

Ezekiel 43:1-3—The King Of Glory Shall Come In, Then The Gate Will Be Shut, Forever

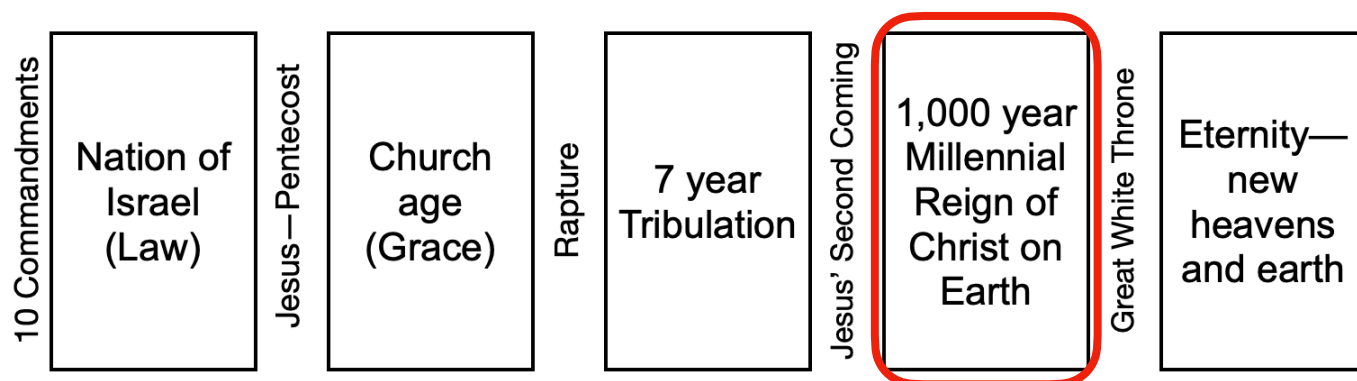
Memory Verse

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Introduction

Ezekiel chapters 40-48 describe places, buildings, land allocations, and worship that are a part of Jesus' Millennial Kingdom, when He comes back to earth from heaven and He reigns for a thousand years on a beautifully renovated earth. The chart below shows when this fits in God's plan of the ages (red outline). The vertical writing represents the events that mark the transition from one time period (or dispensation) to the next.



Outline of Ezekiel 40-48

Chapter 40—The measurement of the courts of the temple

Chapter 41—The measurements of the temple

Chapter 42—The outer court being described

Chapter 43—The glory of God returns to the temple and the altar described.

Chapter 44—Only the sons of Zadok will be allowed to go into the inner court; the other priests were not faithful.

Chapter 45—Describes how the land around the temple/city is divided up, and that the Passover will be one of the feasts observed each year.

Chapter 46—Describes the sacrificial offerings that will be made, and how the temple will be closed throughout the week and only open on the sabbath.

Chapter 47—Describes the river of living water that flows from the temple, and the boundaries of the Land of Israel.

Chapter 48—Describes the divisions of the lands given to each of the 12 tribes of Israel, and the gates of the city of Jerusalem.

Introduction

So far we have seen in Ezekiel chapters 40-43:

- The angel give the measurements and pattern for the Millennial Temple to Ezekiel (40-42)

- The glory of the Lord (Jesus) come into His temple, with Jesus declaring that the temple would be His throne from where He would rule the earth (43:1-12)
- The altar for burnt offerings and the instructions for it's consecration including animal sacrifices (43:13-27)
- God (Jesus) comes to take His rightful place on the throne which is inside the temple, which He calls, "My Throne". The throne represents authority over all creation. Ezekiel (43:1-12)

This week we cover Ezekiel 44:1-3 which tells us why the outer eastern gate of the temple complex will be permanently shut and the great privilege that the prince has to eat before the LORD in the chamber of the outer eastern gate. There's more to this than meets the eye; this is a very misunderstood scripture. There will also be a lot of personal application.

The shut eastern gate (44:1-2)

Ezekiel 44:1-2 NKJV

Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it was shut. ² And the Lord said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.

v 1 **Then He brought me back:** The "He" is capitalised in the NKJV as it seems clear that this is Jesus Himself continuing His message to Ezekiel which started in 43:6. 44:5 seems to confirm it—"And the LORD said to me, "Son of man...". It appears that Jesus has come out of the temple and is leading Ezekiel around.

v 1 **To the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east:** The angel began Ezekiel's tour of the temple here (40:6). Ezekiel is back where he started at the start of his tour of the temple complex.

v 1-2 ... **but it was shut. ² And the LORD said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut:** Once again we see God making clear through repetition what is important.

