

The glory of the Lord

Part 1

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[00:00:00] I'd like you to read tonight with me in the Book of Ezekiel. I want to read two or three portions from the Book of Ezekiel, and then a little verse or two from John's Gospel. But first of all, in Ezekiel chapter 9. Ezekiel chapter 9.

Chapter 9, and I want to read verse 3 only.

Verse 3 only of chapter 9, and we jump to chapter 10. But first of all, verse 3, chapter 9. 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 within him, which had the right as ink-horn by his side. [00:01:06] Now chapter 10. Chapter 10 and verse 4. 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. Verse 18.

Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. Chapter 11.

And the glory, I'm sorry, chapter 11 verse 23. 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.

[00:02:06] Now jump over please to chapter 43. Chapter 43.

Chapter 43 and verse 4.

Verse 4.

Verse 4 and 5. And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court, and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house.

Chapter 47.

Verse 1.

Afterward he brought me again into the door of the house, [00:03:03] and behold waters eschewed out

from under the threshold of the house eastward. For the forefront of the house stood toward the east. And the waters came down from under from the right side of the house at the south side of the altar. Verse 6.

And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. And when I had returned, behold at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters eschewed toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea. Which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. [00:04:01] And it shall come to pass that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live. And there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither. For they shall be healed, and everything shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Enanglam. They shall be a place to spread forth nets. Their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea exceeding many. But the miry places thereof, and the marshes thereof, shall not be healed, they shall be given to salt. And by the rivers upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow old trees for meat, whose sweet leaves shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed. [00:05:06] It shall bring forth new fruit according to his laws, because their waters they eschewed out of the sanctuary. And the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine. New Testament please, John 7, John chapter 7.

John chapter 7 and verse 37, John 7 verse 37.

In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

[00:06:10] But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.

That's all I want to read. Right.

Now it's on my part to talk to you tonight a little bit about the glory of the Lord.

Towards the close of our Bible reading this afternoon, we dwelt on the verse that we all, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord.

[00:07:12] Now tonight, in saying that we are going to talk about the glory of the Lord, well now, we are going to look at it perhaps in a different way, but still the glory of the Lord. What we have more in mind tonight is the fact that God has taken his place amongst us in the power of the Spirit.

And when we read such expressions in the word that the glory filled the house, we would be reminded, wouldn't we, of the fact, yes, that God has indeed taken up his dwelling in the power of the Spirit with his people.

[00:08:02] That is true today.

Well, that's the way I want to maybe concentrate on the thought of the glory of the Lord. Now then, what we intend to do this evening, very, very simply, is to look a little, trace a little out in the Old Testament, very briefly, a little summary, a little outline of the glory of the Lord. Then, just to say a wee word about the prophetic bearing of it.

Then lastly, to say a little of its moral implication for us today. As in my mind, maybe a little bit history, historical, a little bit prophetic, a little bit moral. That's what I want to try and look at tonight. Now, one of the first intimations we have in the Old Testament of the cloud and the pillar, the cloud, the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire was in the end of the 13th chapter of Exodus.

[00:09:22] Chapter 12, of course, is the redemption chapter, isn't it, that we know so well. Chapter 13, towards the end of the chapter, we have a reference for the cloud and the pillar, for the cloud and the fire.

This was the way God undertook to guide and to lead his people across the wilderness.

It says at the end of that chapter, he never took them away. Oh, how gracious God is, isn't he?

As we think of all the rebellion and the stiff-neckedness of the ancient people through the wilderness, God never took from them the pillar of cloud or the pillar of fire.

[00:10:15] He did not ever take them away.

When we just move a little further in that same book of Exodus, we come to the chapter which has to do with the manna, 16th chapter of Exodus.

And rather happily, very sprightly, connected with that cloud is the glory of the Lord. The glory of the Lord was seen in the cloud.

