

Departure of the Glory of the Lord From The Temple

Our study covers chapter ten and part of eleven in the book of Ezekiel. When we finish this study, we will be almost at the end of the second vision of the book, which started in chapter 8. In order to understand our study, it is important to realize that chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11 are all part of this vision. Chapter 8 teaches how to recognize a wicked person. Chapter 9 explains how Yahweh was going to destroy Jerusalem and Judah, and the message continues to flow into chapters 10 and 11. There are three important themes in these three chapters. The themes are like three strands of a twisted rope. The first and major theme is the certainty of judgment on Jerusalem and Judah. That theme runs through these chapters like a very long strip of paper.

The second theme is the departure of the glory of the Lord from the temple in Jerusalem. It occurs intermittently like drops of water. Each drop of water is larger and is more important than the one before. The last drop in chapter 11 is the most important.

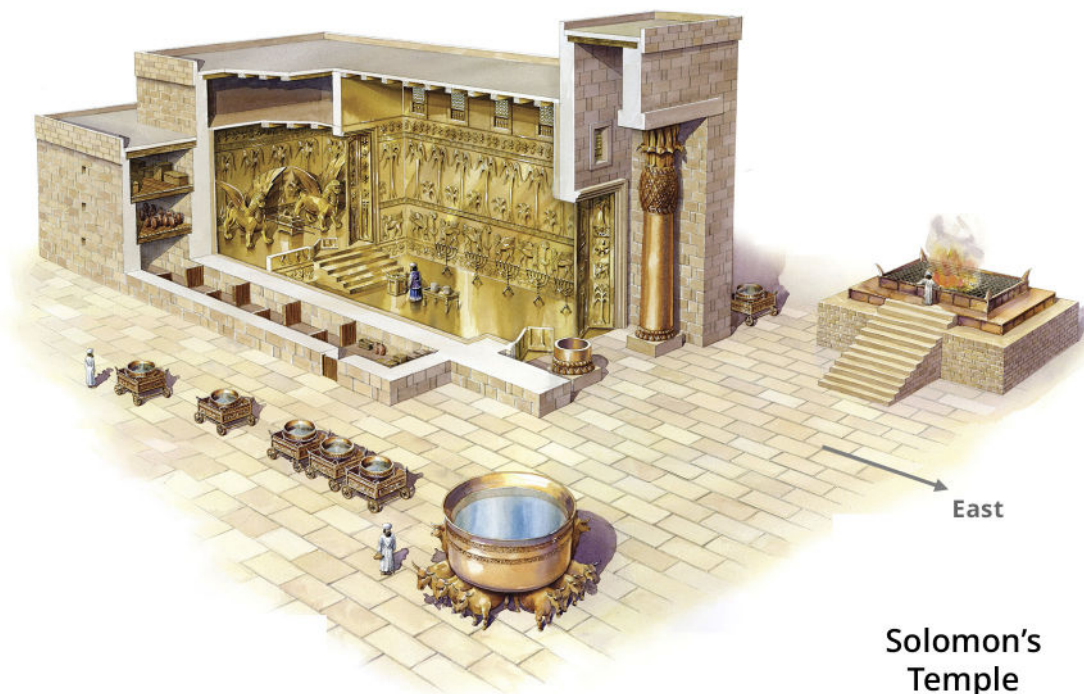
The third theme is Yahweh's protection of the remnant. This occurs like short strips of a ribbon in each chapter. The longest strip of ribbon is in chapter 9. A shorter one is in chapter 10, and the most significant one occurs in chapter 11. Ezekiel 11:13-25 is the climax of the vision.

GLORY OF THE LORD LEAVES THE HOLY OF HOLIES. The first verse in Ezekiel 10 is once again about the glory of the Lord. Here is the verse.

Then I looked, and behold, in the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim something like a sapphire stone, in appearance resembling a throne, appeared above them. Ezekiel 10:1 (NASB)

It almost reads like Ezekiel 1:26,

... there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. Ezekiel 1:26 (NASB)



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The only significant difference between these verses is that Ezekiel 10:1 refers to a sapphire gem, but Ezekiel 1:26 refers to a lapis lazuli gem. A lapis lazuli has a deeper color of blue than a sapphire. That is, both gems are blue, but one is darker. Perhaps the prophet saw a slight change in the appearance of Yahweh due to the difference in color. It is interesting that someone has said that lapis lazuli was more valuable than gold in ancient times. If so, that would be a fitting description of Yahweh. Also, Yahweh appeared once again above the four cherubim.