For example, The fact that God was not finished with His people and would bring them back into the land of Israel, both back from Babylon and again in the later days, is frequently reiterated, (seemingly to us gentiles ad nauseam)—but of course this is what the suffering and persecuted nation of Israel needed and still need to hear over and over—that God would never give up on them and that their future was secure, despite their repeated failures and persistent unfaithfulness toward God.

Here in this verse, God is making a similar point when He repeats that *the outer eastern gate of the sanctuary or temple compound was shut and would remain shut, forever*. Let's find out what God is telling us here and why it's so important to the Israelites. We'll ask two questions:

- Why is eastern gate so special? ...***because the LORD God of Israel has entered by it!*** (v 2) This gate was used by Jesus back in 43:1-5 when He made His grand entrance into the temple through the outer eastern gate of the temple complex to take His rightful place on His throne; from where He will rule the world with a rod of iron for 1,000 years (the Millennium). *This gate is special because it is reserved for God's use alone.*

- Why was the eastern gate shut? Why is it so important that once Jesus has entered the temple by this gate that it remain shut and never be opened? *Simply put, the eastern gate will remain closed because Jesus's glory and the presence of God will never leave the temple (as He did Solomon's temple in Ezekiel chapter 10).* Consider that if the glory of God left this Millennial temple, He would have to leave through the eastern gate—the way He came in—and since it must remain shut, it's a powerful statement that reassures the Israelites that He will be there to stay.

It's like me saying, "I'm never going to use my front door again, because I'm never again going to leave my house." Again, this points to the faithfulness of God to keep His promises. God said that He would be their King forever and here He is saying that once His rule is established, He isn't going anywhere—He will never leave them or forsake them.

Ezekiel 43:7 (NKJV)

And He [Jesus, the LORD] said to me, "Son of man, this [temple] is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, **where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever.**

We as the church have a similar reiterative promise that God will never leave us. The Amplified Bible brings out the forcefulness and repetitiveness of the original language.

Hebrews 13:5 AMP

Let your character or moral disposition be free from love of money [including greed, avarice, lust, and craving for earthly possessions] and be satisfied with your present [circumstances and with what you have]; **for He [God] Himself has said, I will not in any way fail you nor give you up nor leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless nor forsake nor let [you] down (relax My hold on you)! [Assuredly not!]** [Josh. 1:5.]

Just like God promises to never give up on His people Israel despite their outright rebellion and persistent unfaithfulness, so God will not give up on anyone who by repentance and faith have become one of His children.

John 10:27-30 NKJV

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. ³⁰ I and My Father are one."

Romans 8:35-39 NLT

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ³⁶ (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") ³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The prince will be allowed to eat inside the chamber of the eastern gate (44:3)

Ezekiel 44:3 NKJV

As for the prince, because he is the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way.”

v 3 **vestibule**: A vestibule is a “small room, hall, or lobby next to the outer door of a building” (dictionary). In other words, the prince will have access into the chamber of the outer eastern sanctuary (temple compound) gate, though he won’t be able to pass through it (the main door or gate will be permanently shut).

v 3 **As for the prince, because he is the prince He may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD**: This speaks of the great privilege that this prince will have—he will be able to have fellowship with God [Jesus] over a meal.

v 3 **As for the prince, because he is the prince**: Who is this prince who will have access to the vestibule or gate chamber, which represents privileged access to fellowship with Jesus Himself? The Scriptures make it clear:

Ezekiel 34:23-25 NKJV

I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴ **And I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them**; I, the Lord, have spoken.

Ezekiel 37:25 NKJV

Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, forever; and **My servant David shall be their prince forever**.

Isaiah 55:3-4 NKJV

Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David. ⁴ **Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, a leader and commander for the people.**

⁵ Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, and the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you.”

Jeremiah 30:7-9 NKJV

Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

⁸ ‘For it shall come to pass in that day,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘That I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds; foreigners shall no more enslave them. ⁹ **But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king**, whom I will raise up for them.

Hosea 3:5 NKJV

Afterward the children of Israel shall return and **seek the Lord their God and David their king**. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.

Obviously, this prince or leader is none other than king David himself. Jesus will be the King of Kings ruling over the whole world, but David will have delegated authority and spiritual oversight over the nation of Israel—and **My servant David shall be their [Israel's] prince forever** (Ezekiel 37:5).

