



March 13, 2016

Nehemiah 3:29-32

Ever Changing, Never Changing Part 14

“Examining Our Gates: The Second Coming of Christ and Judgment Day”

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Pastor Gary’s seventh and final message in his Nehemiah 3 series deals with the last two gates of Jerusalem: the East Gate and the Inspection Gate. The Bible prophesies that Jesus Christ will return to earth and enter the East Gate of Jerusalem to establish his millennial kingdom. What are the important things we need to know about the second coming of Jesus Christ? What does it mean when someone says Christians will be “raptured” before the Tribulation that is coming upon the earth? How can we be ready? Pastor Gary answers these and other questions about Jesus’ return in today’s study.

The East Gate

1. The Bible records many references to the east, including:
 - a. The Garden of Eden was in the east.
 - b. When Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, God sent cherubim to guard the east entrance so they would not be able to return.
 - c. When Moses fashioned the Tabernacle that was used during the time of wandering, he was instructed to always make sure the entrance faced east.
 - d. When Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem, the entrance faced east.
 - e. When Jesus was a young child, wise men came from the east to worship him.
 - f. The Bible tells us that Jesus is coming again, and when he comes, he will come to the Mount of Olives, east of the city of Jerusalem.
 - g. The Bible also tells us that Jesus will enter Jerusalem through the East Gate.

2. The Bible teaches that when Jesus rose from the dead, he lived 40 more days on the earth before he ascended into heaven, from whence he came.
3. The place from which Jesus ascended was the Mount of Olives, and the Bible records the remarks of the angels.¹
 - a. **Acts 1:11-12** - “ ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’ Then they [the disciples] returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk² from the city.”
4. Ezekiel prophesied about the second coming of Christ and of his coming into the city through the East Gate.
 - a. **Ezekiel 43:1-2, 4-5** - “Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory. The glory of the Lord entered the temple through the gate facing east. Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.”
5. David also prophesied about Jesus second coming!
 - a. **Psalms 24:9-10** - “Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty - he is the King of glory.”
6. The East Gate reminds us of the second coming of Christ.
7. We must always be prepared and ready for the second coming of Christ.
8. **Revelation 19:7** - “Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.”
9. The Church is the bride of Christ, and Christians must be ready for Jesus’ return.
10. **John 14:1-4** - “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

¹ **Acts 1:1-12**

² A Sabbath day’s walk was about ¾ of a mile.

11. Today, the East Gate is not the same as the gate in Nehemiah's day; however, this gate was built over the ruins of the original gate.
 - a. The current version of the East Gate was built in the early part of the 6th Century AD.
 - b. This gate is the oldest of the eight remaining gates of Jerusalem, and it is the only double arched gate.
 - c. The East Gate has been walled up since 1541AD, when Suleiman the Magnificent, a Muslim sultan, gave orders to seal up this specific entrance into the city.
 - d. Suleiman was aware of the prophesy of Ezekiel, which told of a Messiah who would enter Jerusalem through the East Gate, so was intent on preventing this from happening.
 - e. In addition to this foolhardy measure, he ordered that a cemetery should be created, because this Messiah was a priest, and priests were prohibited from coming into contact with the dead.

The Second Coming Of Christ

12. Pastor Gary said there are approximately 1,000 prophecies in the Bible concerning the second coming of Christ, which is almost three times the number of prophecies about Jesus' first coming.
13. The Tribulation will last seven years, and it separates the rescue of the Church and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth.
 - a. The Bible records the details of The Tribulation in [Revelation 6-18](#).
14. The second coming of Christ will occur in the air to rescue the Church, which is called The Rapture.
15. For Believers who know Christ as their Savior who are alive when the "*trumpet call of God*" is sounded, will be bodily snatched from the earth and taken to heaven!
16. [1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#) - "*Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep [a euphemism for death], but we will all be changed - in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed [meaning that we will be given a glorified body on the way up to heaven].*"
17. [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18](#) - "*For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call*

of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.”

18. Today, when a Christian dies, his or her spirit goes to be with the Lord in heaven, and his or her body returns to the earth and decays.
19. Those who have died prior to the Lord's return will receive a glorified body just prior to The Rapture.
20. In Greek, the phrase, “caught up,” is the word *harpazo*, which means to be snatched up.
 - a. The English word rapture comes from the Latin word, *rapturo*.
21. The second coming of Christ will occur on the earth to establish his Kingdom, which is called The Millennial Reign of Christ, and this happens when the Tribulation period is culminated at the Battle of Armageddon, in the Jezreel Valley.³
 - a. **2 Thessalonians 2:8** - *“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.”*
22. **Zechariah 14:4-5** - *“On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.”*
23. The second coming of Christ can happen at any moment, as far as The Rapture of Christians is concerned.
24. **Matthew 24:36-42** - *“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other*

³ **Revelation 16:16**

left. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.”

25. Pastor Gary said he did not want people to have a false sense of security, in terms of when Jesus might return.
 - a. He went on to explain that some people believe that the seven years of Tribulation ([Revelation 6-18](#)) starts the moment Christ returns and Christians are raptured ([Revelation 19](#)), but the Bible doesn't support this timeline.
 - b. He said, “It's not that neat, friends. There's nothing in the Bible that tells us phase one and [phase] two [are] separated by exactly the seven years of Tribulation. The fact of the matter is that phase one could happen and then months, years, or decades later, the seven years of Tribulation [begins]. There's nothing in the Bible that tells us the time period of the gap between phase one and phase two. The reason I say this is because sometimes people will read [Matthew 24](#) [and] [Luke 21](#), which [talk] about all of the signs of the second coming of Christ, and people will have a checklist in their mind, and they will say [to themselves], ‘I don't know that we are that quick to some of these events, so we are probably farther away from his second coming that we think.’ But the truth is that there is nothing in the Bible that tells us he has to rapture the Church immediately before the seven years of tribulation. He could rapture the Church decades before the Tribulation comes.”
26. The second coming of Christ is imminent, so we must be ready!
27. [Luke 12:35-37, 40](#) - *“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”*
28. [2 Peter 3:10-14](#) - *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since*

you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.”

29. We should be living holy and godly lives, considering the imminent return to Christ.

The Inspection Gate

30. The purpose of the Inspection Gate was for the mustering of troops for inspection by the king.
31. The Inspection Gate reminds us of the final judgment.
32. Each one of us must be ready to be reviewed by the King, and give an account of our lives.
33. **Luke 18:8** - *“... when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”*
34. **Romans 14:11-12** - *“It is written: ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’ So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.”*
35. **Jude 24** - *“To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy - to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.”*
36. It because of what Jesus Christ has done on the cross that Believers will be presented *“without fault”* before God!

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Nehemiah 3:29-32** to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Provide an overview of the history of the East Gate, in addition to the biblical prophecies about the second coming of Christ.

4. How have pastors in churches you've attended taught on the second coming of Christ?
5. Read and discuss [1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#) and [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18](#).
6. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks concerning his concern that some people have a false sense of security when it comes to the return of Christ. (See #25 above)
7. Read and discuss [Luke 12:35-37](#) and [2 Peter 3:10-14](#).
8. Read and discuss [John 14:1-4](#).
9. Do you know for certain that you are prepared for the home in heaven that Jesus has prepared for all who believe?
10. Are you fully at peace with the Lord today?
11. Read and discuss [John 5:24](#).
12. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).