



The Half Shekel Journals of 2022 by Pastor Ed Rice

#03 Tue 1 Nov Eastern Gate and Praetorium

The second day of our pilgrimage to Israel had brought us to the Temple Mount. We were in awe of being here in Israel, in awe of what we had thus far seen, overwhelmed by entry into the Temple Mount, and now, in great awe of our Lord Jesus Christ as we had just spent an hour in worship. Turned out it was only thirty minutes, but it was intense. We had considered what Jesus had done and said on the very ground we stood on. We now gaggled from our little corner of the Mount and made our way to the Eastern



Gate. We saw the gate from City View Park on the Mount of Olives, but now we were on the inside looking out. Well, in that the gate was closed and thoroughly sealed, I guess we were looking from the inside over.

Our group gathered close, and our Incredible Guide Joe¹, met us here. The reverence that Jews hold for the site of the temple, particularly the site nearest to the most holy place, where Jews were not previously allowed to enter, kept Joe from attending our previous gathering in the center of the Temple Mount.



Joe had not lost any enthusiasm during his temporary absence. He began pointing out sites and places we could see at this perch on the Temple Mount, and eventually focused on the Eastern Gate.

The revised standard name was the “Golden Gate”, but any Christian who has ever read the book of Ezekiel knows better than accepting the name change.

“Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: 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. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate

1 Some of us were still hunting for the mnemonic that would label him G.I. Joe.

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” (Ezek.43:1-5).

In no less than sixteen references the prophet Ezekiel is told by God to document something about the Eastern Gate. Ezekiel was the prophet that was shown the departed Shekinah glory of God as it left the temple and departed from Jerusalem (Ezekiel 8-11):

“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, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain” (Ezek.8:3-4).



“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. 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.” (Ezekiel 11:22 -23).

We had just worshiped for what seemed an hour (it was just an intense 20 minutes!) because the glory of God came back into the temple in the form of God's only begotten Son, the Messiah, the Christ. The physical presence of God, the manifestation of God as it were (Jn.1:14), departed on a cross standing on the hill called Calvary, or Golgatha.

Through the Prophet Ezekiel, God is letting it be known that his glory will once again enter the temple, and as the sun rises in the eastern sky and breaks into a new day, even so, the Son will break into a new world, ... and he will enter through the Eastern Gate. There is much more to be said about this Eastern Gate.

The Bible says that the people, and the prince shall worship at the Eastern Gate and sacrifice in the new gargantuan temple that will be built during the Millennium.

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened. And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. Likewise the people of the land shall

worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons” (Ezekiel 46:1-3).

Also, after the wrath of God and the battle of Armageddon have destroyed the earth, the water that heals flows out of the Eastern Gate.

“Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued 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. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.... 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. Now 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 issue out 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. And it shall come to pass, that every thing 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 every thing shall live whither the river cometh” (Ezekiel 47:1-3,6-9).



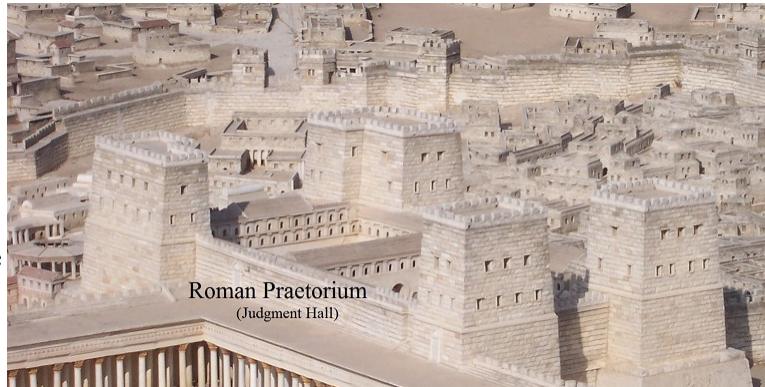
A Bible student knows some things about the Eastern Gate; things that pertain to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and God's Son sitting on the throne of David for a literal thousand year reign. It is not to be the Eastern Gate that Herod built and Muslim's desecrated, it will be the Eastern Gate outside of the truly gargantuan temple that God has built during the Millennial Reign of Christ (Ezek.40-48). Evidently Jews know something about the Eastern Gate as well; their sepulchres on the Mount of Olives are arranged so their feet are toward this gate, so that when a resurrection occurs they will be pointed in the right direction.

Satan knows somethings about this Eastern Gate as well. He can read. His servants hate Herod's Temple Mount and have disdain for the Eastern Gate that stands before us this day. Our guide, Joe, made mention of Muslims trying to desecrate and close off the gate with their tombs and their concrete. It is just speculation Joe said, but for those who know the larger picture and the effort to keep that gate sealed, it is not *idle* speculation.

When King Herod had this huge Temple Mount constructed, he was doubtless aware of the description of what might be called Ezekiel's temple. Again, it is Ezekiel's temple that will be built and operated during the millennial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. Herod made a noble effort, but mere man cannot build the temple that God describes to Ezekiel the prophet. Its dimensions dwarf the whole city of Jerusalem. Mountains will need to be moved before such a temple could be built, and deserts would need to bloom before its described suburbs could be constructed and inhabited. We know who moves mountains. Just the same, Herod did an impressive job here, it was and is a wonder of the world, and his emphasis on this Eastern Gate is notable. God's temple and God's Eastern Gate will be greater. Having studied these things out, Beverly and I stayed a little longer at the Eastern Gate. But alas, our group had moved on to the north.

