

## Ezekiel 9

Chapter 9 continues the vision that began in 8:1 and will end in 11:25 (see note on 8:1).

***9:1 Then He cried out in my hearing with a loud voice saying, "Draw near, O executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand."***

***9:2 Behold, six men came from the direction of the upper gate which faces north, each with his shattering weapon in his hand; and among them was a certain man clothed in linen with a writing case at his loins. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar.***

In his vision, Ezekiel hears a voice call for six executioners to come forward. Each has a weapon of destruction. A seventh man, clothed in linen, has a writing kit at his side. The seven enter from the north gate (Alexander, 785) and proceed to the altar which was built by Solomon (1 Ki. 8:16; 2 Chron. 4:1) which was relocated to the northeast corner of the temple by Ahaz to make room for His own pagan altar (2 Ki. 16:14).

***9:3 Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed in linen at whose loins was the writing case.***

In 9:3 the scene changes from the seven men, to the glory of God moving to the threshold of the temple.

The Ark of the Covenant was in the Holy of Holies (the inner most room of the temple) where the glory of God resided. Exodus 25:18-22 and 37:7-9 describe golden cherubim (angels) that covered the lid of the Ark of the Covenant with their wings. When Solomon built the temple, he also placed giant fifteen-foot cherubim, whose wings filled the entire room (Block, 306).

Being of priestly descent, Ezekiel was undoubtedly familiar with the images of the cherubim in the temple. Apparently this vision offered him an opportunity that was impossible in real life – a look into the inner sanctum of the divine palace, the holy of holies. There he observes the glory of Yahweh rise from its throne, above the ark of the covenant, and move to the threshold of the temple. For Ezekiel the movement of the divine glory would have had ominous significance. It signaled Yahweh's suspension of rule and raised the possibility of His departure from the city. The people's accusation/rationalization that Yahweh has abandoned them is about to be fulfilled, and when that happens there will be no hope. By inserting this observation here the author has intentionally correlated Yahweh's departure with the judgment of Jerusalem (Block, 306).

In Ezekiel 8:6 God said it was Israel's great abominations that would drive Him far from His sanctuary. The movement of God's glory to the threshold of the temple is the first stage in the progression of His departure.

**9: 4 The LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst."**

**9:5 But to the others He said in my hearing, "Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare."**

**9:6 "Utterly slay old men, young men, maidens, little children, and women, but do not touch any man on whom is the mark; and you shall start from My sanctuary." So they started with the elders who were before the temple.**

**9:7 And He said to them, "Defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" Thus they went out and struck down the people in the city.**

Ezekiel now returns to the work of the seven men in 9:1. Until now it was unclear who was calling for the executioners, but verse 5 tells us that it is Yahweh, the One whose glory resides in the temple, who is issuing the command.

First, the man dressed in linen is told to scour the city to find any who were repentant, any who groan over the evils taking place; these are people who see the sin of Israel in the same way that God sees it. They are to be marked on their foreheads. Literally, they were to be marked with the Hebrew letter *taw* (ת) which in its ancient form looked like an X or a cross. The mark served as an identifying mark of those who will escape slaughter, similar to the blood on the doorposts of the Israelites' houses on the night of the Passover (Exo. 12).

Revelation parallels Ezekiel 9 in thought. In Revelation 7 the mark is a seal that identifies a remnant among the Israelites who will be spared from the coming judgment.

Revelation 7:2-4: "And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, 'Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.' And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel. . . ."

After these people have been marked, the executioners are instructed to go through the city and kill the rest of the people without showing pity (9:5). They are to begin their grisly task at the sanctuary itself with the seventy elders who were secretly worshipping images of creatures in the inner court (8:10-11), defiling the temple. "So they started with the elders who were before the temple" (9:6) even before God had finished speaking to them (9:7).

## NOTE:

The mark of God on the heads of His servants has a special place in both Jewish and Christian thought. Due to the link to Exodus 12, early Jewish commentators saw the mark of Ezekiel 9 as a reference to the blood of the Passover lamb, or the mark of salvation. However, when the church drew a connection between Christ, the Passover lamb and His death on the cross to this passage, the Jews reversed their position and said the mark was the mark of death (Block, 310 ff).

