

- I) V1-3 INTRO: Then He brought me back to the *outer gate of the sanctuary* which faces toward the east
  - a) Earlier in this book, Ezekiel had written of how the glory of God had departed from the temple
    - 1) Ch 10-11 reveals that God's glory progressively departed from the Temple
    - 2) His glory paused over the threshold of the Temple, then at the east gate
    - 3) FINALLY: His glory departed from the Mount of Olives (11:23)
  
- II) HIS GLORY: Was not present in Zerubbabel's reconstructed temple
  - a) His glory was not present in the temple when Herod progressively worked on it
  - b) His glory is not present when a temple is rebuilt during the Tribulation
  
- III) FACT: His glory *only returns* when Jesus returns, and the temple is at that time rebuilt
  - a) We have seen that, when Jesus returns He will build a new temple
    - 1) Zech 6:12-13 Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is *the BRANCH!* From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD; Yes, *He shall build the temple of the LORD.* He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be *a priest on His throne,* and the counsel of peace shall be between them both
  
- IV) THE BRANCH: One of the titles of Messiah is *the BRANCH* as Messiah comes from the tree (line) of David
  - a) The title reveals His humble beginnings, as well as His fruitfulness
    - 1) Jer 23:5 Behold, the days are coming says the LORD, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth
    - 2) IT IS: To this temple that the glory of God returns and fills the temple with His glory (Ezek 43:5)
  
- V) V1-2 THEN: He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east
  - a) Ezekiel is at the *outer gate* of the temple, not the *Eastern Gate* on the wall: The gate was now closed
    - 1) V2 It is closed because it honor's the Lord's glory having returned through it
    - 2) This invests it with a special sacredness
  
- VI) THIS: Has caused confusion as many have thought this refers to the Eastern Gate on the wall
  - a) The East gate was walled up by the Ottoman Turks in 1530 A.D.
    - 1) A the cemetery has been planted in front of it. Many believe this was done to prevent the entrance of the Messiah through that gate
    - 2) FACT: When Jesus returns, the landscape changes and a new temple will be built
  
- VII) V3 AS FOR: The prince because he is the prince he may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD
  - a) THE PRINCE: Is a title at least 14 times from this place on to the end of the book, excepting ch 47
    - 1) Many believe that the prince here mentioned is Messiah
  
- VIII) ACTUALLY: This is not correct, as it is speaking of *a human ruler*
  - a) FIRST: As we will see, the prince does not act out the role of a priest Ezek 45:19-20
    - 1) Messiah is able to offer sacrifices
    - 2) Ps 110:4 You *are* a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.
  
- IX) SECOND: The prince actually offers a sin offering on behalf of himself
  - a) Jesus is without sin and has no need to make an offering to purify Himself
    - 1) 1 Jn 3:5 You know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

- I) THIRD: The prince has sons (Ezek 46:16), which would refer to physical, natural descent
  - a) Obviously, we are sons of God spiritually, and not by physical descent
    - 1) Jn 1:12 As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name
- II) FOURTH: The prince worships God (46:2) but Jesus as God, *receives* worship
  - a) Heb 1:6 Let all the angels of God *worship Him*.
- III) WHO IS HE: Some believe that the prince being referred to is David himself (Ezek 37:24)
  - a) Ezek 34:23-24 I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them--My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken
- IV) STILL: It is also possible that it is a descendant of David being spoken of
  - a) He will be a representative for Jesus, and will have authority under Him
    - 1) This would serve to emphasize how Jesus is actually ruling and reigning on earth
    - 2) Dan 7:14 To Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.
- V) V3 AS FOR: The prince because he is the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD
  - a) The prince is able to eat at the gate, but is not permitted to enter in through the gate
- VI) V4-8 ALSO: He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple; so I looked and behold
  - a) God's glory is filling the temple, and a man as sanctified as Ezekiel falls down before God
    - 1) As he is on his face, God speaks to him and tells him to clearly see and hear
    - 2) He says to him mark well who may enter the house and all who go out from the sanctuary (V5)
- VII) POINT: God is extremely particular about who He allows to come and worship Him there
  - a) God is telling Ezekiel that sins of the past will not be tolerated
    - 1) Only those circumcised in heart may enter to worship and offer sacrifice to Him
    - 2) The foreigners He mentions are unbelievers who were offering sacrifices to God: NO MORE!
- VIII) INTERESTINGLY: God makes it clear that their present condition was in great contrast to His future plans
  - a) At that time, unqualified people were entering in to the temple, and even making sacrifices
    - 1) When God once again is present, this is not going to happen
    - 2) No longer will unqualified unbelievers be allowed to officiate in His temple
- IX) QUESTION: Why is this such a big deal anyway?
  - a) What if they were *sincere* and simply wanted to serve God: is there something wrong with this?
    - 1) God had established priestly regulations, and they must be upheld
    - 2) FACT: Foreigners had no right to *officiate in the temple* in any way
    - 3) ALSO: The sacrifices offered were not simply physical actions, but were conditions of a heart/faith
- X) V9-14 THUS: Says the LORD GOD No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh