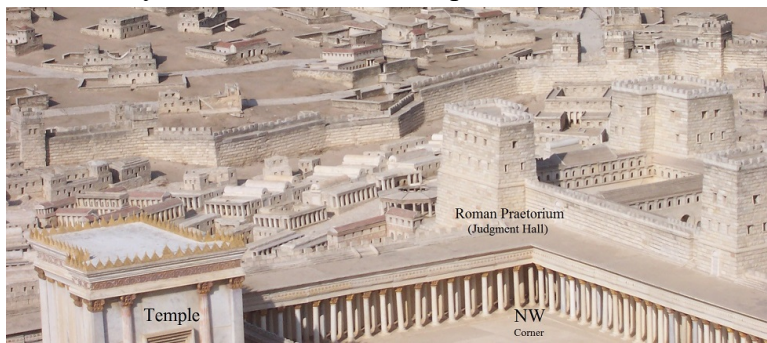
As we gathered at the north end of the Temple Mount our guide Joe, and then our guide, Pastor Chalie, addressed what was once standing in the empty lot before us.

To address Jerusalem's vulnerability from the north a citadel was placed on a rocky plateau just outside the north west corner of the Temple Area. "The fortress served as a headquarters for the Roman army in



Jerusalem... The close proximity of its high towers to the temple complex enabled Roman guards to keep watch on any disturbances that developed. Herod had built underground passage ways that allowed Roman detachments to enter the compound if deemed necessary."²

This fortress was used for the Roman's judgment hall and Mark 15:16 says of Christ on trial, "And the soldiers lead him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they called together the whole band." An old Arabic proverb says, "He that speaks well turns ears into eyes." As Pastor Chalie spoke we could see the Roman Praetorium³ standing in



the open lot before us. We could see Jesus in the hands of the mocking soldiers; we could hear Pontius Pilot say to the crowd, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ (Messiah)? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified" (Mat.27:22).

It only took a moment really; mere minutes of our time standing at the north end of the

² see www.christianevidences.org accessed 11/22/2022

³ Pictures of the Roman Praetorium were taken by the author at the Israel Museum's most impressive display of a huge model of Jerusalem in the Second Temple period. Huge is 2,000 square meters (21,520-square-foot)! The Second Temple Jerusalem Model recreates the city of 66 AD at the height of its glory; the eve of the great revolt of the Jews against the Romans. We visited the Israel Museum on 03 Nov, Day 4 of our pilgrimage.

Temple Mount. The Muslims had made sure that we had no Bibles to open. Our guide Joe, with just a few worded brushstrokes had painted the towers of a Roman citadel, filled with soldiers, and housing a judgment hall called Praetorium. Our guide Pastor Chalie had made that hall echo with God's word, Pontius Pilot's words, and soldiers with a purple robe and crown of thorns. Our guide the Holy Spirit of God now flooded my mind with holy words:

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2Cor.5:20).

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ... He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:17-18, 36).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

It is a horrible thing that man did in that judgment hall, that Praetorium that once stood only a few feet from where we now listened to Pastor Chalie.



The law was given in 1492 BC and for 1,500 years man was tried and tested for his ability to keep that law. He was supposed, by keeping the law, to come through the dark veil and stand in the

presence of a holy God. He failed, man was and is incapable of keeping God's law, incapable of standing in God's presence through law. In this judgment hall, the verdict for man is forever in; here man condemned the only begotten Son of God to death on a cruel cross. That guilty verdict for man cries out, *"the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..."* (Jeremiah 17:9). ... *"As it is written there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ... For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom.3:10-11, 23).

Religions, every one of them, try to revisit this Judgment Hall and cast out the verdict that came in here. Whether it be Judaism (the only "religion" that God endorsed), trying to go on as if this Judgment Hall didn't count; or Catholicism where black robed priests and clergy teach people that a little more penance, a little more suffering (a little more Via Dolorosa), and a little more bead counting will suffice; or if it be any of the Roman or Orthodox Protestant offshoots that suppose a few more good works will suffice, perhaps water of baptism will wash us, or keeping the Sabbath will subdue that lost estate of man. No, the verdict is in, it was read in the judgment hall before us now standing, the gavel has sounded, the innocent is condemned that the guilty may go free. *"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom.5:8).

The trial whereby man must keep the law of God is past. That dispensation, or test of stewardship, is ended, that case cannot be reopened by any religion. A new dispensation is now opened and springs on the world as a new dawn. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. ... That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”* (Eph.2:8-9, 7)

Pastor Chalie closed his Bible, ... well he stopped quoting the Bible, and he tucked his phone away, Muslims guarding the Temple Mount did not allow us to bring in a Bible. We somberly walked by the Praetorium which stood in our minds eye, and began our departure from the Temple Mount. It is a marvelous thing to be saved by grace.

*Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul.
Thank you, Lord, for making me whole.
Thank you, Lord, for giving to me,
Thy Great Salvation, So Rich and Free.*
lyrics and music: Seth and Bessie Sykes



The Half Shekel Journals of 2022 by Pastor Ed Rice
#04 Tue 1 Nov The Via Dolorosa and Gethsemane
The second day of our pilgrimage to Israel had brought us ...