



View of Kidron Valley and the Eastern Gate of Mercy from Mount of Olives.

“The glory of the Lord entered the temple through the gate facing east.” (*Ezekiel 43:4*)

Shalom Hans,

At first glance, it’s just a sealed-up, stone entryway.

Jerusalem has eight gates to its walled old city, so what’s so special about this one?

Why is there so much controversy today about a gate that you can’t even walk through?



Jaffa Gate (left) and all the gates of Jerusalem’s Old City are open, except the **eastern gate (right)**. In medieval times, Jews prayed for mercy at the gate, such as when the Crusaders had captured the inner city and would not allow Jewish People to enter. This may be how it got its current name — Gate of Mercy.

Bless Israel and the Jewish People, [click here](#)

The Gate of Mercy Is a Gate for Messiah

This east gate is beautifully called in Hebrew **Sha'ar HaRachamim**, the **Gate of Mercy**. Christians call it **the Golden Gate**.

Standing beneath this awesome structure just might send shivers down your spine, while imagining the future event that many believe could take place here.

Jewish tradition has long held that it will remain sealed until the Messiah comes through the east gate. This is the great expectation of 70,000–150,000 Jews who have been buried on the Mount of Olives over the last 3,000 years!



Aerial view of the cemetery on the Mount of Olives.

Most of them wanted to be buried on the Mount of Olives because it sits across from the Temple Mount. They believed that they would be one of the first people resurrected as the Messiah enters in through the eastern gate and ushers in the Messianic Kingdom.

However, God has been using the eastern gate of the walled city in His great plan of atonement and redemption since Biblical times, such as with the ritual of the scapegoat on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).



The Scapegoat (c. 1855), by William Holman Hunt

The Scapegoat Exits the Gate of Mercy

Before the Mercy Gate existed, the eastern gate to Jerusalem was called the Shushan Gate.

Jewish tradition says that the Jews returning from the Babylonian and Persian Empires etched on the Shushan gate an image of the palace in the Persian capital of Shushan as an appreciation to the kings of Persia for helping them rebuild the Temple and, later, Jerusalem.

In 1969, the archaeologist Dr. James Fleming discovered that a gate is located (buried) directly under the current Gate of Mercy. He and many of his colleagues today do believe that this is the Shushan gate.

In Jewish tradition, this Shushan Gate stood lower than the other gates and was built in line with the Temple entrance, inner court gate, outer court gate, and the Mount of Olives. Therefore, when the High Priest performed purification rituals on the Mount of Olives, he could see over the Shushan Gate and into the sanctuary of the Temple (*Mishnah, Middot 2:4*).

Because it is near the Mount of Olives, the Shushan Gate was used on the most holy day of the Jewish year, Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), in God's atonement process for the nation of Israel.

According to ancient Jewish writings in the Mishnah (which describe what was happening during the Second Temple period) two goats were purchased on Yom Kippur at the east gate.



This artistic rendering of the Second Temple complex illustrates a walkway over the Kidron Valley, connecting the Shushan Gate to the Mount of Olives, which was used on Yom Kippur, as described below. (Painting by James Tissot, c. 1890, cropped)

We are very grateful for all sponsorships.

sponsor Evangelism & Bible Translation

sponsor a Bible Chapter or Prophecy

One goat was sacrificed in the Temple courtyard to make atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar “because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins had been” (*Leviticus 16:16, 20*).

Another goat — the scapegoat — was sent out through this eastern gate after the High Priest laid both of his hands on its head and confessed over it “all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites — all their sins — and put them on the goat’s head” (*Leviticus 16:21*).

With all of the sins of the People of Israel on the goat, someone led it through the east gate, over a walkway that crossed the Kidron Valley (**so that no contact would be made with dead bodies in the cemetery which would make the people ritually unclean**) to the Mount of Olives, and then into the Judean wilderness, and tradition says over a cliff (*Leviticus 16:21–22; Mishnah Parah 3:6; Middot 1:3*).

While the First (Old) Covenant scapegoat left the east gate to make atonement for the nation of Israel, Christians believe that Yeshua (Jesus) entered through this gate to usher in a New Covenant atonement for the sins of all mankind.



Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, by William Hole (1846–1917)

The Scapegoat and Lamb of God Arrive from the East

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and victorious, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (*Zechariah 9:9*)

Yeshua descended the Mount of Olives and entered Jerusalem through what many believe is the east gate (*Luke 19:36–37*). He did this on the day known by Christians as Palm Sunday, the same day that the Passover lambs were being selected (and would be sacrificed four days later).

The people didn’t understand it yet, but by waving palm branches and shouting **Hosanna**, which means **save us now!** They had selected Yeshua as their Messiah, their scapegoat and Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world (*Luke 19:38*).

It was only four days later that He would carry away all of their sins on the execution stake (cross), fulfilling a Messianic Prophecy in Isaiah 53.

“Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, and though the Lord makes His life an offering for sin ...” (*Isaiah 53:10*).

Some believe that God has even more in store for this Mercy Gate in His great plan of redemption.