Oh yes, that cloud, pillar of cloud, represented the glory of the Lord, represented the wonderful thought that God was going to be amongst his people.

[00:11:06] And then we don't move all that far in the book of Exodus, and we read the words, God says, chapter 25, Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.

That sanctuary, of course, had to do with the setting up of the Tabernacle. And from chapter 25 onwards, through the book of Exodus, we get a record of the care and the minute care that Moses took in doing exactly what he had seen in Paddan on the Mount.

Well, it says, you know, that Moses was faithful in all God's house.

[00:12:01] I believe it means he was most meticulous, most careful as to every detail of the making of the Tabernacle.

Well, it was with the view, wasn't it, that God would take his place amongst his people. When you come to the end of chapter, of Exodus chapter 40, it says that Moses finished the work.

Oh, I like those words. I love those words. Moses finished the work. He completed all that God had

asked him to do in setting up, devising, having constructed the Tabernacle. The next verse says that the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle, filled it.

You know, that's obvious, isn't it? I can't read those words, you know, without thinking, without thinking of those blessed words of the Savior on the cross. [00:13:06] It is finished. All was done.

And, of course, consequent upon that, the Spirit of God came down.

I and God dwelt in his house, dwelt in his house on the ground of redemption.

But how sweet the words are, aren't they? Moses finished the work and the glory of the Lord filled the house. Beautiful picture. Charms me, these verses, you know. Anyway, we go on a little further, perhaps.

And we know, of course, eventually the people were taken to a promised land and they crossed over Jordan. They went into the inheritance that God had promised to them. Of course, their ways were very wayward. Their ways were obstructive. They did all that they could to emerge.

[00:14:10] Well, they gave Moses a rough time, didn't they, in the desert? And so it was right through their history. They came to a point, I must mention this little point, they did come to a point in their history where things got so bad, things got so sinful, their ways became so sinful and idolatrous, that to quote the words of the psalm, it says that God delivered their strength into captivity, his glory into the enemy's hands.

Referring to the moment, remember, when in the early chapters of the first book of Samuel, the ark, that which was indicative of the presence of God. [00:15:01] Yes, God dwelt between the Jeroboams, remember, as it says in the Psalms. Oh, how sad it was.

What did the wife of Phinehas have to say as she gave birth to her child? Just as she died in childbirth, she said, Echabod, Echabod, the glory has departed.

What a solemn moment it was for Israel and their history. Well, it doesn't seem to have been a permanent thing there because as we pursue our way through the little bit of the history, remember how David found a place in Zion for the ark.

Eventually, Solomon built the temple and the ark was put in the oracle of the house.

[00:16:01] The staves were withdrawn and it says again similar words, but the glory of the Lord filled the house, filled the house. And they sang, the mercy of the Lord endureth forever.

Beautiful pictures again of the presence of God taking his place amongst his people. The psalmist cried out, didn't he? O thou that dwellest between the Jeroboams, shine forth. Well, there you have it in Solomon's day.

A beautiful day picture of the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus. But you know, we go on a little bit further and we come to the days of Ezekiel.

The days we've been reading about tonight in the book of Ezekiel. [00:17:01] Terrible days.

Once again, Israel had been fearful in their idolatrous ways. Naughty in all their doings.

To such an extent that if we take up the book of Hosea, God had to say, lo am I, not my people.

Take up the book of Daniel and Daniel tells us how government was transferred from Israel into the hands of Gentiles.

And here in the book of Ezekiel, we have read this solemn, solemn tale of how the glory of the Lord left the house.

We've often said, haven't we? I've heard it said, oh, many times. How reluctantly, how reluctantly, pathetic, sad, pathos, the way the glory left the house.

[00:18:08] Stage by stage, just as though it didn't really want to go.

But things had gone to such a terrible extent, so sinful and so idolatrous. God could no longer dwell among his people. There they were, Ezekiel kicked through the door and he saw them worshipping the sun in the temple. Why, it was hardly, would hardly, pathetic, would you?

