
SUNDAY SERMON

Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church

Willow, Alaska

Date: July 17, 2016

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 07.01-08.18

Text: Ezekiel 08.01-18

Subject: EZEKIEL SERIES –Glory of the LORD and profaning of the temple

Last time, you will remember that I spoke from the 6th chapter of Ezekiel concerning God's message to the mountains, hills, rivers, and valleys of Israel. That message continues through the 7th chapter which we will now read, then pass on to the 8th chapter.

1 And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me.

And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, -- This was the sixth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin. The prophecies contained in chapters 8-19 of Ezekiel fall within eleven months. Let us notice this verse and compare with Ezekiel 20.1.

Ezekiel 20:1 And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat before me.

As I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, -- Ezekiel is still in his house. Let us remember that the LORD commanded him to shut himself within his house.

Ezekiel 3:24 *Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.*

The elders were those of the captivity who were present there to hear the words of the prophet, Ezekiel.

That the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me. --the Spirit of prophecy came upon Ezekiel in mighty Divine power, which enlightened him at that very time, and in that very place. We have seen this expression (the hand of the LORD) three times in the previous chapters of this book.

Ezekiel 1:3 *The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and **the hand of the LORD** was there upon him.*

Ezekiel 3:14 *So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but **the hand of the LORD** was strong upon me.*

Ezekiel 3:22 *And **the hand of the LORD** was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.*

2 Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire:

from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber.

This is undoubtedly an appearance of the Son of God. This description fits very well with that which is given in Revelation 1.

Revelation 1:15 *And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.*

3 ***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.***

And he put forth the form of an hand, -- Put forth the form of a hand, that looked like a man's hand; this was a vision and this seems to speak of the Spirit of God sent forth by Christ, sometimes called the finger of God;

Exodus 8:17-19 *And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 18 And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. 19 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, **This is the finger of God:** and Pharaoh's heart was hardened,*

and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Luke 11:20 [Jesus, speaking to the unbelieving] *But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.*

and took me by a lock of mine head; This showed the LORD's power over him. It was by this that he raised Ezekiel him from his seat.

and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and heaven;
-- The spirit lifted him up in the air, and carried him.

and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem; -- This was as if he was actually brought to Jerusalem by the power of the Spirit of God.

Concerning the Visions. The visions are retrospective – [**a survey or review of a past course of events or period of time.**] Israel, all of the nation, not Judah only, had done these things, and were taken into captivity. This is the divine view of the national sinfulness, apostasy, and idolatry revealed to Ezekiel in a series of visions so vivid that though the prophet was by the river Chebar, in the land of Babylon, it was as if he were transported back to Jerusalem, and to the time when these things were occurring. These visions of the sinfulness of Israel are intermingled with promises of restoration and blessing which are yet to be fulfilled.

to the door of the inner gate: -- not the city of Jerusalem, but

the temple, - the inner court as we shall see.

that looketh toward the north; -- This gate looked toward the north for there were gates on every side.

where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy; -- A graven image, undoubtedly one that King Manasseh had set up. Some commentators say the image was Astarte or Ashtoreth – but I cannot find that in the Bible Text, so I will just say it was an image. This horrible idol provoked the LORD to jealousy, for He is a jealous God over His people.

Exodus 20:4-6 *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

The LORD God is especially provoked concerning graven images and those likenesses which he has forbidden.

Deuteronomy 4:23-24 *Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. 24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming*

fire, even a jealous God.

This image placed there by King Manasseh very much provoked the LORD God to jealousy – for he is jealous over His people!

2 Kings 21:1-3 *Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah. 2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.*

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

The glory of the God of Israel was in the temple, between the cherubim, where the glory of the divine Majesty dwelt. The glory of the Lord is the glorious Shechinah (dwelling, tabernacling) of Jehovah which came and dwelt between the cherubim. Please notice the LORD's words to Moses in telling him to have the people bring an offering for the tabernacle.