Some say that this prince is the Messiah, Jesus. However, this is unlikely as the prince: must offer a sin offering (Ezekiel 45:22), has sons (Ezekiel 46:16), sits to eat bread before the LORD (44:3), and his reign is limited to Israel only (Ezekiel 37:25).

“The prince, Messiah’s representative in a special sense, will then have the privilege of sitting in the very gate where the Lord Himself will have entered. He will perform certain religious acts in the presence of the Lord.” (Feinberg)

Application: Experiencing greater intimacy with God

Let’s see how we can experience greater intimacy with God, and why this prince (king David) was rewarded with this special access to God’s private gate chamber. James gives us a clue.

James 4:8a NKJV

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Who was the one man in both the Old and New Testaments that almost always chose to draw near to God whatever the circumstance? Who was the only person in all of Scripture called “a man after God’s own heart”?—King David.

1 Samuel 13:14 NKJV

But now your [king Saul’s] kingdom shall not continue. **The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart [David]**, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you [king Saul] have not kept what the Lord commanded you.

Acts 13:22 NKJV

And when He had removed him [king Saul], **He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’**

The greatest privilege that David will have as prince will not be his authority over the Israelites, but rather His frequent face to face access to Jesus Himself during the Millennium. Why does David get this privilege? Consider one of David’s prayers and notice his childlike dependance on and deep affection toward God.

Psalms 27:7-11 NKJV

Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice! Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8 When You said, “Seek My face,” my heart said to You, “Your face, Lord, I will seek.”

9 Do not hide Your face from me; do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation.

10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me.

11 Teach me Your way, O Lord, and lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.

Psalm 27:7-11 NLT

Hear me as I pray, O Lord. Be merciful and answer me! ⁸ **My heart has heard you say, “Come and talk with me.” And my heart responds, “Lord, I am coming.”**

⁹ Do not turn your back on me. Do not reject your servant in anger. You have always been my helper. Don’t leave me now; don’t abandon me, O God of my salvation!

¹⁰ Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close.

¹¹ Teach me how to live, O Lord. Lead me along the right path, for my enemies are waiting for me.

Psalm 27:8 AMP

You have said, **Seek My face [inquire for and require My presence as your vital need]**. My heart says to You, Your face (Your presence), Lord, will I seek, inquire for, and require [of necessity and on the authority of Your Word].

This is God’s heart and desire for all of us; God has and will always give the invitation—**“Come and talk with me.”** King David’s heart response was, **“LORD I am coming”**. James rephrases God’s invitation as; “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

The Amplified Bible brings out an important facet of what it means to *seek God’s face*—**“require My presence as your vital need.”** It won’t be till we realise our complete and absolute need for God, that we will forsake all else and seek Him with our whole heart.

Warning: Seeking God’s face doesn’t mean seeking what God can give you, rather it means simply enjoying and being content with a love relationship with God Himself. Both the prosperity gospel and the works gospel focus on what we can get from Jesus; this is called selfishness. This ‘law’ or ‘cause and effect’ based thinking goes like this: if I do what God wants, if I’m a good Christian, if I sing enough, if I witness enough, if I read my Bible every day, then I’ll have a blessed life, a happy marriage and good relationships with others. Some go further and add money and health to the list of desired benefits. However, any seeking the gift over the Giver is the essence of both prosperity gospel and legalism—the two are actually very similar, both being works based. In contrast, only the true gospel, the gospel of grace, focuses us on Jesus Himself. Just as Jesus was always content because of His perfect and intimate relationship with His Father, so the Scriptures encourage us to experience that same contentment.

Hebrews 13:5 NLT

Don’t love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.”

⁶ So we can say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?”

In other words, if I have God, then I don’t need anyone or anything else. Where is mine and your hearts today? Every believer needs to ask themselves, “Am I seeking the Lord with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, or am I double minded, dabbling in worldly pleasures (which may not be explicitly sinful), and **seeking the gift rather than the giver?**”

I may intellectually know, for example, that the prosperity gospel is wrong, but deep down I don’t really care about God and really just want to have a nice life—I see *being good and doing what God wants as a means to achieving my goal of earthly happiness*. In this case, the good things that God gives us actually become idols and take our focus off God; relationships, career, marriage, friends, recreation, position in and service for the church, money and health etc.

