

The LORD Is There

Exile, Glory, and the God Who Comes Back: A Study of Ezekiel

Session 15. The Glory Comes Home

Reading: Ezekiel 40:1-4; 43:1-12; 44:1-3 (with the temple vision surveyed)

Part One

Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim

The group discovers that the glory that walked out of the temple in chapters 10 and 11 returns by the very same east gate, and they weigh for themselves what this measured, visionary temple is actually pointing to.

Catholic Touchstone

Christ is the true temple, the definitive dwelling of God among men; the Church, the soul in grace, and the heavenly Jerusalem are where his glory now takes up residence, which is why the tabernacle lamp burns and why the Fathers saw even Mary in the sealed east gate.

This is the emotional payoff of the whole study, and it arrives directly after the Gog oracle: last week the last enemy was destroyed and God promised never to hide his face again, and tonight the group finds out what that looks like architecturally. In session 4 your group watched the glory leave the temple in slow, reluctant stages, pausing at the east gate, standing on the mountain east of the city. Tonight, fourteen years after Jerusalem's fall, Ezekiel is carried in vision to a very high mountain and shown a temple measured gate by gate, and then the glory comes back from the east, by the same gate it left through, and fills the house. The Follow the glory thread, planted in session 1, resolves tonight. Let the group find the reversal themselves; do not announce it. Then help them do the harder, more interesting work: this temple was never built, so what is it? Hold the question open long enough for them to feel it before the New Testament answers it.

What You Need to Know

A dated hope

Ezekiel 40:1 stamps the vision with a date: the twenty-fifth year of the exile, fourteen years after the city fell, usually reckoned to around 573 BC. Every dated oracle so far has been a countdown to catastrophe. This one is different. Ezekiel is taken "in the visions of God" to a very high mountain in the land of Israel and meets a man whose appearance is like bronze, holding a measuring reed. The genre marker matters: the text itself calls this a vision, not a construction contract. The prophet's commission in 40:4 is to look, to hear, to set his mind on everything shown him, and to declare it to the house of Israel.

Your two-minute flyover of chapters 40 to 42

You will not read chapters 40 to 42 aloud; you will survey them. Rehearse a brief guided flyover in your own words, roughly along these lines: a wall around the whole complex; a great east gate, mirrored by identical north and south gates; an outer court, then an inner court higher up, entered by matching gates; chambers for priests; the temple building itself at the top and center; everything measured with the reed, threshold by threshold, in careful symmetry, with holiness increasing as you move inward and upward. Two facts to hold ready but not to hand over early: nowhere in the vision is anyone

commanded to build this, and when the exiles returned under Zerubbabel they did not build it. No temple we know of, the postexilic or the Herodian included, was built to this plan.

- Keep the flyover to two minutes; its job is to make the group feel the exactness, not to memorize the floor plan.
- If someone asks about the sacrifices described later in the vision, the objection bench below has your answer.

The return of the glory (leader only; the group discovers this)

Ezekiel 43:1-5 is a deliberate, step-by-step reversal of the departure your group traced in session 4. In 10:18-19 the glory left the threshold and paused at the east gate of the house; in 11:22-23 it went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain east of the city. Now Ezekiel is brought to the gate facing east, and the glory of the God of Israel comes from the east, enters by the east gate, and fills the temple. Ezekiel himself makes the identification for us in 43:3: this is the same vision he saw by the river Chebar in chapter 1, and the same he saw when the city was destroyed. Same glory, same seer, same gate, opposite direction. Do not preach this. Send them to the texts and let them find it.

The shut gate and the prince

In 44:1-3 the east gate is shut, permanently, for one stated reason: the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered by it. God's door is not reused. One figure, the prince (Hebrew *nasi*), is permitted to sit in the gate's vestibule and eat bread before the LORD. Ezekiel never calls him king; he has often been connected with the Davidic figure the study has been tracking since 21:27 (the one whose right it is) and 34:23-24 (my servant David). Christian tradition also drew a second, tender reading from the sealed gate: St. Ambrose and the later Latin tradition saw in the gate through which the Lord alone passed, and which remained shut, a figure of Mary's perpetual virginity. Present that reading honestly for what it is: a venerable spiritual reading cherished by the liturgy, not the literal sense of the verse, and not the ground of the doctrine, which the Church holds on other grounds (CCC 499).

