

The LORD Is There

Session 15. The Glory Comes Home

The glory that walked out came home by the same gate, and it did not stop at a building.

What We Found

Fourteen years after Jerusalem fell, Ezekiel was carried in vision to a very high mountain and shown a temple measured gate by gate and cubit by cubit. No one was ever told to build it, and no temple we know of was built to it; the exactness was the point. In this vision, God gives the measurements of a house he means to fill.

Then came the moment fifteen weeks of this study have been waiting for. We put the departure of the glory side by side with its return and found an exact reversal: the same glory, the same seer, the same east gate, walked in the opposite direction. The God who left in grief came back on purpose, and declared this the place of his throne, where he will dwell among his people for ever.

We asked what a never-built temple is pointing to, and let the strongest opposing reading have its say before answering. The New Testament gave us the destination: the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld his glory; the true temple is the Lord's own body, then his Church built of living stones, then each of us, temples of the Holy Spirit, and at last a city that needs no temple because God himself dwells there.

We ended at a sealed door: the east gate to remain shut because the LORD had entered by it, with one mysterious prince permitted to eat bread before the LORD in its vestibule. The tradition saw in that sealed gate a quiet figure of Mary, the one gate by which the Lord entered the world. And we noticed the word the vision keeps repeating: for ever. The book has one sentence left to say about that. Next week we hear it.

Voices of the Church

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. When your world feels like it is coming apart, Gregory is proof this reading was forged under siege, not in comfort.

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 is how the Church reads the Old Testament 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 says out loud what we pieced together tonight: the returning glory finally landed in flesh, and then in you.

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

Ready Response

If a friend asks: 'If God is everywhere, why do Catholics make such a fuss about a tabernacle in a building?'

You are right that God is everywhere; Ezekiel saw his glory in Babylon, of all places. But the God who is everywhere also loves to be somewhere: a tent, a temple, and finally a human body.

Jesus called his own body the temple, and he chose to stay with us in the Eucharist. The tabernacle is not where we trap God; it is where he promised to wait for us.

Come sit in front of one with me sometime. It is easier to explain from a kneeler than from an argument.

Go Further in the Catechism

- **CCC 586.** Jesus identifies himself with the temple, God's definitive dwelling among men
- **CCC 1197.** Christ the true temple; by grace, Christians become temples of the Holy Spirit
- **CCC 756.** the Church as God's building, his dwelling of living stones
- **CCC 117.** Scripture's spiritual senses: allegorical, moral, anagogical
- **CCC 499.** Mary, ever-virgin

Before next session. Read Ezekiel 47:1-12 and 48:30-35 before we meet again.