

[TOP](#)

## Easter: Echoes From The Tomb

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### Easter: Echoes From The Tomb

By George H. Guthrie

JACKSON, Tenn. -- Leaning forward, you strain to hear. The fresh, cool breeze of the garden morning brushes your cheek. Bending, you look into that open, black-dark mouth of the tomb, its only light the sun's thin finger reaching past your shoulder to touch the corner of a bone box. But the bones for which it waits have changed, gotten up and walked away. No smell of death; only the sweet scent of burial spices hanging in the air.

Bouncing off the walls of this vacated tomb, you may hear echoes from another garden where the lie, "Has God really said?" prevailed, and death was ushered in. But now, in this garden the lie has been silenced with a resounding, "Yes!! His Word lives!" and death has been driven out, the curse of Eden swallowed up in this empty space.

And do you hear the echo of righteous Noah, who built a deliverance to carry God's creations through the judgment, or Father Abraham, through whom all the peoples of the earth would be blessed? Do you hear the echoes of Egypt's oppressive slavery turned inside-out in powerful salvation, and at its peak an innocent lamb slain so that death would pass over? Do you hear the echo of new life found through parting waters, or of bread, water, and the Shekinah tent given in a wilderness? Do you hear the death-dealing law, unable to give life, at once fulfilled and filled full by the Life? Do you hear these echoes?

As you now kneel on this rough-hewn path leading into where Hope was dead for a moment, do you hear Joshua's name, bouncing 'round these walls, the same name as "Yeshua," "Jesus," whose very name shouts "Salvation!""? Walls have crumbled. Evil has been judged, banished from the land. Joshua led God's people to a promised place, a place flowing with all good things, as does now his namesake, who takes us to a promised rest harder bought. And the chaos of Judges too rings through this darkened grave, its "every man did what was right in his own eyes" now crushed under a staggering obedience, one Man having done what was right to give us new hearts, making us right with God.

King David's words, "You will not allow your Holy One to see decay," hang in this sweet air, and His Son, the ultimate Man, the ultimate King, receives the coronation song and, finally, dominion of the world and of a different kind of Kingdom. And this Easter tomb, having become a temple of sorts, housing God, echoes with the words of blessing over Solomon's temple, its walls now torn down but built up in flesh and bone, stone by stone, to go walking through the world, taking the Light of the Gospel, the Presence, to all the black corners of the earth. The temple decisively cleansed by one Offering, the Great High Priest intercedes, never to offer another sacrifice, the way into the holiest place forever opened by His trail-blazing life.

Here too, in this now-hollow crypt ring full the words of Isaiah, "On this mountain ... He will destroy death forever," and

Jeremiah's "they will all know Me," and do you hear Ezekiel's bones rattle with hope? Exile having been exiled, this now is the true return, the Kingdom come, God's people ruled by one ever-living King.

A baby's cry, warbling out from to this place. Vulnerability led to gain dominion, and avoid the terror anticipate this shaking of the earth "no greater love," and Love's power that shushed a storm and raised a child. You hear them here in this cavernous glory.

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And now you turn looking from this garden to the outpouring, the Spirit come, and to the church spreading down the ages, and to those who die in Hope, and you see us. For all these echoes from the Easter tomb, you realize, are our Story, and we, at the mouth of this conquered grave, stand at the center of His Story.

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