***9:8 As they were striking the people and I alone was left, I fell on my face and cried out saying, "Alas, Lord GOD! Are You destroying the whole remnant of Israel by pouring out Your wrath on Jerusalem?"***

As the six proceed with their executions, Ezekiel cries out, "Alas, Lord GOD! Are You destroying the whole remnant of Israel by pouring out Your wrath on Jerusalem?" (9:8). This is a reasonable question. Israel had once been a great nation, but was now on the verge of extinction. In 733<sub>BC</sub> they lost control of the Transjordan and Galilee, and many were taken into exile (2 Ki. 15:29). Ten years later, in 722<sub>BC</sub>, Samaria fell, ending the existence of the northern kingdom (2 Ki. 24). The only tribe that was left was Judah, and many in that tribe had been taken away into Babylonian exile (around 605<sub>BC</sub> and 597<sub>BC</sub>). Although Jerusalem was still standing, it was under the rule of Babylon. Watching the six men execute God's wrath made Ezekiel fear that the nation was about to end.

***9:9 Then He said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is very, very great, and the land is filled with blood and the city is full of perversion; for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!'***

***9:10 "But as for Me, My eye will have no pity nor will I spare, but I will bring their conduct upon their heads."***

***9:11 Then behold, the man clothed in linen at whose loins was the writing case reported, saying, "I have done just as You have commanded me."***

"The Lord responds with a devastating indictment (9:9-10) that includes a word-play: the people of Israel insist the Lord does not 'see' (or 'look') (8:12; 9:9), so the Lord resolves not to 'see/look' on them with pity or spare them. He is resolved to 'bring down on their own heads what they have done' (9:10)" (Carson, For the Love of God, Vol 1, Sept 21 reading).

Just like in the days of the flood, wickedness had to be completely purged from the land. Israel's sin was great; the land was filled with bloodshed, and the city with perversion. They had come to believe that God had abandoned them, so they turned to other gods (8:12).

## Ezekiel 10

**10:1** *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.*

**10:2** *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.*

**10:3** *Now the cherubim were standing on the right side of the temple when the man entered, and the cloud filled the inner court.*

**10:4** *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.*

**10:5** *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.*

**10:6** *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.*

**10:7** *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.*

**10:8** *The cherubim appeared to have the form of a man's hand under their wings.*

"Then I looked" introduces a new subunit in Ezekiel's vision. The unit itself is somewhat choppy. Chapter 10 verses 1, 3-5, and 9-22 focus on the glory of God. However, these verses are broken up by the action of the man in linen in verse 2 and verses 6-8. Chapter 10 has similar imagery as the initial vision of God in chapter 1 (see notes there for details).

The concept of cherubim forming a throne-chariot for God's glory is found in the OT (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Ki. 19:15; 1 Chron. 13:6; 2 Chron. 28:18; Psa. 18:10; 80:1; 99:1), and several passages in particular picture God as a warrior riding in on flying cherubim to judge Israel's enemies (2 Sam. 22:2-15; Psa. 18:1-15; 104:3).

The temple and its furnishings represented a modest model of God's heavenly dwelling (Block, 306). The cherubim in verse 1 are the realities behind the statues of the cherubim in the Holy of Holies of the temple who supported the invisible throne of God.

In the vision, the chariot momentarily parks at the temple's south gate to the right of the temple (10:3; the north gate was where the statue of jealousy was placed [8:5], and the entrance through which the executioners had entered [9:2]). Once the temple had been cleansed by the six men, the Shekinah glory of God fills the temple and then rises and moves to the temple door (the threshold of the temple [10:3-5]). The sound of the cherubim's wings resounds through the temple courts (10:5).

Meanwhile, the man in linen is commanded by God to get some coals from between the cherubim and spread them over the city (10:2). As the man enters the heavenly chariot, one of the cherubim picks up the coals and hands them to him (10:7). The throne of God has become the source of judgment.

*The imagery in verses 9-22 is slightly different than that of chapter 1, but portrays the heavenly chariot of God once again. However, God's abandonment of the temple in verses 18 and 19 is still the main focus of this scene.*

***10:18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim.***

***10:19 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.***

Verses 18 and 19 give the details of the second phase of God's departure from the temple. Ezekiel watches as the glory of God rises from the temple threshold and meets the waiting chariot. The chariot then taxis to the east gate, presumably the gate of the outer court (Block, 326).

It is worth noting that for the first time since 8:16, the temple is called *the LORD's house* (10:19). Most of the narrative refers to it as simply "the house," reflecting God's growing alienation from the temple. "Defiled by the abominations described in chapter 8, and desecrated by the slaughter of 9:7, it had for all practical purposes ceased to be His residence. . . The departure of the glory signals the end of a relationship that has existed for almost 4 centuries. The divine King has abandoned His residence" (Block, 326).

