

The Book of Ezekiel

Lesson 20: The Glory Returns and Worship Restored -- Ezekiel 43:1–44:31

Back in Lesson 4 we watched in sorrow as the glory of the LORD lifted from the threshold, paused over the city, and rose from the mountain to the east, abandoning the defiled temple to judgment. Now, after the long measuring of chapters 40 through 42, Ezekiel is brought to the eastern gate, and the glory of the God of Israel comes from the east. The sound is like the roar of many waters, the earth shines with His glory, and the glory enters the house by the gate facing east.

What the prophet saw depart now returns. God Himself fills the house, and a voice declares from within, This is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever. The whole point of the measured temple is here: not stone and dimension, but the presence of God among His people.

With the glory returned, the LORD calls His people to holiness. They are to be ashamed of their iniquities, to put their abominations far away, and to keep the ordinances of His house. Chapter 44 turns to the shut eastern gate, the exclusion of the unfaithful, and the faithful sons of Zadok who alone may draw near, all underscoring that to dwell with a holy God is to be made holy.

We read this as God's promise to dwell among His people, fulfilled when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, fulfilled in the church where God lives by His Spirit, and fulfilled finally when the dwelling of God is with man forever. The priesthood and offerings here are described in the language of the old economy, but they point beyond themselves to our great High Priest and His once-for-all sacrifice. They do not predict a reinstated literal sacrificial system, which would deny the cross.

Group Discussion: Read Ezekiel 43:1–9 aloud as a class. Remind everyone of Lesson 4, where this same glory departed from the temple to the east. Trace the movement: the glory left, and now from the east it returns and fills the house. Ask the group to weigh the declaration in verse 7, This is the place of my throne, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever. Discuss together how this promise of God dwelling with His people reaches its goal in Christ (John 1:14) and in God's presence with the church forever (Revelation 21:3).

Personal Reflection: The glory that departed because of sin returns to dwell among a people called to holiness. Read 43:10–11 and let the vision shame you, in the godly sense, over anything in your life that has driven God's presence to the edges. Ask whether your reverence in worship and your conduct through the week reflect a person in whom God Himself has chosen to dwell (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). Confess and turn.

Read Ezekiel 43:1–44:31

Study Questions

1. The glory of the LORD returns from the east and fills the house (43:1-5), the same glory that departed to the east in chapters 10 and 11. What does this return and indwelling reveal about God's covenant faithfulness and His settled purpose to dwell among His people?
2. God's glory departed because of Israel's abominations and now returns to a holy house. What in your own life has driven the sense of God's nearness to the margins, and what would invite His presence back to the center?
3. The voice declares, This is the place of my throne, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever (43:7). How does Scripture show this dwelling fulfilled when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14) and in God's presence with His people forever (Revelation 21:3)?
4. God tells Ezekiel to describe the house to Israel that they may be ashamed of their iniquities (43:10-11). When is shame a healthy, godly response, and how is that godly grief different from the worldly sorrow that only crushes (2 Corinthians 7:10)?
5. The altar is consecrated through a prescribed ritual before it can be used (43:18-27). What does the careful consecration of the place of approach teach about the holiness required to come near to God, and how is that approach now opened to us through Christ (Hebrews 10:19-22)?

6. The eastern gate is shut because the LORD has entered by it, and it remains shut (44:1-3). What does it stir in you to know that God's presence so marks a place that it is set apart from common traffic? Where do you guard what God has set apart in your own life?
7. The LORD rebukes the bringing of foreigners uncircumcised in heart and flesh into His sanctuary, and the unfaithful Levites bear their punishment, while the faithful sons of Zadok draw near (44:6-16). What does this teach about who may approach God, and how is faithfulness, not mere lineage, the heart of acceptable service?
8. The priests are charged to teach the people the difference between the holy and the common, the clean and the unclean (44:23). Where do you need to grow in discerning that difference, and who in your life looks to you to model it?
9. The vision restores an altar, priests, and offerings in the language of the old covenant. Why must we not read this as a prophecy of a future literal temple in Jerusalem with reinstated animal sacrifices? Show from Scripture that such a return would deny the once-for-all, final sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice (Hebrews 9:11-14; 10:1-18), and explain how these symbols instead point to our greater High Priest who entered the true sanctuary by His own blood (Hebrews 9:24-26).
10. If God has truly come to dwell among His people, and you yourself are His temple, how will the returning glory of God reshape your reverence, your holiness, and your worship in the days ahead?

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: John 1:14, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory; Revelation 21:3, the dwelling of God is with man, and He will dwell with them; Hebrews 9:11–14, Christ entered the holy places by His own blood, securing eternal redemption; Hebrews 10:1–18, by one offering He has perfected forever those being sanctified; 2 Corinthians 7:10, godly grief produces repentance leading to salvation.

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