Thus saith the LORD God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

Ezekiel 11:16,17

- The Shekinah Glory Departs From Israel

Although the people now believed that God had forsaken them, He promises to be with the exiled nation and ultimately to return them to the land and to Jerusalem. This promise includes changing their hearts so that they can walk in His statutes and keep His ordinances. They will once again be His people and He “**will be their God**” (Ezekiel 11:18-21).



With these last words, spoken at the east gate of the Lord’s house, the Glory now departed (see *Figure 6*). It moved from the **[CLICK]** east gate to the “**mountain which is on the east side of the city**” (Ezekiel 11:23).

This mountain is Mount Olivet, the Mount of Olives, which overlooks the city of Jerusalem and the precious Temple site: where Solomon had constructed the Temple, where David had repented and prayed, where God had stopped the plague, and where Abraham had offered his only son upon the altar.

Notice in verse 23 that the Glory “**stood**” upon the mount.

*And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and **stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city***

This Hebrew word means *to tarry* or *to linger*⁴. The eyes of the Creator looked upon the city and the Temple. He gave a final look before departing with sadness and regret, for the people had caused His need to depart. The Glory then ascended to heaven as God visibly parted from His people. The Glory of Israel was gone.

The Rest of the Story

At the 2nd return of Christ, God will repeat this pattern and keep His promise to Israel. Turn to Ezekiel 43:1-5:

*¹Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: ²And, 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. ³And 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. ⁴And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. ⁵So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, **behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house.***