That God's people with all their blessing should stoop so low to worshipping the sun. Yet there they were, he looked through a little chink in the wall and he saw them worshipping the sun. Little wonder, little wonder, the glory left the house.

You know, my dear friend, that nation is the same today. [00:19:01] The glory hasn't returned yet. God still says about that people, lo am I, not my people.

And so how sad it is to just trace this little piece in the book of Ezekiel and see the glory having to go. Now, we're going to come back to that again later on, but just mention it as we pass through this historical line of things with regard to the glory of the Lord. I jumped over to the end of the book of Ezekiel.

Beautiful, isn't it? You know, what we were talking about this afternoon, chapter 36, I will put upon them my spirit. Take away the stony heart and give them a heart of flesh. [00:20:01] As we were saying, possibly this chapter was in the Lord's mind when he said to Nicodemus, art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things. New birth.

And of course, turn your page over in 37 and there you get that little picture of the valley of dry bones. And they come to life.

Sinews, bones, they come to life.

One stick, Judah and Israel together in unity again.

One stick, the prophet says.

And then the temple is set up again.

Then you read the old refrain again. The glory of the Lord filled the house.

Filled the house. That's going to happen, you know. That's going to happen. [00:21:02] That's a little bit of prophecy, if you like. And yes, well, the day will come when that nation is going to be the center of things on earth. They'll be the center of administration here upon earth. And the glory of the Lord shall take its place in their midst. And the Lord Jesus Christ shall be the great center and theme of that wonderful day. And then, of course, the glory comes down and fills the house.

And then, then, the river begins to flow.

The river that we read about in chapter 47.

Beautiful chapter, isn't it? About the river that flowed on the south side of the altar. The south side of the altar. Oh, how much there is to learn from that, isn't there? [00:22:05] Well, in that day which is yet to come. Yes. It says the fishermen are going to stand at the Red Sea. I'm sorry, at the Dead Sea and catch fish. You won't catch fish the other day, will you? I'm sure you won't. You know, on that day, the waters are going to be healed. God's going to transform everything. Things are going to be different than what they are today. The curse should be removed. All that sin has brought into this world should be done away with. And God shall shine in light divine, as we sometimes say. And glory never fading. Wonderful day it will be when the glory fills the house. When a river of blessing flows across this world. [00:23:02] With healing, medicine, fruit, meat, life.

All that this big world needs will come in the blessed person of the Lord Jesus. When the glory of the Lord fills the house.

Well, that's very brief, isn't it? That's a very brief little resume of what is said about the glory of the Lord in the Scriptures.

Very wonderful, isn't it? I didn't say this, but I should have perhaps said it. That second occasion, or perhaps it's the first time. Yes, the first time the words, the glory of the Lord, actually occur in our Bibles is in Exodus 16.

At the time of the manna. The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. [00:24:02] How striking, that's the first occasion you get those words. And they come in, you see, with reference to one of the beautiful types of the Lord Jesus in the Scriptures. The bread that came down from heaven. The manna, that which sustains our souls. Oh, I think it's interesting, the first time it's mentioned is in the 16th chapter of the book of Exodus. Well, so much then for this little outline. Very brief it's been, we could have gone into many, many different little circumstances where the glory came in. But none of these will do, I think. There are bright circumstances and sad circumstances. You know, I can't think of anything sadder than the words of the psalm.

You know, it says in the actual historical record that the Philistines captured. [00:25:01] But their sin was so great that the psalmist says God delivered his strength into captivity. His glory into the enemy's hands.

Oh, how tragic was the day. Well now, so much then for this little simple outline of the glory of the Lord. Now then, we're going to go back again tonight to this little episode of the glory departing from the house. You will notice, I have no doubt, as we read those early verses in the book of Ezekiel, you get a mention of the house. The house, the city, and the mountain.

The house, the city, and the mountain.