How the Church reads this temple

The Church has never issued a definitive verse-by-verse interpretation of Ezekiel 40 to 48, so hold the latitude honestly. What is fixed for a Catholic reader: the sacrifices of the old law are not coming back, because Christ's one sacrifice is complete (Hebrews 10), and Christ himself is the true temple (John 2:19-21; CCC 586, 1197). Within that frame, the tradition reads the vision along the senses of Scripture (CCC 117): literally, a real vision given to real exiles as a certified promise that God will dwell with his people again; and spiritually, fulfilled in ascending landings: the body of Christ, the Church built of living stones, the baptized soul in grace, and finally the heavenly Jerusalem, where John sees no temple at all because the Lord God and the Lamb are its temple. The measured exactness is not wasted in this reading; it means the promise is definite, not a mood.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

The third filling

Twice before in Israel's story the glory has filled a newly prepared dwelling: the tabernacle at Sinai (Exodus 40:34-35) and Solomon's temple at its dedication (1 Kings 8:10-11). Ezekiel 43:5, where the glory of the LORD fills the temple, strongly echoes both and is often read as the third scene in that series. Anyone with the passages open can verify the echo, which makes it your strongest card: the vision is announcing a new Sinai moment, a new dedication, God moving back in.

The mountain east of the city

In 11:23 the departing glory stood on the mountain east of the city, traditionally identified with the Mount of Olives. Luke shows Jesus coming down that descent toward the city and then into the temple (Luke 19:37-45); the correspondence is suggestive, and Luke does not say he entered from the east. The tradition has long savored the correspondence. Offer it as suggestive rather than as proof; the geography is certain, the theological intention of the evangelists at this point is an inference.

The Word pitched his tent

John 1:14 says the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and the Greek verb is *eskenosen*, literally that he pitched his tent, he tabernacled among us, "and we have beheld his glory." John 2:19-21 completes the thought: Jesus speaks of the temple of his body. The glory that came back through the east gate of Ezekiel's vision came back, in the fullness of time, in flesh. From there the fulfillment cascades outward: the Church as God's building of living stones (1 Peter 2:4-5), the Christian as temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19, which lands directly on session 12's promise of the Spirit within), the Eucharistic presence, and at last the city where no temple stands because God himself is its temple (Revelation 21:22).

Voices of the Church

Read these aloud where they land. Each is either a direct citation or an honest summary, labelled as such.

St. Gregory the Great, d. 604

Gregory preached a whole series of homilies on these very chapters while Rome itself was under threat from Lombard armies, and he eventually broke the series off because of the siege. In substance he teaches that Ezekiel's measured temple is the Church and the faithful soul: the gates, walls, steps, and chambers signify the life of grace, and the measuring itself teaches that God builds his dwelling in us deliberately, virtue by virtue, nothing left approximate. A man watching his own city fail preached that God's true building was still going up.

Homilies on Ezekiel, Book 2. Summary of his teaching, not a direct quotation.

For the group. For young adults living in what can feel like a collapsing culture, Gregory is the proof that this session's reading is not escapism; it was forged under siege.

St. Ambrose, d. 397

Ambrose, in substance, reads the east gate of Ezekiel 44 as a figure of Mary: the gate that faces the sunrise, through which the Lord alone passed into the world, and which remains sealed. What the vision honors in architecture, the sealed door of God's own entrance, Ambrose sees honored in a person, the Virgin whose womb was the Lord's one gate into human history and remained wholly his.

De institutione virginis (On the Instruction of a Virgin). Summary of his teaching, not a direct quotation.

For the group. This shows the group how the Church's spiritual reading of the Old Testament works at its most tender: not forcing the text, but recognizing a pattern God loves to repeat.

St. Cyril of Alexandria, d. 444

Cyril teaches in his commentary on John that in the Word made flesh the glory of God has taken up its dwelling among men and the Lord's own body is the true temple. What the ancient sanctuary held in shadow and figure, the Incarnation holds in truth; and because the Word has made our nature his temple, he makes us in turn, through his Spirit, temples of the living God.

Commentary on John, locus not pinned. Summary of his teaching, not a direct quotation.