How do I know?: How do I know if I'm loving God with all my heart, mind, soul and strength? If I am, then I'll be content, joyful, thankful, faithful and hopeful whether or not I have the things that make for a happy and easy life, and I'll be overcoming habitual sin. Like God did with the nation of Israel, He takes away those things that I seek to find fulfillment in, or turns them into a curse, so that I will turn the affections of my heart back to Him. I can then once again enjoy the good things that God gives me once they are put back in their rightful place—under Jesus Lordship.

All of us need to be like Joshua who is famous for his singlemindedness and unwavering loyalty to His God. He gave the people an ultimatum—serve God or serve the idols but don't try to do both, because you're really just serving yourself and the world. It's like Jesus's warning to the Laodicean church, be hot or be cold, but please do not be lukewarm (a half-hearted compromising Christian who loves the things of the world).

Joshua 24:14-23 NLT

“So fear the Lord and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord alone. ¹⁵ **But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”**

¹⁶ The people replied, “We would never abandon the Lord and serve other gods. ¹⁷ For the Lord our God is the one who rescued us and our ancestors from slavery in the land of Egypt. He performed mighty miracles before our very eyes. As we traveled through the wilderness among our enemies, he preserved us. ¹⁸ It was the Lord who drove out the Amorites and the other nations living here in the land. So we, too, will serve the Lord, for he alone is our God.”

¹⁹ Then Joshua warned the people, “You are not able to serve the Lord, for he is a holy and jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. ²⁰ If you abandon the Lord and serve other gods, he will turn against you and destroy you, even though he has been so good to you.”

²¹ But the people answered Joshua, “No, we will serve the Lord!”

²² “You are a witness to your own decision,” Joshua said. “You have chosen to serve the Lord.”

“Yes,” they replied, “we are witnesses to what we have said.”

²³ **“All right then,” Joshua said, “destroy the idols among you, and turn your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel.”**

Summary: I can't turn my heart to the Lord until I have destroyed or submitted to God the idols that are stopping me from worshipping and loving Him with my whole heart. What will I choose? God or the world?

What we know from history is that the Israelites sounded sincere, but they were not sincere. How do we know that they never completely forsook their idols? Because as soon as Joshua and the other elders died, they went straight back to idol worship. The affections of their hearts was always for the things of the world. God to them was just a means to an end, a way to get what they wanted—their hearts were never in it—they never served God alone—they were never completely sold out for or given over to God.

Dwight L. Moody said: “*The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him. By God's help, I aim to be that man.*”

Caution: errors caused by replacement theology concerning the eastern gate

There are many today that see Ezekiel 44:1-2—the prophecy concerning the outer eastern gate of the temple complex being shut and never to be opened again after Jesus enters through it—as being already fulfilled at Jesus’s first coming. If you have been to the current temple mount you will notice that the current eastern gate is completely closed in and filled in with stone blocks. They will therefore try to tell you that this entire prophecy (44:1-2) was already fulfilled in Jesus’s day at His first coming. However, there are many problems with this interpretation. Let’s have a look at what the Bible says and you can make up your own mind. This should also greatly deepen our understanding of this passage and it’s application for us.

Background: The Old city of Jerusalem is surrounded by a wall with eight main gates or exits. One of these gates is the Eastern Gate, also called the Beautiful Gate (see Acts 3:2) or the Golden Gate. This Eastern Gate to the city faces the Mount of Olives as you look out over the Kidron valley, and gives the most direct access to the temple mount. If you were able to enter the Eastern Gate you would be very close to where the Jewish temple stood.

The current Eastern Gate or Golden Gate is the oldest gate in the Old City of Jerusalem, having been constructed in the 6th or 7th century AD (remember that the Romans completely destroyed Jerusalem, including the walls and gates, in 70 AD). “It was sealed shut in 1540-41 AD by order of Suleiman the Magnificent, a sultan of the Ottoman Empire”(gotquestions.com), and has been sealed shut ever since, for almost 500 years.

The location of the original Eastern or Beautiful Gate that existed at the time of Jesus is below the current Eastern Gate. gotquestions.com summarises the argument for a past fulfilment of this future Millennial prophecy well—it is given below:

“Some interpret these passages in Ezekiel as references to the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory of the Lord coming into the temple is seen as the triumphal entry (Ezekiel 43:2; Matthew 21:1–11). The command to permanently shut the gate because the Lord has entered it (Ezekiel 44:2) is seen as a prediction of the walling-up of the Eastern Gate by the Muslims in AD 1540. And, finally, the “prince” to whom the gate will be opened (Ezekiel 46:12) is seen as Christ Himself at the second coming—the Prince of Peace will return to the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4) and enter Jerusalem by way of the re-opened Eastern Gate.