In Exodus 25.8, we read these words:

"8 And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell <07931> (8804) among them."

The Hebrew word which is translated “dwell” in this verse is שָׁכַן shaw-kan’ which is translated also as: abide, place, remain, inhabit, rest, set, continue, dwellers, and dwelling. The Shekinah is The Angel that went before them in the cloud, the eternal Word and Son of God for as yet he had not removed from his abiding place, though strongly provoked to it. Afterwards he did move from his place as we shall see in future chapters.

This exact expression “the glory of the God of Israel” is found in the book of Ezekiel only – and it is found five times.

Ezekiel 8:4 *And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain.*

Ezekiel 9:3 *And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side;*

Ezekiel 10:19 *And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD'S house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.*

Ezekiel 11:22 *Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.*

Ezekiel 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.

The expression “the glory of the LORD” is found 34 times in the Old Testament and appears exactly 9 times in the book of Ezekiel. Eze 1:28; Eze 3:12,23; Eze 10:4,18; Eze 11:23; Eze 43:4-5; Eze 44:4. These two expressions are very significant. We shall see the glory of the LORD depart from the temple, then from the city to the mountain on the east of the city, which is the Mount of Olives. This glory came upon the completed tabernacle in Exodus 40.

Exodus 40:33-35 *And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. 34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

It came upon the completed temple and filled the LORD’s house in II Chronicles 7.01-03.

2 Chronicles 7:1-3 *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 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’S house. 3 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the*

glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

Thus, the glory of the LORD was, at the time of Ezekiel's vision, still abiding between the cherubim in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. This is what Ezekiel saw in his vision in this chapter and had seen in the plain in chapter 1.

5 Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.

The LORD having directed Ezekiel eyes toward the north, he sees the image of jealousy (the idol erected by King Manasseh) northward at the gate of the altar.

6 He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.

It is as if the LORD were saying, "Ezekiel, do you see all this? Do you see what great abominations the whole house of Israel is committing here? And what is the end of all that? It is that I should go far off from my sanctuary? I, even I, who has dwelt among them since the days of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness! But I will show you greater (more and more) abominations!

7 ¶ And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall.

So the LORD brought the prophet to the door of the inner court of the temple. Ezekiel looked and saw a hole in the wall.

8 Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door.

The LORD commanded Ezekiel to dig in the wall – so he did and saw a door.

9 And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.

Go in, saith the LORD, and behold the wicked abominations they do here.

10 So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about.

So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts -- The creeping things and abominable beasts were undoubtedly the unclean creatures forbidden to the Israelites. These were beasts which did not have cloven hoof and that chewed not the cud or that went upon their paws – like camels, swine, dogs, cats, et al.

Leviticus 11:21-24 Yet these may ye eat of every flying

creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth; 22 Even these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind. 23 But all other flying creeping things, which have four feet, shall be an abomination unto you. 24 And for these ye shall be unclean: whosoever toucheth the carcase of them shall be unclean until the even.

and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about. -- the pictures of their idols were drawn and placed around the wall of the room or chamber; and where they were worshipped by the priests and Levites, and this was not in one chamber only, but in many, as appears from verse 12.

11 And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.

As Ezekiel viewed these seventy men of the elder of Israel – he saw them offering incense to the idols pictured on the wall of the chambers. Incense speaks of prayer going up.

In contrast, we see the prayers of the saints with incense going up before God in the Revelation.

Revelation 8:2-4 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a

golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

4 *And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.*

What mockery of God did these seventy elders do in offering incense to the baneful creatures of the earth!

12 *Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.*

These elders were doing this in the dark – out of sight. It was done in secret, but the LORD saw them clearly. Note their words, “*The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.*” But they had shut out the words of his promise, “I will dwell among you.”