For the group. Cyril closes tonight's loop: the group will find the returning glory in Ezekiel, then find in John where it finally landed. Cyril says out loud what they will have pieced together.

Catechism Connection

The Catechism says

CCC 586. Far from being hostile to the temple, Jesus identified himself with it, presenting himself as God's definitive dwelling place among men; his body, destroyed and raised, is the true temple.

CCC 1197. Christ is the true temple of God, the place where his glory dwells; by grace Christians also become temples of the Holy Spirit, living stones from which the Church is built.

CCC 756. The Church is God's building: the holy temple built of living stones, the dwelling place of God among men, the holy city and new Jerusalem.

CCC 117. Beyond the literal sense, Scripture carries a spiritual sense, divided into allegorical, moral, and anagogical; this is the frame for reading Ezekiel's temple as pointing to Christ, the life of grace, and heaven.

CCC 499. The Church confesses Mary's real and perpetual virginity; she is celebrated as ever-virgin. Cited here for the doctrine itself, which does not rest on Ezekiel 44; the gate image is the tradition's poetry about a truth held on other grounds.

Thread Watch

Thread Watch

Follow the glory (resolve). Planted at the Chebar in session 1, walked out in session 4, tonight it comes home by the same east gate. After question 3's discovery lands, name the arc out loud: we have been following the glory for fifteen weeks, and tonight it came back. Let the room feel the door close on that thread.

The LORD is there (develop). 43:7, God will dwell in the midst of his people for ever, is one step from the book's final sentence. Point at the permanence; do NOT reveal the city's name. Next week resolves this.

Son of man (develop). God addresses Ezekiel as son of man at 43:7, showing the seer a homecoming his own generation will never build. The one who ate the scroll of lamentation now swallows a floor plan of hope.

Whose right it is (develop). The prince at the shut gate (44:3) quietly joins 21:27 and 34:23-24. Connect the dots lightly and hedge honestly; do not overclaim a one-to-one identification.

The everlasting covenant (develop). The 'for ever' of 43:7 and 43:9 picks up last week's ending, the sanctuary in their midst for evermore (37:26-28). Same promise, now given an address.

Objection Bench

Leader only. Do not raise these unless someone in the room does.

Chapters 43 to 46 of this same vision prescribe sin offerings and a functioning altar. Whatever reading you take, doesn't that contradict Hebrews?

The vision speaks the only sacrificial vocabulary Israel had; within its idiom, restored communion with God is described as restored worship. The Christian reading holds that the reality signified is the one perfect sacrifice of Christ, which the old offerings always foreshadowed. Notice that anyone who presses the sacrifices literally has the same problem in reverse and sharper: Hebrews 10 rules out any return of atoning animal sacrifice, full stop.

Isn't the Marian reading of the shut gate just pious imagination pasted onto the text?

Distinguish the senses. The literal sense is stated in the verse: the gate is sealed in honor because the LORD entered by it. The spiritual reading, Ambrose's and the liturgy's, discerns the same divine pattern in Mary. The doctrine of the perpetual virginity does not depend on this verse and the Church has never claimed it does; the image is a treasure of the tradition, not a proof text. Presented that way, it is both honest and beautiful.

If this temple was never built, wasn't the prophecy simply false?

The text calls itself "visions of God" (40:2) and never commands construction. Its own details push past architecture: a very high mountain that matches no geography, holiness spreading over the whole mountaintop. A promise can be kept in a greater key than it was given. Jesus keeping the temple promise in his own body is fulfillment, not failure.

Session Goals

1. The group discovers the east-gate reversal themselves, by putting chapters 10 and 11 side by side with 43, and the Follow the glory thread resolves.
2. They weigh the literal-future-temple reading at full strength and answer it from the text and the New Testament.
3. They connect the returned glory to the Incarnation, the Church, the Eucharist, and their own baptized bodies.
4. They meet the shut gate and the prince, including the Marian tradition, with honest labels on what is literal sense, what is spiritual reading, and what is defined doctrine.
5. They leave with the 'for ever' of 43:7 ringing, ready for the book's last word next week.

Time Note

Planned for 75 to 90 minutes

For 90 minutes: Win 10; reading plus the two-minute flyover 15; questions 1 and 2, 10; the gate discovery and debrief 12; questions 4 to 6, 15; the John discovery and the steelman 15; questions 9 and 10, 8; Send, Live It, and closing prayer 5.