Ezekiel 10:2 now focuses on Yahweh who is speaking, **And He spoke to the man clothed in linen and said, "Enter between the whirling wheels under the cherubim and fill your hands with coals of fire from between the cherubim and scatter them over the city." And he entered in my sight. Now the cherubim were standing on the right side of the temple when the man entered, and the cloud filled the inner court. Ezekiel 10:2-3 (NASB)**

We are told Ezekiel saw Yahweh speaking to a man who is clothed in linen. In chapter 9, we discovered that he was an angel with a writing kit. He was a scribe. His task was to put the mark of a cross on the foreheads of the remnant. The mark kept them safe from being killed. The remnant were those who hated the evil abominations described in chapter 8. They groaned and moaned over the sins that were occurring around them. Those are signs of a righteous person. The wicked do not grieve over evil. Instead, they enjoy evil things! At the end of chapter 9, after the wicked had been killed and the remnant had been saved, the man in linen gave his report to Yahweh. He said, "I have done as You have commanded me."

Now in chapter 10, Yahweh speaks to him again. This time the man in linen was told to go between the whirling wheels which were under the cherubim. He was to fill his hands with coals of fire. The Hebrew text refers to these coals as hot coals. He was to scatter them over the city. This was an act of judgment or destruction on the city. It may have been like the time Yahweh rained brimstone down on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-28). But here it is a figurative destruction of the city.

Then the description of the judgment is interrupted in verses 4-5 with the second theme of the glory of God. The verses say,

Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple, and the temple was filled with the cloud and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD. 5 Moreover, the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks. Ezekiel 10:4-5 (NASB)

Notice that Ezekiel reported that the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub in the Holy of Holies to the threshold of the temple. It is important to remember that the temple had an outer court, an inner court, and then the temple inside the courts. The temple was entered from the east side. After passing the golden altar, a priest could enter the Holy Place where various sacrifices were offered daily. Adjacent to the Holy Place was the Holy of Holies. The two rooms were separated by a curtain. In the Holy of Holies, Yahweh would meet with the high priest only once a year. So, verse 4 is telling us that the glory of the Lord left the Holy of Holies and moved to the entrance of the Holy Place. When the Shekinah glory of the Lord moved there, it filled the court of the temple.

This event is also described in Ezekiel 9:3. This reveals that the part of the vision given in chapter 10 overlaps with the vision given in Ezekiel 9:3 to the end of the chapter. That is, Ezekiel 10:4-5 began at Ezekiel 9:3. The visions overlap. That means that chapter 9 describes only the instructions given to the execution team, but chapter 10 describes what the man in linen would do at the same time the wicked were destroyed. We must remember this is a prophetic vision about the Babylonian army's destruction of the city of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., which would have been about four years later. So it appears that chapter 9 explains what would happen to the people, but chapter 10 described what happens to the city.

Here is what Yahweh commanded the man in linen to do next.

It came about when He commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, "Take fire from between the whirling wheels, from

between the cherubim,” he entered and stood beside a wheel. Then the cherub stretched out his hand from between the cherubim to the fire which was between the cherubim, took some and put it into the hands of the one clothed in linen, who took it and went out. ⁸ The cherubim appeared to have the form of a man’s hand under their wings.” Ezekiel 10:6-8 (NASB)

The man is told to take the coals of fire from between the whirling wheels. We have already learned from Ezekiel 1:15 that there was one whirling wheel for each cherub. So, apparently the coals of fire were in the middle of four wheels. Then one of the cherubim gave the man some hot coals of fire, and the man then left. We are never told what the man in linen did next with the coals of fire. This is the last we read of him. However, the implication is that when this man in linen, actually an angel, scatters them over the city, it symbolically represents the Babylonian army’s final destruction of Jerusalem.

Then verses 9-17, 20-22 continue the second theme, the glory of the Lord.