## **Ezekiel 11**

***11:1 Moreover, the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the LORD'S house which faced eastward. And behold, there 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.***

***11:2 He said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who devise iniquity and give evil advice in this city,***

***11:3 who say, 'Is not the time near to build houses? This city is the pot and we are the flesh.'***

Ezekiel is picked up a second time (8:3; 11:1) and moved to the east gate where he sees twenty-five leaders of the house of Judah gathered. Their attitude reflects confidence that there was no need to take the prophets' threats of impending disaster seriously. "Go ahead and build. Get settled in. Nothing will happen to us." These men saw themselves as the choice meat in the pot and the walls of Jerusalem like the sides of a pot that protected them.

**11:4 "Therefore, prophesy against them, son of man, prophesy!"**

**11:5 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.**

**11:6 "You have multiplied your slain in this city, filling its streets with them."**

God responds by saying He knows what's in their minds and sees their motives and smugness (11:5 "I know your thoughts"). He is aware of their corruption and willingness to take the lives of others (11:6 "You have multiplied your slain in this city, filling its streets with them").

**11:7 '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.**

**11:8 "You have feared a sword; so I will bring a sword upon you," the Lord GOD declares.**

**11:9 "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.**

**11:10 "You will fall by the sword. I will judge you to the border of Israel; so you shall know that I am the LORD.**

**11:11 "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.**

**11:12 "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.""**

**11:13 Now it came about as I prophesied, that Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. Then I fell on my face and cried out with a loud voice and said, "Alas, Lord GOD! Will You bring the remnant of Israel to a complete end?"**

In verse 7 God responds to what He sees. The leaders saw themselves as the prime cuts of meat who were safe in the pot; God sees them as butchers who made a stew out of their citizenry (Block, 336). Ezekiel's statement is a condensed form of Micah 3:1-3:

"Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice? You who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones, who eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones in pieces and chop them up like meat in a pot, like flesh in a cauldron."

Although the image of the pot doesn't change, its purpose does – it is no longer a pot of protection (11:11); it is a pot where the ingredients are cooked. God says that He will personally remove them from the pot (11:9) and give them over to death by the sword (11:10), which is what they dreaded most would come to pass (11:8). Yahweh has assumed the role of the butcher (Block, 336).

**11:14 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,**

**11:15 "Son of man, your brothers, your relatives, your fellow exiles and the whole house of Israel, all of them, are those to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'Go far from the LORD; this land has been given us as a possession.'**

**11:16 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Though I had removed them far away among the nations and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone."'"**

Verse 15 interprets the plight of the exiles from the perspective of those in Jerusalem. The NIV translates the latter half of the verse: "those of whom the people of Jerusalem have said, 'They are far away from the LORD; this land was given to us as our possession.'"

"Their statement ('They are far away from the LORD') picks up the motif of the divine alienation first introduced in 8:6, expressed explicitly in 8:12 and 9:9, and implied in the staged departure of Yahweh from the temple as portrayed in the vision. But the estrangement is given a perverse twist - it is not God who is alienated but the exiles. They have been expelled from the land, which obviously must mean that they are also far away from Yahweh" (Block, 347).

While the exiles put their hopes on those who are in the land, "the Jerusalemites themselves saw the exiles as so much rubbish, people rejected by God and transported far away from the land and the temple (Ezek. 11:14-15)" (Carson, For the Love of God, vol. 1, Sept 23 meditation). But it wasn't the exiles who were far from God; "it was the Jerusalemites back home who are alienating themselves from Yahweh by their daily conduct and their arrogant claims" (Block, 349). According to chapter 10, the glory of the Lord had departed from the sanctuary in Jerusalem and God would become a sanctuary to those in exile (11:16). The timing of this statement and its contextual placement is crucial. When God's presence left the temple, the temple building was no different than any other. The focus of worship had moved from the temple to foreign soil, from the "holy land" to the unclean land to which the people had been banished. No building would ever again be called the sanctuary where God dwelled, but God would be a sanctuary to those who trust in Him. This is expanded upon in verses 17-21.