You transfer that thought in your thinking tonight.

[00:26:02] Take that thought and put it into the Gospels. Put it into the Gospels. We have been talking tonight about the reluctance with which the glory left the house. It didn't want to go. It went slowly, step by step.

The house, the city, and the mountain. The mountain, of course, on the east, the Mount of Olives. You think of the words of the Lord Jesus, will you? Thirteenth chapter of Luke, is it? Or any other Gospels? Matthew 2? You get these solemn words, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem. How oft would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her brood under his wings. But ye would not, your house is left unto you desolate.

[00:27:01] Oh, how pathetic those words are. They are filled with meaning and sorrow in the Saviour's words as he left the house. A little bit further on in Luke, you remember how it says that he wept over the city.

He wept over the city.

If thou hadst known the things that belong to thine peace, he says. Oh, think of the Saviour weeping.

The nation to whom he had come had refused him. The nation to whom he had come had cast him out.

Came to his own and his own received him not. What a picture it is, isn't it? He wept over it. He wept over the city.

And then the mountain.

We take ourselves in thought and stand alongside that little company of disciples.

[00:28:09] That's right, at the beginning of Acts, in the end of Luke's Gospel, where we get a record of what we refer to as the Ascension. And they watched him go. Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? It says that they came back from Olivet.

Obviously he went by the way of Olivet.

Three stages, three stages. Three stages, the mountain, the house, the city and the mountain.

Shall we not see a picture here, the glory departing from the temple in Ezekiel's day. Oh, how sad. Rejected, unwanted by the builders, set in naught by the builders.

[00:29:04] He goes away. He goes away. The house is left unto you decimated. Weeps over the city. From the mountain of Olives he goes back to his father again. You can't read those verses, can you? In Ezekiel with regard to the return of the glory. Without thinking of the sad, sad picture of a rejected Christ.

That a nation refusing him, unwanted, cast out. He leaves them. Well now, I suppose, just to leave the prophetic for a minute tonight.

And just take again our thought over to the end of the book of Ezekiel.

Yes, we've had new birth, chapter 36.

We've had quickening, I suppose, chapter 37.

[00:30:03] We've had the house built, the new temple built again. And the glory fills it. Well, that may be prophetic substantially in the prophet. But, you know, we're not going to wait, are we, tonight in our thoughts to the kingdom. Oh, no.

I think it's right to say, you know, that yes, whilst the Saviour left, left by Olivet. Was it long after, was it? Fifty days after.

Fifty days after. Forty and ten days.

And what took place? Oh, I tell you what took place. It says, you know, the wonderful words, Acts chapter 2. It says, the Spirit filled the house where they were sitting. The very terms that are used about the tabernacle, the temple, the future temple, the glory filled the house. [00:31:05] And on that day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God came down into this world, did it not?

The Spirit of God came down. God took his dwelling place in his saints.

It says about that little company that were waiting at Jerusalem. It says, the Spirit filled the house where they were sitting and sat on each one of them.

I wonder if we realize the wonderful significance of this to us today.

Have we really got it? Have we really realized the privilege, the responsibility, the wonder, the blessedness of being here? Forming a house in which God takes his place, takes up residence.

[00:32:05] In the house? Yes. Individually, in us and with us.

Everywhere we think about it, he dwells in the assembly collectively, he dwells in each believer individually.

It can be said, can it not, that the glory filled the house. Here we are tonight, those who according to chapter 36 have been born of God. According to chapter 37 have been made to live. Forming this house down here on earth and the glory fills the house where they were sitting.

What a wonderful outline of things there is in this book of Ezekiel. I want to talk about this with you. Let's suggest, I think, I always think we should keep the interpretation of a passage clear before we talk about applications.