Then I looked, and behold, four wheels beside the cherubim, one wheel beside each cherub; and the appearance of the wheels was like the gleam of a Tarshish stone. As for their appearance, all four of them had the same likeness, as if one wheel were within another wheel. When they moved, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went; but they followed in the direction which they faced, without turning as they went. Their whole body, their backs, their hands, their wings and the wheels were full of eyes all around, the wheels belonging to all four of them. The wheels were called in my hearing, the whirling wheels. And each one had four faces. The first face was the face of a cherub, the second face was the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. Then the cherubim rose up. They are the living beings that I saw by the river Chebar. Now when the cherubim moved, the wheels would go beside them; also when the cherubim lifted up their wings to rise from the ground, the wheels would not turn from beside them. When the cherubim stood still, the wheels would stand still; and when they rose up, the wheels would rise with them, for the spirit of the living beings was in them. Ezekiel 10:9-17 (NASB)

These are the living beings that I saw beneath the God of Israel by the river Chebar; so I knew that they were cherubim. Each one had four faces and each one four wings, and beneath their wings was the form of human hands. As for the likeness of their faces, they were the same faces whose appearance I had seen by the river Chebar. Each one went straight ahead. Ezekiel 10:20-22 (NASB)

The description of the cherubim is almost identical to that given in chapter 1. So, we will not study each verse in depth. But we should notice a few things. First, verse 10 teaches us that the four wheels were identical in appearance. Chapter one taught us that each cherub had a wheel beneath him. The second thing we should notice is that the description of the cherubim is different than the one in chapter 1. In Ezekiel 1:10, the cherubim were said to have four faces: one of a man, one of a lion, one of a bull or an ox, and one of an eagle. But here in Ezekiel 10:14, they have the faces of a man, a lion, an eagle, and a cherub. The only difference is that the face of a bull or an ox in chapter 1 was replaced by the face of a cherub. It could be that the primary face of a cherub appears as an ox. We know the cherubim in this chapter were identical to the ones in chapter 1 because verses 20-22 tell us they were identical.

Apparently Yahweh included this in the vision for Ezekiel so that he understood Yahweh had visited him again. We will discover at the end of chapter 11 that this also informed the exiles that Yahweh spoke to him. That appears to be the major point of verses 9-17.

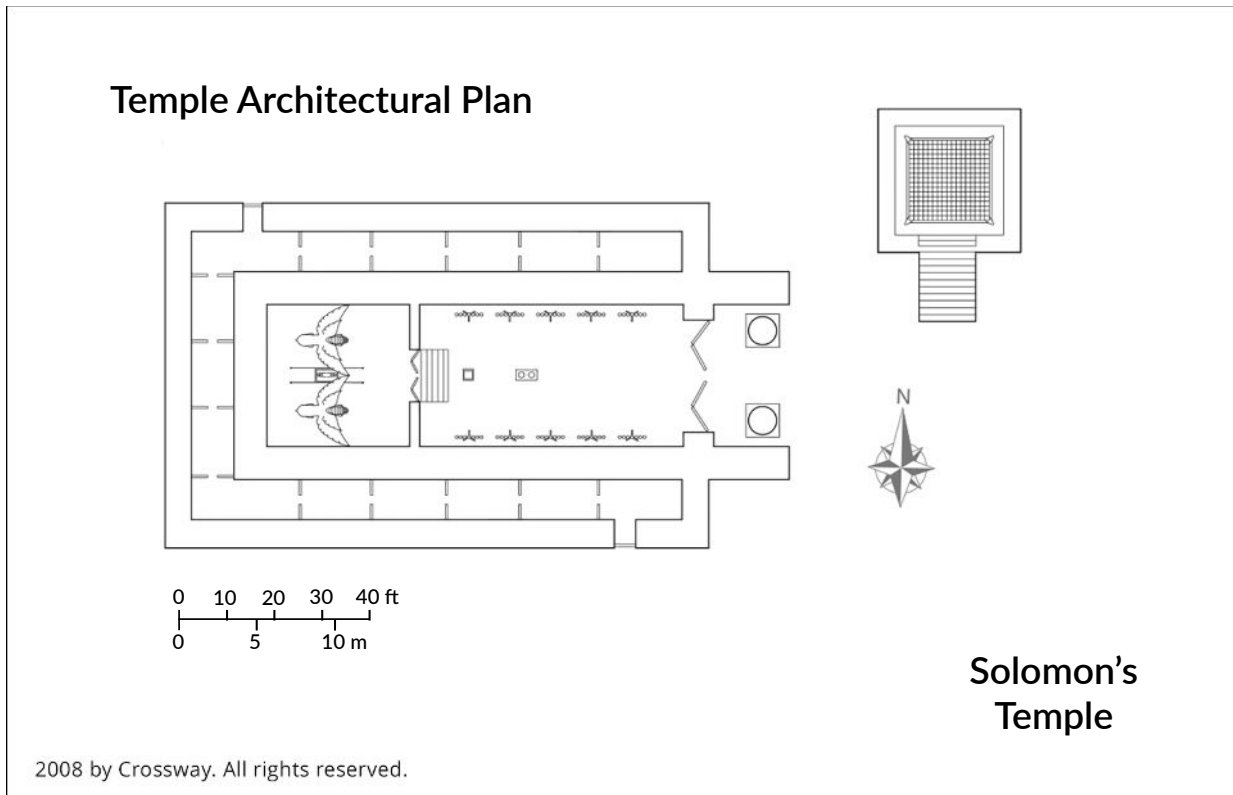
GLORY OF THE LORD LEAVES THE TEMPLE. Verses 18-19 continue the second theme of these three chapters — the departure of the glory of the Lord. This chapter also overlaps with chapter 9 and 10. In verses 1-12, we are going to learn four characteristics of wicked people. The first characteristic of the wicked is given in 1-3. Verses 18-19 follow:

Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. When the cherubim departed, they lifted their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them; and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD’S house, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them. Ezekiel 10:18-19 (NASB)

Verse 18 says the glory of the Lord now left the temple and stood over the cherubim, just as it had in the Holy of Holies. We learned in chapter 1 that the cherubim and four wheels form something like a chariot for Yahweh. So, the chariot left the front of the temple and carried the glory of the Lord to the eastern gate of the house of the Lord. The east gate would have been immediately in front of the temple. There the glory of the Lord hovered over the cherubim. So, the glory of the Lord had left the Holy of Holies, moved to the threshold of the temple, and has now moved to the east gate leading to the court of the

were twenty-five men at the entrance of the gate, and among them I saw Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, leaders of the people. He said to me, “Son of man, these are the men who devise iniquity and give evil advice in this city, who say, ‘The time is not near to build houses. This city is the pot and we are the flesh.’ Ezekiel 11:1-3 (NASB)

Now the prophet is lifted up and taken to the east gate. There he saw twenty-five men. These men were different than those in Ezekiel 8:16. These men are leaders, since Jaazaniah,



temple. That ends chapter 10. Now did the glory of the Lord leave? Think about that question as we begin the next chapter.

HOW TO SUFFER PUNISHMENT FROM YAHWEH. In the first part of Ezekiel 11, the first theme returns — the judgment upon Jerusalem. This chapter also overlaps with chapter 9 and 10. In verses 1-12, we are going to learn four characteristics of wicked people. The first two new characteristics of the wicked in this chapter are given in 1-3.

Moreover, the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the LORD'S house which faced eastward. And behold, there

a son of Azzur, and Pelatiah, a son of Benaiah, were among them. The Jaazaniah in verse 1 is not the same Jaazaniah in Ezekiel 8:11. The Jaazaniah in Ezekiel 8 worshiped the sun and his father's name was Shaphan. Here the father's name is Azzur. Historical records reveal that Jaazaniah was a common name. So, Jaazaniah and Pelatiah were leaders in Judah. Verse 2 reveals they were evil men because we are told they planned evil and gave bad advice to the city. Why do we know they are wicked people? Proverbs 2:6-7 gives us the answer when it says that Yahweh gives wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to the righteous. But that is not true for the wicked. So, these

leaders were wicked.

Next, notice that in verse 3 we are told these two leaders said, “The time is not near to build houses. This city is the pot and we are the flesh.” Before we discover the meaning of this proverb, notice that verse 11 reveals this is a lie. So, verses 1-3 give us the first characteristic of the wicked person in chapter 11. They plan evil, give bad advice, and lie. They may be intellectuals, but they lack true wisdom. We see that day after day.

Now let’s explore verses 4-12. This is a difficult passage. But I will give you what I believe is the best conclusion.

First, we must remember that the Babylonian army had already invaded the land and defeated Jerusalem in 605 B.C. since King Jehoiakim was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Chronicles 36:5-8). That resulted in the first deportation. Then in 597 B.C. the Babylonians returned and deported more people because Jehoiachin was evil in the sight of the Lord. That resulted in the second deportation.

But when the prophets warned that the Babylonian army was going to invade and defeat Jerusalem and Judah again, the leaders did not believe the prophets. The leadership thought they could fight and win if the Babylonian army came again. Why? Because Jeremiah 27:14-15 reveals that false prophets were telling the leaders they would not be defeated again and taken captive.