**11:17 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel."'"**

**11:18 "When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it.**

**11:19 "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,**

**11:20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.**

**11:21 "But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I will bring their conduct down on their heads," declares the Lord GOD.**

In verses 17 to 21, in the midst of judgment and disaster, Ezekiel gives a glimmer of hope. Some call this Ezekiel's gospel. These words address Ezekiel's concern in 9:8 "Are You destroying the whole remnant of Israel by pouring out Your wrath on Jerusalem?" The answer is that He is not. God will not just reverse the judgment and put them back into the circumstances that they were in before all of this happened, He will establish an entirely *new* order.

First, in verse 17, God promises to restore the damaged relationship between Himself and His people and gather the exiles back to their homeland.

Then, in verse 18 He tells them that the land they will return to will be *new*; it will be purified from all the detestable things that had contaminated it.

Furthermore, in verses 19 and 20, He promises that He will make a *new* covenant with His people. This covenant will involve a reconstruction of the people themselves. The problem with the Israelites in their current condition is found in 14:3: "these men have set up their *idols in their hearts* and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. . ." (Ezekiel 14:3 NASB). But God will give them a heart transplant; their stony heart (their heart that was hardened toward God) will be removed and a heart of flesh (a living heart that could respond) will replace it. This new heart will be exclusively devoted to Him; the people will have a new moral will to obey Him.

The good news reaches a climax in verse 20 where God announces that they will be His people, and He will be their God. This expresses a relationship of commitment and intimacy. Unlike the Old Covenant where many of the participants didn't want the God of their ancestors, all who enter the New Covenant will desire to be God's people, and He will be their God.

The same glorious truths are expanded upon by Ezekiel's contemporary, Jeremiah, when he says:

Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jer. 31:31-34).

Block makes the following observations up to this point (356):

1. The true Israel is recognizable not by external marks, such as circumcision, the possession of the law, or her presence in the holy land near the temple, but by a willing obedience to the covenant Lord. True spirituality is not expressed by claiming the promises of God or parroting theological dogma. Those who leave the greatest stock in these externals may be those whom

God rejects. For the true Israelite the claim to covenant relationship with God is matched by genuine piety and compassion for others, especially those who have been marginalized. God's praise is directed toward those who demonstrate faith by a hatred of evil, fidelity toward His will, and charity toward others.

2. Spiritual renewal is achieved not by human effort, but by a transforming act of God. Education, economic development, and the renovation of political structures may ameliorate [enrich] the symptoms of fallen humanity, but they cannot resolve the fundamental problem - a heart that is hard and disposed against God. But by His grace God offers His covenant to sinners, transforms their inner being, and sets them on a new course to pursue a life of faith, compassion, morality, and justice as established in His revealed will.

3. This oracle serves as a powerful witness to Yahweh's covenant faithfulness. His promises to restore the nation of Israel to her land and to renew His covenant are based on the irrevocability of the promises made to the fathers and the marriage entered into at Sinai. Israel's infidelity had absolved God of all beneficent covenantal obligations to this generation, and would have justified His allowing the nation to be lost in the conglomerate population of the empire. But the ancient covenant curses had held out the hope for the nation of a new act of grace after judgment (Lev. 26:40-45). Now, even before Yahweh's cup of wrath has been emptied, He sends those who have been betrayed by their compatriots a promissory note of restoration. For those who walk with God there is always light at the end of the tunnel.

***11:22 Then the cherubim lifted up their wings with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them.***

***11:23 The glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city.***

Verse 23 is the last phase of God's departure from the temple. The cherubim had transported the glory of the Lord to the east gate of the outer court (Ezek. 10:18-19) and now completely out of the temple area to the mountain east of the city (Ezek. 11:23). "Thus the presence of God judicially abandons the temple and the city. Nothing stands in the way of their destruction" (Carson, For the Love of God, V.1, Sept 23 meditation).

In sum, the movement of the glory of God in these chapters is as follows:

- 9:3 the glory of the God goes up from the cherub in the Holy of Holies to the door of the temple (this is repeated in 10:4)
- 10:3 the cherubim of the mobile throne of God wait at the right side of the temple
- 10:18 the glory of the LORD departs from the threshold of the temple and stands over the cherubim which were waiting for Him
- 10:19 the mobile throne of God taxis to the entrance of the east gate
- 11:22-23 the throne leaves and rests over a mountain to the east of the city

***11:24 And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God to the exiles in Chaldea. So the vision that I had seen left me.***

***11:25 Then I told the exiles all the things that the LORD had shown me.***

Daniel Block makes some excellent closing observations about the vision in chapters 8-11. He says:

1. First, chapter 8 illustrates the failure of misdirected worship. True religion is demonstrated not only in ethical conduct but also in worship acceptable to God. Authentic formal worship lets God be God on His own terms and submits to that divine self-definition. Anything else places the worshiper above the deity, which is the essence of idolatry; moreover, it is a delusion. The elders in the darkroom and the women weeping the Tammuz appear to have been sincere in their ritual expression. However, they are sincerely misguided. Instead of gaining a hearing with God, these expressions only provoked His wrath and closed His ears. True worship is driven by God's Spirit and focuses on the reality of His person.