[00:33:14] I don't like the idea of applications and not perhaps saying what the true interpretation of the passage is. And I think what we've been saying tonight on a prophetic level is the true interpretation

of this river. God will remove the curse from earth in the days of the coming kingdom. I want you to think about this river tonight. You know, on the day of Pentecost I suggest this river began to flow. The river of God's grace. The river that flows across the barren land where Jesus died that we sometimes sing about. [00:34:01] What a lovely river it is. As we said, it came from the south side of the altar.

Of course, there couldn't be any river, could there? Couldn't be any river. Couldn't be any sustenance. Couldn't be any satisfaction. Couldn't be any real worth, could there? Except it come through the death of Christ. The altar.

And more than that, as I think about the south side of the altar.

Oh, I think of the warmth. The warmth.

The heat connected with the south side. What is it that flows, that is the source of this river, if it isn't the love of God made known in Christ. The one who gave himself upon the cross.

[00:35:01] The south side has always been an interest to me, you know, in scripture. If you think about the south side of the tabernacle in the holy place.

You remember on the south side stood the candlestick. The lampstand, the golden lampstand on the south side. You know, I've been to many a fellowship meeting and somebody has been speaking about the Lord Jesus, about his glory, and somebody has said at the end, Oh, our hearts were warmed tonight.

Our hearts were warmed. Isn't it right? Oh yes, the candlestick. The ministry of Christ today. In the power of the Spirit. The Spirit illuminating the beauties of the candlestick. That was on the south side, you know. Oh yes, the side of warmth and cheer. [00:36:03] How we need a ministry of Christ.

The camp of Reuben, you know. It was on the south side of the encampment.

Reuben means, say a son, doesn't it? Say a son.

Sonship.

Oh, God has made us sons. Sonship to himself through Jesus Christ. Wonderful word, aren't they? Hear this river of God's grace. It flows on the south side of the altar. The love of God manifest in Christ. That brings with it life, as we have said. Brings with it meat, food.

It brings with it healing, medicine. All that this poor world needs. In the river of God's grace. Lovely thought, isn't it? The river of God's grace. [00:37:02] I think it's a charming, charming thought. That river began to flow. The glory came down and the river began to flow. Flows today. Thank God it flows today. But that brings me in simple words to the seventh chapter of John.

Seventh chapter of John. What's your place and what is my place with regard to the river of God's grace?

Our place.

Oh yes.

He that believeth on me. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

This spake the other spirit. Jesus glorified. Spirit comes down out of the inward parts of the saints.
[00:38:02] This river is flowing today.

Whether I'm concerned with the poverty of the saints. Or whether I'm concerned with the poverty of men around me. Are we, beloved brethren, are we channels of blessing?

I like the old hymn. I haven't sung it for years, you know. It's in our hymn book at home. We don't sing it very often, you know. Is your life a channel of blessing? Is the love of God flowing through you? Are you telling the loss of the Saviour? Are you ready His service to do? When I read that, you know, is the love of God flowing through you? I again shot up in my thoughts to the south side of the altar. The south side of the altar. Is the love of God flowing through you? You know, dear brethren, there's a tremendous amount of need today. [00:39:02] Not only in the world, there is need in the world. Oh yes, dear brethren, an appalling condition of things around us. Think of the saints. Think of their needs. So many perhaps impoverished. The Midianites have got in. And Israel was impoverished in the days of the Midianites, you know. Worldly things get in.

Are we concerned about it? Are we so filled ourselves that there's something flowing from us?

Whether it be for saint or for sinner. It says, he that believeth on me.

Now that doesn't just simply mean, you know, that we once believed the gospel. It doesn't mean that. It's what is characteristic of the believer.

A little footnote in Darby's translation on that word. [00:40:01] And he says, characteristic. It's a characteristic of a believer, of a saint of God, that he believes. He believes. It's not just a matter that I once did it, the night I was converted. That's not the idea, is it? Oh, no, no.