If you are running long, cut in this order.

1. Cut the Dig Deeper boxes first.
2. Fold question 4 into the debrief of question 3; one sentence from you covers it.
3. Trim the chapters 40 to 42 flyover to two sentences: a measured temple, courts rising toward the center.
4. If still short, deliver question 10's synthesis yourself as a sixty-second summary instead of a discussion.

Part Two

Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Pray together

Lord God of Israel, you have never abandoned your people, even when your glory seemed to walk away. You measure what you mean to build, and you finish what you measure. Tonight, turn our faces to the east. Come back through every door we have watched you leave by; fill this room, and fill us, as you once filled the temple. We ask this through Christ our Lord, in whom your glory came home for good. Amen.

Win

Open questions. No wrong answers. Let everyone speak before you move on.

W1. Tell us about a time you went back to a place that used to matter to you: a childhood home, an old school, a church. What did walking back in feel like?

W2. When something in your life breaks badly, are you a 'repair the original' person or a 'replace it with something better' person? Why?

Both questions are seeding tonight's tension: does God repair the old temple or build something greater? Do not resolve it; just enjoy the answers.

Read

Read aloud

Two readers for Ezekiel 40:1-4. Then you give a two-minute guided flyover of chapters 40 to 42 from your prep notes; do not read them aloud. Then one strong reader for 43:1-12, slowly; this is the summit of the book. Hold 44:1-3 back until question 9.

Build

Numbered inductive questions. Ask, wait, let the group work the text. The ANSWER boxes are for you to share after the discussion, not before it.

A dated hope

1. Look at 40:1-4. What details of time, place, and instruction does Ezekiel give us before the tour begins, and why might each one matter?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Three details. Time: the twenty-fifth year of the exile, fourteen years after the city fell, dated as precisely as the oracles of doom were; God stamps his promises with dates just as he stamped his judgments. Place: in the visions of God, on a very high mountain in the land of Israel; the text itself tells us what genre we are in, and the precise geographical referent is debated. Instruction: look, listen, set your mind on everything, and declare it to the house of Israel. Ezekiel is shown this not as a private consolation but as a message. After thirteen sessions of watching this book, the group should notice the mood change: the countdown clock has become a promise with a timestamp.

Dig Deeper

The twenty-fifth year, at the beginning of the year on the tenth day of the month, has struck many scholars as pointed: the tenth day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement, when the jubilee trumpet sounded (Leviticus 25:9), and twenty-five is half of fifty, the jubilee number, as if the exile has reached the turn toward release. It is a suggestive proposal, not a certainty; offer it as such.

2. After the flyover of chapters 40 to 42: why do you think God gives a grieving people a temple in exact measurements, gate by gate and cubit by cubit, rather than a paragraph of comfort?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Let them argue this one. Strong answers: measurement means intention; nobody drafts a floor plan for a building they do not mean to inhabit. Measurement means order and holiness; the courts rise step by step toward the center, and you always know how near the Holy One you stand. Measurement makes a promise definite instead of a mood; vague comfort evaporates, but a blueprint can be held. And 43:10-11, which they will reach shortly, gives God's own reason: the plan itself is meant to be shown to Israel. One caution to plant now, gently: notice that in the whole vision, no one is ever commanded to build it.

The glory comes back

Live discovery

Split into two teams. Team one, go to Ezekiel 10:18-19 and report: when the glory left the temple building, where did it pause, and at which gate? Team two, go to Ezekiel 11:22-23 and report: when the glory left the city altogether, where did it stop, and in which direction? Then we will read 43:1-5 together and compare.

Let them find it. Ezekiel 10:18-19; Ezekiel 11:22-23

3. Before we talk about 43:1-5, we need to check something against our own past. Where exactly did the glory go when it left, back in session 4?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Team one finds the glory leaving the threshold and pausing at the east gate of the house of the LORD. Team two finds it going up from the midst of the city and standing on the mountain east of the city. Then 43:1-5: Ezekiel is brought to the gate facing east, the glory of the God of Israel comes from the east, enters by the east gate, and fills the house. It is an exact reversal, the same road walked in the opposite direction. God retraces his steps (that image is ours, not the text's, but it is what the geography shows). When this lands, name the thread: we have been following the glory since the first night of this study. Tonight it came home.