2. Second, false worship leads to false morality. When people presume to define the character of God they also tend to redefine their own ethical standards. The interrelation between worship and morality is expressed in 8:17: abominations in the temple were accompanied by social acts of violence. Worship not only offers an opportunity to express one's fundamental relationship with God, it also shapes one's character. Unless the encounter with God produces a former determination to doing the will of God, the worship has not been conducted in spirit and in truth.

3. Third, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. The image of judgment portrayed in chapter 9 is offensive to the modern reader. How can God decree the elimination of an entire population, including the innocent? But the fury of divine wrath must be perceived against the backdrop of His grace. Instead of responding to their special status with gratitude and humility, the Israelites had become arrogant, presuming upon the goodwill of their covenant Lord. But God will not be mocked. If he demanded elimination of the Canaanites because of their depravity, when the Israelites behave like the Canaanites, they can expect no other fate (Deut. 8:19-20).

4. Fourth, the Lord remains sovereign over His own destiny. When He leaves the temple, He does not depart as captive of some foreign invader, eager to prove the superiority of His god over the divine resident of this house. Yahweh abandons the city by His own decision, for His own reasons, in His own time, and by His own means. But only the eyes of faith will recognize that the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians was not a sign of His demise. Only the eyes of faith recognize that by voluntarily abandoning His temple, He has delivered His people over to the enemy.

5. Fifth, God is not tied to any place or any shrine. He has indeed chosen Mount Zion as the site for His name to dwell, and His glory resided there in the temple as a visible sign of His presence (cf. Ps 132:14), but He will not be boxed in by a house built with human hands. Since His true

abode is in heaven (1Ki. 8:22-53), for humans to define spirituality in terms of proximity to His house is diluting. Human rejection may cause Him to leave His earthly palace, but He remains enthroned in the heavens, from where He is able to respond to all who call on Him.

6. Sixth, when God abandons His people, they lose all right to His favor and protection. From Ezekiel's perspective, the turning point in Israel's history came not from the ascension of Zedekiah or even the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem, but with the departure of the glory of the king of heaven from His temple. According to Ezekiel's vision, historical events are indeed reflections of realities determined in the heavenly plane. And nothing has changed. According to Paul, the primary battles are still spiritual, and they are waged in the heavenlies (Eph. 6:10-20). Once Yahweh has decreed the fall of the city and has departed from His temple, neither human strength nor angelic force could defend the city against His agent, the invader.

(Daniel Block, Ezekiel, vol 1 – NICOT, 359-360)

Of course, with such a passage before us, we cannot help but fast forward 600 years in history when the words of the prophet would come true. At a time when no one was expecting it, after 400 years of silence from God, a messenger appeared to a young woman and told her that she would conceive and bear a son, and “they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us)” (Matt 1:23). John declares His nature more specifically: He is God (Jn. 1:1) who became flesh (Jn. 1:14) and dwelled among us (literally, tabernacled among us – Jn. 1:14). Like the glory of God which resided in the OT Tabernacle, and then later in the temple built by Solomon, the glory of God resided in Christ; John said that “we beheld His glory” (1:18). The glory of God that had left the temple returned, as promised, in the person of Christ.

It is in Christ that the promises in Ezekiel 11:17-21 come to pass. It is He who would “save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). It is He who gathers a new people of God (Eph. 2:14ff.); it is through His death that there is forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31); it is by His blood that the New Covenant is established (I Cor. 11:25; Lk. 22:2), and by His power that men and women become new creatures (II Cor. 5:17).

Now we, individually as believers, are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 5:1), just as we are collectively as a church (1 Cor. 3:16 “you” is plural – referring to the group).

We also have the mark of God upon us (cf. 9: 4) “*In Him . . . we have been sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance . . .*” (Eph. 1:13-14). Christ promises that He will write on us the name of His God, and the name of the city of His God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, and His new name (Rev. 3:12).

Finally, history is consummated with the words, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them . . .” (Rev. 21:3).