Oh, no, no. We've got to go on drinking. We've got to go on drawing from the supplies of grace. We've got to go on, in faith, drawing from the reservoirs that there is in the power of the Spirit of God. If there's this constancy of faith. If there's this constancy of believing. Then there will be from us, whether we know it or not, rivers of living water.

Of course, you know, often we say, and we love chapter four, don't we? Oh, yes, we love chapter four. [00:41:01] He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall be in him a fountain of water spilling up into everlasting life.

That's going back to its source, isn't it? That's going back to its source. Sometimes we think that's maybe our holy priesthood, our worship, our service Godward, spinning up into everlasting life.

But here in chapter seven, the water is not springing up, it's flowing out. Flowing out, as the hymn says, across the barren land where Jesus died. My friend, is there not a need for medicine today? Medicine, the word is healing, of course, I think. You'll find, and I like the word medicine, you know, in the authorised version. [00:42:02] I think there's a great need for medicine today, isn't there? Whether it be saint or sinner, there's a need for medicine. Healing, fruit.

Fruit. Fruit is generally, we say, something to do with the expression of Christ in our lives.

What we had before us this afternoon, the expression of Christ in our ways, our conduct and our life. Yes, there's need for food, for food, spiritual food.

What are we doing about it ourselves? Are we going to hells? Are we taking spiritual food? You know, there's one thing in scripture you'll find worth thinking about, that God is always careful to say that his people have food to eat.

Always the same, there was food in the wilderness, food in the 12th of Exodus, [00:43:03] food in the land, God was always concerned that there should be food for his people.

God is just as concerned today, my dear brethren, as to what kind of food we eat. Let's search our hearts, what kind of food do we eat?

These days, you know, they say a lot about the health shops, don't they? The great thing nowadays is the health shop. Well, the apostle talks, you know, about health-giving food. Sound teaching is health-giving teaching.

That's the kind of teaching we need, you know. If we are taking in this teaching ourselves, if we are concerned about it, then it will throw out of our inward parts for others.

[00:44:03] Trouble is, trouble is, so very often, there's something clogging up the streams, clogging up the streams, worldliness, desire for wealth, desire to get on in the world, desire to keep round ourselves possessions, and this kind of thing. Oh yes, it gets in, doesn't it? It gets in. These things, you know, are clogging up the channels, just like the Philistines blocked up the wells in the days of Isaac. Oh, let's say to it, let's say to it, that these bodies of ours, as we make our way to the glory, the day when we shall see his face, let's say to it, in some way, our lives are channels of blessing.

[00:45:04] The chorus of that hymn says, make me a channel of blessing today.

Well, may the Lord help us to be channels of blessing. Tremendous need in the world and amongst the saints. Plenty to do, no need to be idle. He that believeth on me, out of his inward parts shall flow rivers of living water.

You know, there's no trickle, is there? It doesn't say a trickle, does it? It doesn't say a trickle, does it? I like the psalm, you know, when it talks, the psalm talks about Moses striking the rock. It doesn't say that the waters trickled out of the rock, it said that they gushed out, they gushed forth. [00:46:01] That's the way it will be, you know. Let's be absorbed, beloved, with the Lord's things. Let's get our eye fixed upon the glory of the blessed Lord, as we had it this afternoon. Realizing something of the wonder of being, of having God dwelling here today in the power of the Spirit, filling the house, sitting upon each one of us, what a resource we have. Let's think of it, that we are channels of blessing, until the day comes when the Lord shall take us home. May the Lord bless His Word. Now shall we sing in closing the rock again? 385, 385.

And here we come.

In 385, the Father sent the Son, a ruined world to save, [00:47:05] the man meted to the sinless one

across the grave. Blessed substitute from God, wrath's awful cup he drank, laid down his life and in the tombs, reproached, sustained. I wanted this verse, the second verse. The second part of the verse says, as we've been quoted here tonight, the river of His grace, through righteousness supplied, is flowing o'er the barren place where Jesus died.

Shall we rise and sing the Lord again? 385.