4. In 43:3 Ezekiel insists this is the same vision he saw by the river Chebar, and the same he saw when the city was destroyed. Why does it matter that the returning glory is the same glory?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Because it means God did not come back changed, softened, or replaced. The glory that judged Jerusalem and the

glory that comes home are one; his holiness and his mercy are not two gods taking turns. It also means the exiles' strange consolation was real: the glory they saw in Babylon in chapter 1 was never a lesser, travel-sized presence but the same throne that had filled the temple. And it certifies the seer: one witness has seen all three appearances, so the promise carries the same authority as the judgments that came true on schedule.

5. Read 43:6-9 again. What does God claim this place is, how long does he intend to stay, and what does he ask of Israel in return?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

He calls it the place of his throne and the place of the soles of his feet, where he will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel for ever. The word to sit with is 'for ever.' The tabernacle was left, Shiloh was left, Solomon's temple was left; every previous dwelling was forfeitable, and this one is declared permanent. The condition: no more defiling his holy name, no more harlotry (the group will hear chapter 16 in that word), no more royal corruption pressed up against his sanctuary. Connect it to session 12: a permanent dwelling is only possible among a people with new hearts, which is exactly what God promised to supply himself. The permanence rests on his gift, not on their improvement.

Dig Deeper

The complaint about the kings, their thresholds beside God's threshold with only a wall between, seems to reflect the old palace-temple complex, where royal burials and royal politics crowded the sanctuary. In the vision, the prince gets an honored place, but the throne belongs to God alone.

6. In 43:10-12, God tells Ezekiel to describe the temple to the house of Israel 'that they may be ashamed of their iniquities.' How can a floor plan make anyone ashamed? And what is 'the law of the temple' in verse 12?

Take it as far as the room wants

Floor. If the group stalls, ask: has seeing something beautiful ever made you ashamed of your own mess, in a way that made you clean up rather than give up?

Ground. Draw the contrast explicitly: one room called most holy in Solomon's temple; a whole mountaintop called most holy here. Ask what direction holiness is moving.

Depth. Connect to 36:26-27: only a people carrying God's own Spirit could live on a mountain where everything is most holy. The architecture presumes the heart transplant.

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The blueprint works like a mirror (our image): seeing in detail what God has prepared exposes in detail what they wasted. Shame here is not humiliation but the ache of recognizing squandered love, the same movement as 16:61 and 36:31, where remembering under mercy leads home rather than into despair. The law of the temple in verse 12: the whole territory on top of the mountain shall be most holy. In the old temple, 'most holy' was one small room; now it is the entire summit. Holiness is expanding outward past the building's walls. Say no more than that; where the expansion ends up flowing is next week's discovery.

Where the glory landed

Live discovery

Two teams again. Team one, read John 1:14 and note the two key words: what did the Word do among us, and what did we behold? (Leader: the verb translated 'dwelt' is *eskenosen*, literally 'pitched his tent,' 'tabernacled.') Team two, read John 2:18-22 and answer: when Jesus says 'destroy this temple,' what temple does John say he meant?

Let them find it. John 1:14; John 2:18-22

7. This temple was never built. The exiles went home and built a different, humbler temple, and even Herod's grand rebuild followed another plan. So did the glory ever actually come back through the east gate? The New Testament thinks it has an answer. Let's find it.

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Team one: the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, "and we have beheld his glory." John is deliberately using tabernacle language: the glory that filled the tent and the temple has taken up residence in flesh. Team two: "he spoke of the temple of his body." Put the two together and the New Testament's claim comes into focus: Christians have read the return of the glory as fulfilled above all in Christ, not in masonry. That is the tradition's reading of Ezekiel, not a definition of the Church. One more correspondence to offer, marked as suggestive rather than proof: the mountain east of the city where the glory stood in 11:23 is the Mount of Olives, and the Gospels show Jesus entering the temple from precisely that direction.

8. But wait. Is reading the temple as Jesus actually fair to Ezekiel? Let's give the other reading its full strength before we answer.