- a) Unfaithful priests receive mercy, but will not serve in the higher services of the priesthood
  - 1) They will have priestly duties, but not the deeper or more honorable ones
- I) V15-16 BUT: The priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the
  - a) This refers to the legitimate priests whom God set apart to minister before Him
    - 1) Zadok was faithful to David as the priest who ministered during his kingdom
    - 2) POINT: Only those who are faithful to the Lord come near to the Lord (have deep fellowship)
    - 3) Ps 24:3-5 Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- II) V17-19 AND: It shall be whenever they enter the gates of the inner court that they shall put on linen
  - a) Linen garments were the clothing of priests, and were used to keep them from sweating
    - 1) Sweat is regarded as unclean: it also can represent man's efforts and not God's grace
    - 2) It is the work of Jesus that purchases salvation: our faith receives it as a gift (Titus 3:5)
    - 3) V19 They were not to mingle with the people while wearing their garments
- III) V20-27 BRIEFLY: They shall neither shave their heads nor let their hair grow long, but they shall keep
  - a) Avoid extremes; Shaving the head, or growing long hair were signs of mourning (Lev 10:6)
  - b) V21 They will not drink wine because joy comes by the Spirit of God
  - c) V22 They will have pure marriages that have no stresses from past relationships
- IV) V23-24 AND: They shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy and cause them
  - a) They will be worthy of and recognized as being teachers of God's people
    - 1) They will openly demonstrate to God's people what pleases or displeases the Lord
    - 2) They will judge according to God's judgments, laws, and statutes
- V) BRIEFLY: How do we know what is good and what is bad
  - a) I overheard a conversation between a young father and his four-year-old son
    - 1) What is the standard used to determine what is good, and what is bad
- VI) GEORGE BARNA: Survey of Americans who profess to be born-again Christians
  - a) Evangelicals divorce at the same rate as the nation at large
  - b) 9% are givers
  - c) Of 12,000 teens pledging to wait for marriage, 80% had sex outside of marriage in the last 7 years
  - d) 26% do not think fornication is wrong
- VII) FACT: These all had one thing in common: they did not think that studying the bible really matters
  - a) To them, doctrine only divides and it doesn't matter what you believe
    - 1) The result was that they are no different from the rest of the world
- VIII) ON THE OTHER HAND: Those who think studying the bible matters live differently
  - a) They are 9 times more likely to avoid adult only material on the internet
  - b) They are twice as likely to volunteer time to help people with needs
  - c) They are twice as likely to not watch a movie specifically because of offensive content
    - 1) 49% of Christians with a biblical worldview have volunteered more than an hour in the previous week to an organization serving the poor, while only 29% of professing born again believers had done so

- VIII) TEACHING AND APPLYING GOD'S WORD MATTERS: And this is what the priests will do
  - a) They will teach and model the truth, and people will grow
- I) V25-27 REMEMBER: This is in the millennial kingdom, so obviously death still occurs
  - a) Not all will be believers, faithfully following the Lord and some will die
    - 1) The priests will conduct funerals, but are to remain free from touching dead bodies
    - 2) They will only attend funerals for close relatives
- II) V28-31 FINALLY: Their everyday needs will be provided by the offerings of the people
  - a) But their true portion, their joy, will be knowing that God is their portion
    - 1) V29 When support is given with joy the giver is blessed by God
    - 2) Pr 3:9-10 Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.