This interpretation is popular and leads to much dramatic speculation about how and when the Eastern Gate will be unsealed. However, there are some textual problems with that interpretation.”

Actually there are many problems with this interpretation. Let’s take a look:

A. The gate that Jesus used at His triumphal entry was never sealed shut

The masses continued to use it for decades after, up until the time it was destroyed in AD 70. For example, after Jesus ascension, Peter was passing through the Eastern or Beautiful Gate when he healed the lame man who was put there everyday to ask for money from the people passing by on their way to the temple. Clearly the gate was still open and being used by all the people. There is no record of this gate ever being sealed shut before it was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.

This is in direct contradiction to Ezekiel 44:1-2 which states that ***no man shall enter it, because the LORD God of Israel has entered it; therefore it will be shut.*** Ezekiel is clearly telling us that **no man** shall enter it, which obviously means *not one single person*. This will be the case during the Millennium—a literal fulfillment.

In addition to this, the gate that was built on top of the original Eastern Gate in the 6th or 7th centuries AD was also not sealed shut until 1540 AD, which was nearly 1,000 years later. Again, masses of people went through this gate.

B. *The gate in Ezekiel 44:1-2 is a part of the Millennial temple complex, whereas the gate that Jesus rode through was a part of the city wall*

The Eastern or Beautiful Gate described in Acts 3:20 and that Jesus rode through in His Triumphal Entry was one of the eight city gates that gave access to Jerusalem. Once inside the city wall, Jesus would have then had to go through another gate to get into the temple complex itself.

In contrast, the Eastern gate described in Ezekiel's vision in chapters 40-44 is clearly referring to the outer gate of the sanctuary or temple complex, *and not the city gate*. The city gates of the Millennial Jerusalem are described in detail in Ezekiel 48:30-35, with there being 12 of them, three on each side (north, south, east and west), and each gate named after one of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Ezekiel 48:30-35 NKJV—*selected parts*

“These are the exits of the city. On the north side, measuring four thousand five hundred cubits (~2.5 km) ³¹ (the gates of the city shall be named after the tribes of Israel), the three gates northward: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi; ³² on the east side, four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan; ... ³⁵ All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE.

Again, the gates are not the same—one is a gate into the city, and the other one a gate into the temple complex. Also, you probably noticed that the Millennial temple and city of Jerusalem (12 city gates named after the 12 tribes) are very different to the temple and city (8 gates with various names) which existed at Jesus's first coming. Also, the Millennial temple complex and city of Jerusalem will be much bigger than that which existed at Jesus's First Coming.

C. *The problem of twisting Scripture (Ezekiel 46:12) to suit your own interpretation*

Zechariah 14:4 tells us that at the Second Coming, the Messiah (Jesus or the LORD) will 'touch down' on the Mount of Olives, which will then split, half to the north and half to the south.

Zechariah 14:4-5 NKJV

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south ... Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You.

Those who deny a literal New Millennial temple and city of Jerusalem believe that Ezekiel 46:12 refers to the very moment or day of the Second Coming of Christ, and that when Christ returns and touches down on the Mount of Olives He will then walk through the eastern gate of the city wall. Let's see if this is a reasonable interpretation.

Ezekiel 46:12 NKJV

“Now when the prince makes a voluntary burnt offering or voluntary peace offering to the Lord, the gate that faces toward the east shall then be opened for him; and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings as he did on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he goes out the gate shall be shut.

It's obviously a long stretch to say that Ezekiel 46:12 refers to the Second Coming of Christ. In addition to the gates not being the same (city vs temple gates—see previous point), there are three main issues. Firstly, the prince cannot be Jesus. Why? As we have previously learned about the prince: he must offer a sin offering (Ezekiel 45:22—Jesus doesn't have to because He's perfect), has sons (Ezekiel 46:16), sits to eat bread before the LORD (44:3), and his reign is limited to Israel only (Ezekiel 37:25).

Secondly, the context of the surrounding verses (44:1-15) and even the verse itself is that of an established and repetitive system of worship, and not a one-off opening of a gate that happens only once at Jesus's Second Coming.