Build then press

The strongest form of the objection. The most natural reading of a blueprint is a building. Ezekiel gives dimensions, gate by gate, cubit by cubit; 43:10-11 even commands that the plan be written down before Israel's eyes so that they may observe and perform it. Many sincere Christians therefore hold that this temple will be literally built in a future age, with its worship restored, and the careful ones anticipate the obvious objection: the offerings of chapters 43 to 46, they say, are memorial and commemorative rather than atoning, looking back at the cross the way the Mass does, so that nothing in the vision competes with Hebrews. On that reading the plan can be literal without unsaying Calvary. Prophecies of the exile's end came true literally; the fall of Jerusalem came true literally; on what principle do we suddenly go symbolic in chapter 40? Isn't the honest reading the literal one?

Answering from the text. Take it seriously; it is a real reading held by serious people, and its instinct, that God keeps his promises concretely, is right. But answer from the text first. The vision calls itself "visions of God" and sets the temple on a very high mountain that matches no geography in Judah; it never commands construction, only contemplation and shame unto conversion; and its own law, the whole mountaintop most holy, is already bursting the categories of architecture. Then answer from the New Testament, which is the Christian's inspired commentary: Jesus says the temple to be destroyed and raised is his body; Hebrews 10:11-14 teaches that by one offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. Meet the memorial version squarely rather than the crude one: the Church's difficulty with it is Christological before it is textual, since the one memorial the New Testament gives us of that sacrifice is the Eucharist, and a restored Levitical system alongside it would be a second sign of the same reality with no warrant in the New Testament; and John, granted the Bible's final vision of the world to come, reports: "I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" (Revelation 21:22). The

fulfillment is not less literal than a building; it is more solid. God did not keep the promise in a smaller key than he gave it, but in a greater one. And note the honest latitude: the Church has not bound Catholics to one verse-by-verse exegesis of these chapters; what is fixed is that Christ is the true temple and his sacrifice is unrepeatable.

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The literalist reading rightly insists God keeps promises concretely, but the vision's own features (a self-declared vision, an impossible mountain, no build order, holiness overflowing the floor plan) point past masonry, and the New Testament names the destination: the temple of his body, the once-for-all sacrifice, and finally a city with no temple because God and the Lamb are its temple. The promise is fulfilled in a greater key, not abandoned. Where the Church has not defined the details, we hold our reading with confidence and our neighbors with charity.

The sealed gate and the prince

9. Now read 44:1-3. Why is the east gate shut, and who is the one person allowed to sit in it? What do you make of each?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The gate is shut for a stated reason: the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut. God's door is sealed in honor; no foot traffic through the King's own entrance. The exception is the prince, the *nasi*, who may sit in the gate to eat bread before the LORD, entering by the vestibule. Two threads to pull gently. First, the prince: Ezekiel never calls him king, and he eats a covenant meal in the gate the LORD entered by; the group has met this figure before, the one whose right the crown is (21:27) and 'my servant David' (34:23-24). The book leaves him mysterious; so should we, while noticing that every mystery in this book has been leaning in the same direction. Second, the tradition's tender reading: St. Ambrose and the Latin tradition after him saw in this sealed gate, through which the Lord alone passed, a figure of Mary, ever-virgin, the one gate by which God entered the world. That is a spiritual reading, not the literal sense, and the doctrine does not rest on this verse (CCC 499); but it shows how the Church reads, always watching for the pattern of God's ways to repeat.

Dig Deeper

Why *nasi*, prince, rather than *melek*, king? Perhaps because in this vision there is only one throne, and 43:7 has already said whose it is. The Davidic figure reigns, but as one who serves at the King's gate; a shape that should look familiar by the time we reach the Gospels.

So what is this temple?

10. Put the whole evening on the table. This measured temple was never built, the glory returned to it in vision, Jesus called his body the temple, and Revelation's city has no temple at all. So when you read Ezekiel 40 to 48 as a Christian, what are you actually looking at?

Take it as far as the room wants

Floor. Simplest version: ask, where can you go, this week, to sit near the returned glory? If someone says the tabernacle at church, the whole session has landed.

Ground. Walk the four landings in order: his body, his Church, your body, the city to come. Ask which one they find

hardest to believe.

Depth. Ask why God might prefer to fulfill a promise in a greater key than he gave it, and whether that changes how they read the promises they are still waiting on.