The Gate of Mercy faces east toward the Mount of Olives (above) where the Bible predicts Messiah will come. (*Zechariah 14:4; Acts 1:11-12*)

Ezekiel Prophecies a Closed Gate

The Prophet Ezekiel had a stunning vision of an eastern gate in another Temple that had not yet been built (in Ezekiel chapters 40–48):

“The gate is to remain shut because the Lord, the God of Israel, had entered through it. The prince himself is the only one who may sit inside the gateway to eat in the presence of the Lord. He is to enter by way of the portico of the gateway and go out the same way.” (*Ezekiel 44:3–4*)

Some Christians believe Ezekiel’s vision is speaking about the current closed gate that is in Jerusalem today. And, therefore, they believe that the prince who enters it is Yeshua when He returns. But there are problems with this interpretation.

First, the Hebrew word for **prince** is **nasi** and not **mashiach** (messiah).

Second, the east gate that Ezekiel sees is the “**outer gate of the sanctuary.**” (44:1).

And third, the “prince” makes a sin offering for himself and the people (45:22), so he cannot be the sinless, righteous Messiah Yeshua. Rather, his role is an overseer of Jerusalem.



A view of an enclosed structure in front of the Gate of Mercy inside the Temple Mount (1876).

Please help our Bible Prophecy Project and consider sponsoring a Chapter, [click now](#)

However, Ezekiel does give us a beautiful end-time Messianic prophecy.

“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” (*Ezekiel 43:2*).

If this verse sounds familiar, it’s because you may have read something similar by the Jewish Apostle John in the New Testament.

“His voice was like the sound of rushing waters... His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance” (*Revelation 1:15–16*).

Today, however, the scene on the east side of the Temple Mount is not at all glorious!



On February 22, 2019, Palestinians broke through the gates to the interior structure of the Gate of Mercy. (*@auroraintel Twitter feed*)

The Battle for the Gate

The structure in the photo above is on the Temple Mount side of the Mercy Gate. It was closed in 2003 by an Israeli court order to protect it from illegal excavations and use by Hamas affiliated groups.

However, on February 14, 2019, the Jordanian Muslim Waqf, who was given administrative control of the Temple Mount following the Six-Day War in 1967, opened the area for Muslim prayer.

Israel tried to close the structure, but Palestinian protesters continued to break in. In the aftermath of the protests, Israel reportedly reached an agreement with the Waqf to keep the site closed, while allowing Muslim worshipers to pray near it.

The Waqf intends to renovate the Gate of Mercy structure and reopen it as a place of prayer for Muslims. Last year, Israeli police reportedly entered and removed cables and construction materials from the renovation site, prompting condemnation by the Waqf.

But why is the Waqf battling for this control now, in recent years?

Is it another sign of the last days revealing that the Messiah is returning very soon?



On February 22, 2019, Palestinians entered the interior structure of the Gate of Mercy.
(@auroraintel Twitter feed)

Islam teaches that on Judgment Day, righteous Muslims who receive God's mercy will enter the gate, which in Arabic is also known as the Gate of Mercy or Gate of Eternal Life.

In addition, the Arabs have long wanted to occupy this site to prevent the Jewish Messiah and His forerunner, the Prophet Elijah, from entering the eastern gate, as Jewish tradition teaches.

This helps explain the battle for the current gate over the centuries.

Built in the 6th or 7th century AD, Muslims closed the present gate in 810. Reopened in 1102 by the Christian Crusaders, it was walled up by the first Muslim Sultan of Egypt and Syria, Saladin, after regaining Jerusalem in 1187.

Ottoman Sultan Suleiman rebuilt it together with the city walls, but walled it up again in 1541, and it has remained closed ever since.

The Ottomans (who were Muslim) built a cemetery in front of it, most likely because Islam teaches that Elijah is a Jewish priest. And in the Bible, Jewish priests are not allowed to come near dead bodies.

Nevertheless, all of that trouble created by the Muslims to stop the Jewish Messiah from coming through this eastern Gate of Mercy is in vain.

Yeshua, who walked on water, who was able to get out of a sealed tomb, and who suddenly appeared in a room that was locked (*John 20:19*) cannot be stopped by any sealed gate or cemetery.



Yeshua Goes up a Mountain to Pray, by James Tissot

To conclude, the Shushan Gate is buried right below the Gate of Mercy that exists today.

That is likely the gate that Yeshua rode through on a humble donkey on the day the Passover lambs were being selected (Palm Sunday), fulfilling Zechariah's Messianic prophecy in chapter 9 verse 9.

And maybe He will enter the eastern Mercy Gate when He returns. In the meantime, the current Gate of Mercy can be seen as a symbol of God's merciful plan of redemption for all, including you, Hans.

Please help us proclaim Yeshua to Israel with your gift of \$100, \$50, \$250, \$500 or \$1000

YES, I want to Give a Special Gift Today

sponsor Evangelism & Bible Translation

sponsor a Bible Chapter or Prophecy

Give your Tithe

***** DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL *****

To **Unsubscribe**, please scroll down to the unsubscribe link.

For Help with Making a DONATION, Please go to our Contact Page.

Financial Partners, please CLICK on the following link: <http://free.messianicbible.com/contact/>
(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it in your browser.)

Financial Partners, we value your support and we will respond to you as quickly as possible.

Copyright © 2024 MessianicBible.com
Articles cannot be copied without permission

Messianic Bible
Bibles For Israel
P.O. Box 8900
Pueblo, CO 81008