Thirdly, the purpose of entering the gate of the temple is to make an offering. This would be impossible on the day of Jesus Second Coming as the Tribulation temple has been defiled by the Antichrist. Remember that Ezekiel 40-48 is all about God building and establishing a new temple complex where He will accept people's offerings.

I think that this is a good example of a verse taken out of context and twisted to make it fit a fanciful theory.

D. *The failure to differentiate between the outer and inner eastern gates of the Millennial temple complex*

If you look at a diagram of the Millennial temple, there is the inner court with the altar in the middle and the Temple itself behind the altar. There were three gates (the northern, southern and eastern inner gates) which led out to the outer court (only the priests were allowed into the inner court—the rest of the people had to worship God from the outer court). Once in the outer court, there were another three gates (the southern, northern and eastern outer gates) that lead out of the temple complex. The gate that Jesus (the glory of God—Ezekiel 43:1-5) entered was the **outer eastern gate of the temple complex**. As we have read in Ezekiel 44:1-3, once Jesus has entered through the **outer** eastern gate it would remain shut and would never be opened. Also, the prince (king David), would be allowed to enter the chamber or vestibule of this gate and eat with the LORD, but the **outer** gate would remain shut forever (assurance that Jesus would never leave or cease to rule over them).

Ezekiel 44:1-3 NKJV—*the outer eastern gate of the temple complex*

Then He brought me back **to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it was shut.** ² And the Lord said to me, “**This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.** ³ As for the prince, because he is the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way.”

However, Ezekiel 46 gives us the instructions for the **inner eastern gate of the temple complex**. Simply put, the **inner gate** would be open all day every Sabbath, and closed the rest of the week, except when the prince wanted to make a voluntary peace or burnt offering on any other day. In that case, the **inner gate** would be opened only as long as the prince was there offering his sacrifice.

Ezekiel 46:1-3, 12 NKJV—**the inner eastern gate of the temple complex**

Thus says the Lord God: "**The gateway of the inner court that faces toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and on the day of the New Moon it shall be opened.** ² The prince shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway from the outside, and stand by the gatepost. The priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings. He shall worship at the threshold of the gate. **Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be shut until evening.**

¹² "Now when the prince makes a voluntary burnt offering or voluntary peace offering to the Lord, **the gate that faces toward the east shall then be opened for him; and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings as he did on the Sabbath day [referring back to the gate of the inner court, see 46:1].** Then he shall go out, and after he goes out the gate shall be shut.

Clearly, there are two eastern gates of the temple complex, the **inner** and the **outer**. The outer is reserved for the LORD, and once Jesus makes His glorious entry to the temple (Ezekiel 43:1-5), the outer eastern gate will never be opened again.

In contrast, the inner eastern gate will be opened every Sabbath and when the prince wants to offer a voluntary offering. Clearly this has nothing to do with Jesus' second coming as described in Zechariah 14:4, but rather the everyday running of the temple.

Given the above, another thing to consider is that the inner eastern gate of the Millennial temple complex won't even be built and operational and sanctified until at probably 30 or 75 days after Jesus's Second Coming (see Daniel 12:11-13). Remember that it will take at least 8 days just to consecrate the altar (Ezekiel 43:27). It appears that there will be a time of rebuilding once Jesus comes back. *Therefore, it seems impossible that Jesus could enter the inner eastern gate of the new Millennial temple complex on the day He returns to earth at His Second Coming as it won't have been built yet.*

- E. *The most important difference is that in Ezekiel's prophecy in chapters 40-48, after the door is shut, Jesus is physically ruling and reigning on the earth, over all the earth, from His throne, the temple (Ezekiel 43:1-7).*

This was obviously not the case at the time of Jesus's First Coming. Instead, after His Triumphal Entry Jesus was crucified. Ezekiel 40-48 is clearly a picture of the Millennium when Jesus will rule and reign over the whole earth from the Millennial temple that He will build in Jerusalem.

Summary: I believe that the prophecy in Ezekiel 44:1-2 (and by extension all of Ezekiel 40-48) concerning the eastern gate that will remain closed belongs to a future, yet to be built temple complex and city that will be completed after Jesus' Second Coming at the start of the Millennium. It can therefore have nothing to do with Jesus's first coming and His Triumphal Entry. Let us look forward to this exciting future that God has in store for every believer and be willing to draw near to God, seeking Him with our whole heart. May each of us be a "man after God's own heart."