Apparently, these two leaders, Jaazaniah and Pelatiah, were telling the people in verse 3 to not build house and prepare for war. The proverb, “This city is the pot and we are the flesh,” seems to mean that the people in the city were like flesh and the city was like a metal pot that would protect them against the Babylonian army. They were safe! But that was contrary to the message of the prophets. Those who reject Scripture will be liars.

So, Yahweh told Ezekiel to prophesy the following against them in verses 4-12. Here are verses 4-8.

Therefore, prophesy against them, son of man, prophesy!” Then the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and He said to me, “Say, ‘Thus says the LORD, “So you think, house of Israel, for I know your thoughts. You have multiplied your slain in this city, filling its streets with them.” Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, “Your slain whom you have laid in the midst of the city are the flesh

and this city is the pot; but I will bring you out of it. You have feared a sword; so I will bring a sword upon you,” the Lord GOD declares.” Ezekiel 11:4-8 (NASB)

Ezekiel was to prophesy to the leaders that Yahweh knew what they were thinking. The NET Bible translates the last of verse 5 as,

This is what the LORD says: This is what you are thinking, O house of Israel; I know what goes through your minds. Ezekiel 11:5 (NET)

A better translation is that Yahweh knew their thoughts. That is why verse 8 says, “You have feared a sword; so I will bring a sword upon you.” Yahweh knew they were afraid of another invasion. They thought they could win. They rejected the warning of Yahweh.

In verse 6, Yahweh announced, “You have multiplied your slain in this city, filling its streets with them.” That is, they had killed many righteous people. That is why verse 7 states, “Your slain whom you have laid in the midst of the city are the flesh and this city is the pot; but I will bring you out of it.” They had the proverb wrong. Rather than the pot being a protection for the wicked, the city had been used as a pot to kill the righteous. That gives us the second characteristic of the wicked. They will make the righteous to suffer and die. In John 15:18 Jesus told the disciples,

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. John 15:18 (NASB)

The wicked hate the righteous!

In verses 9-11, we discover the third characteristic of the wicked in this chapter. They will suffer and even be killed. Yahweh said this,

““And I will bring you out of the midst of the city and deliver you into the hands of strangers and execute judgments against you. You will fall by the sword. I will judge you to the border of Israel; so you shall know that I am the LORD. This city will not be a pot for you, nor will you be flesh in the midst of it, but I will judge you

to the border of Israel.”” Ezekiel 11:9-11 (NASB)

The Babylonian army will invade and defeat them in Jerusalem and to the borders of Judah (v. 10). Now notice in verse 11 that Yahweh said the city would not be a pot for them. That is, it will not be a protection for them. Instead, they would be judged. Why?

Verse 12 gives the answer, and it also gives the fourth characteristic. The wicked live like the world around them. They enjoy sin!

““ Thus you will know that I am the LORD; for you have not walked in My statutes nor have you executed My ordinances, but have acted according to the ordinances of the nations around you.”” Ezekiel 11:12 (NASB)

The reason for a third invasion was because of their unrepentant hearts. They had not learned from the first and second invasions. So, a third invasion was coming! It was coming because they did not obey. They did not worship Yahweh. They had sinned like their culture. They enjoyed the things of their world.

CONCLUSION. This is the end of the first thread. The destruction of Jerusalem was like a very long strip of paper from chapter 9 through chapter 11. The last two themes of the glory of the Lord and the remnant will be concluded in verses 13-25 of this chapter. We will learn some significant truths about them. It will be a great study.

But what have we learned in this study? First, the wicked plan evil, give evil advice, lie, cause the righteous to suffer, live like the world around them. They enjoy sin! Yahweh may not punish them the first time or the second time, but He will eventually. He knows their thoughts and He will repay the wicked by bringing upon them the very things they fear the most. They may run to the borders of the nation for safety and feel safe, but Yahweh will hunt them down. There is no escape when Yahweh finally decides to punish them.

The message for the wicked is that today is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6:1-2 says,

For he says, “I heard you at the acceptable time, and in the day of

salvation I helped you.” Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! 2 Corinthians 6:2 (NASB)

Today is the day for every wicked person to repent and plead for God to forgive and save. This passage reveals God’s view of every unbeliever, that is, every non-Christian. God considers them to be wicked. God calls them to repent and to seek Him. Romans 10:9-13 states,

That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” Romans 10:9-13 (NASB)

Those who believe and trust in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins will not be disappointed. So, do it today!