13 ¶ *He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. 14 Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.*

Ezekiel is commanded of the LORD to turn again for a different view of the abominations. Having been brought to the door of the gate of the LORD's house which was toward the north, Ezekiel saw women sitting and weeping for Tammuz. This is the only time the word “Tammuz” appears in the Holy Scriptures.

They bewailed the death of this Tammuz. These mourning women *sat at the door of the gate of the Lord's house*, and there shed their idolatrous tears, as it were in defiance of God and the sacred rites of his worship, and some think, with their idolatry, prostrating themselves also to corporeal whoredom; for these two commonly went together, and those that dishonored the divine nature by the one were justly *given up to vile affections* and a reprobate sense to dishonor the human nature, which nowhere ever sunk so far below itself as in these idolatrous rites.

15 Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. 16 And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.

More and greater abominations, Ezekiel should see, saith the LORD. In the inner court of the LORD's house, at the door of the temple, between the porch and the altar, Ezekiel saw about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD. Their faces were toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. As we showed in the last message, the LORD had commanded Israel never to turn to the idolatrous things done by the nations which they displaced in this land – part of that was their worship of the sun, moon, and stars. Notice that these men had their back turned from the LORD's house!

Deuteronomy 4:15-19 *Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: **16** Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, **17** The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, **18** The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: **19** And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.*

17 Then he said unto me, 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.

O, Ezekiel, do you see this? Can we think it was a light thing which Judah did in committing the abominations seen in the LORD's house?

for they have filled the land with violence, -- Judah had been characterized with plundering of the property of others and oppression; doing injury to the poor and needy, the widow and the fatherless, in all places.

and have returned to provoke me to anger: -- With their

idolatry and abominable worship of idols.

and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. – Some commentators say it had to do with idolatry. John Gill made this comment: This was “a laurel, or olive, or vine branch, which idolaters carried in their hands, and put to their nose, in honor of the idol they worshipped;”

18 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.

Therefore will I also deal in fury: -- Therefore – because of all these abominations which you have seen, Ezekiel. I will also deal in fury! How little did the nation expect that God would repay them to their face!

Psalm 76:7 *Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?*

Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: --
Ezekiel 5:11 *Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.*

The LORD would deal with them in righteousness. Though he saw their plight and their terrible pain and suffering, his eye would not spare. He would not pity them or “feel sorry” for them.

And though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them. – O, how men cry to God when they are in dire straits! As the LORD said in his instruction to the sons of men in the Proverbs, so saith he here to his chosen nation!

Proverbs 1:22-32 *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? 23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. 24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; 25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; 27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. 28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: 29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: 30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. 32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.*

O, do you hear the LORD, sinner friend? Don't think for a single moment that your sins shall not find you out! Though you fly to the highest mountain or hide in the depths of the sea – though you wait until the darkest night – or hide in the most secret place, God will find you out! O – will you know, O man that he sees you and knows every

thought and every intent of your heart! Before He sent Ezekiel into the hole in the wall, God had already seen the abominations!

You are like me, dear sinner friend. We are both fallen in Adam! Neither of us have done good, nor are we able to do so. We are as the corrupt tree which can bear corrupt fruit only! We need a savior! We need the forgiveness of sins! We need the hope of eternal life! O, dear sinner friend, I have found all that in God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ! He has saved me from all my sins! He has forgiven me of my sins! He has given me a helper, the Holy Spirit, to teach me, to comfort me, to help me through life's tangled ways! He has given me eternal life! He has promised me to share in His glory when he returns.

Where, O where is your hope? Where is your forgiveness of sins? Do not all your sins stand in witness against you. The forgiveness of sins is the first and most important issue with which you have to deal! Think not, first, that the LORD will give you a better life – though he does for his forgiven children! You need a savior! You need a savior! You need the forgiveness of sins! Your sins cry out against you! If you continue in unbelief, you shall die in your sins! Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and you will be saved! Follow him in the waters of baptism. Walk with him and his saints in his church! Amazing love, this! How greatly does He love his people for whom he died!