



**ARCHBISHOP SHANE B. JANZEN  
PRIMATE OF THE TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN COMMUNION**

**MESSAGE FOR LENT 2019**



IN the Old Testament there is the vision of the Prophet Ezekiel beholding the glory of God departing from the Temple in Jerusalem. It is a powerful vision, with an even more powerful message. A vision and message that is relevant to the Church today as we enter into the holy Season of Lent.

God's dwelling among a people or nation or church, or in the heart and mind of a person, is conditional upon that people, that nation, church or person being obedient to His commands. Sin, idolatry, false worship will cause God to withdraw His divine presence, and with it His glory. It is with this in mind that the Suffrages following the Lord's Prayer at Mattins and Evensong, pray: "And take not thy Holy Spirit from us." In that prayer we petition God not to depart from us, not to take His glory from among us.

The Church, the nations, each congregation and every person, has a choice whether to be faithful to God or to reject Him. The Apostle Paul taught that the greatest mystery of all is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (*Colossians 1:27*) Jesus Christ living in His Church and in His people is the most important thing we can experience in this life; it is the glory of God dwelling in us as temples of the Holy Spirit. Yet one of the main lessons we learn from Scripture is that God dwells only where He is wanted, worshipped and obeyed. This is true of nations; it is true also of churches, congregations, homes, and every individual.

God withdrawing His glory is never what He wants or wills. Whenever God's place of dwelling—whether a person, a church, or a nation—is filled with false worship, continued sin, blasphemy, or hatred, there is no place for God's glory.

In so many ways our society, and even some of our churches and religious institutions, have organized themselves and their laws and worship so that God is no longer welcome or revered. Through time, the world has crowded out the divine, and there is no place for God; as a result, His glory is not to be found. Jesus illustrated this in the Parable of the Sower, when the new plants were choked by the thorns – the cares and demands of the world – and the life of faith died.

There are times when we as Christians, when we as a Church, crowd our days with the demands and concerns of the world, with little time for prayer and worship, for quiet time and meditation on God's Word — and then we find ourselves wondering why God is not present, blessing our lives. In all of this, especially now in Lent, we should ask ourselves the all-important question: Does God dwell among us? Do we manifest His glory in our lives? Are we obedient to His Word? Is there room for God in the temple of my soul?

The Epistle to the Hebrews warns us not to neglect so great a salvation as that which has been offered to us—yet at times we may well come to the realization that we are doing just that. As we enter into the Season of Lent, we are given yet another opportunity to reflect on our lives and where needed, to turn back to God; to clear away the sins and distractions which crowd out our worship and prevent God's glory from dwelling in us.

Through this Season of Lent, may each of us experience the love and longing for the Lord which calls us back to Him; leading us to the joyous celebration of Eastertide!

*+Shane*