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Resist the either/or; the Church reads Scripture in layered senses (CCC 117), and this vision rewards all of them. Literally: a true vision given to real exiles, a certified promise that God would dwell with his people again, drawn with the exactness of something meant. Spiritually, the fulfillment lands in ascending stages: the body of Christ, the true temple where the glory tabernacled (CCC 586); the Church, God's building of living stones (1 Peter 2:4-5; CCC 756); each baptized person, a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is session 12's promise with an address on it (1 Corinthians 6:19; CCC 1197); and finally the heavenly Jerusalem, where the scaffolding of temple drops away because God himself is the dwelling. One honest hedge: the Church has not defined a single exhaustive interpretation of these chapters, so hold the layers with confidence and the details with humility. And one thing to feel before we close: 43:7 says for ever. Next week the book gets its last word, and it is about an address.

Send

Open questions. Let these land in silence if they need to.

S1. Is there a part of your life where you quietly assumed God left for good? What would change if you believed he intends to come back in through the same door he seemed to leave by?

S2. If your body really is a temple the glory has moved into, what is one honest way your week would look different if you lived like the Lord is in residence?

Live It This Week

Practices

1. Make fifteen minutes before the tabernacle this week, more if you can. Bring Ezekiel 43:1-5 and read it slowly in front of the lamp; let that lamp be your east gate. That image is ours, not Ezekiel's; the lamp itself burns to mark the presence of the Blessed Sacrament reserved there.
2. Name one door in your life that grief or sin walked out through: a broken friendship, a habit, a season you gave up on. Bring that exact door to confession, or at least to ten minutes of honest prayer, and ask the Lord to come back in by it.
3. Each morning this week, pray one line before your feet hit the floor: 'Lord, this is the place of your throne; dwell here today.' Mean your own body, your room, your day.

Scripture Memory

Ezekiel 43:2

"And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east; and the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with his glory."

Ezekiel 43:2

Closing Prayer

Pray together

Father, your glory walked out of a defiled house slowly, as one who did not want to go, and tonight we watched it come home by the same gate. Thank you that you did not rebuild the old thing; you gave us something greater, your Son, the temple no one can tear down. Seal the gates of our hearts for you alone, make our bodies fit dwellings for your Spirit, and keep us hungry for the city where you are the temple and the light. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Part Three

Leader Reference Card

Every passage used in this session, in order. Print this page and keep it in front of you.

Primary text

- **Ezekiel 40:1-4** date, mountain, the man with the measuring reed
- **Ezekiel 40:5-42:20** surveyed by the leader, not read aloud
- **Ezekiel 43:1-12** the glory returns; the throne; the law of the temple
- **Ezekiel 44:1-3** the shut east gate and the prince

Discovery passages

- **Ezekiel 10:18-19** glory pauses at the east gate (team one)
- **Ezekiel 11:22-23** glory stands on the mountain east of the city (team two)
- **John 1:14** the Word tabernacled; we beheld his glory (team one)
- **John 2:18-22** the temple of his body (team two)

Supporting passages

- **Exodus 40:34-35** glory fills the tabernacle
- **1 Kings 8:10-11** glory fills Solomon's temple
- **Hebrews 10:11-14** one offering, for all time; steelman response
- **Revelation 21:22** no temple in the city; steelman response
- **Luke 19:37-45** Jesus approaches the temple from the east, over Olivet
- **Ezekiel 21:27** callback: the one whose right it is
- **Ezekiel 34:23-24** callback: my servant David, the prince
- **Ezekiel 37:26-28** callback: sanctuary in their midst for evermore
- **1 Corinthians 6:19** your body a temple of the Holy Spirit
- **1 Peter 2:4-5** living stones, a spiritual house

Terms

- ****kavod.**** glory; the weight and radiant presence of God himself
- ****nasi.**** prince; Ezekiel's word for the Davidic figure, pointedly not called king
- ****eskenosen.**** he pitched his tent, tabernacled (John 1:14)

Catechism

- **CCC 586.** Jesus identifies himself with the temple
- **CCC 1197.** Christ the true temple; Christians temples of the Spirit
- **CCC 756.** the Church as God's building and dwelling
- **CCC 117.** the spiritual senses of Scripture
- **CCC 499.** Mary's perpetual virginity