

# + THE LOOKOUT

SEPTEMBER 2022

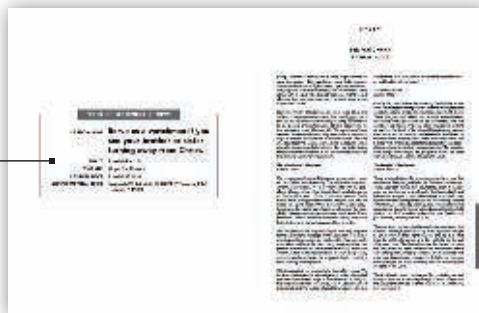
## Unit: Ezekiel (Part 2)

### Theme: Hope for Sinners

**Overview:** A Bible school class named themselves the HOPE Class. The acronym stood for "Hitched Or Patiently Engaged." But that is not what *hope* stands for or means. *Hope* is the eager and very real anticipation of a world totally controlled by God. The major prophet Ezekiel marked out the consequences of sin (we focused on that last month), but he also marked out hope for sinners. This month students will learn of the tender care necessary to turn a sinner back to God, how having a new heart helps with that task, how people who have experienced the deadly nature of sin can breathe with new life, and how God's nature can come afresh to once-weary sinners.

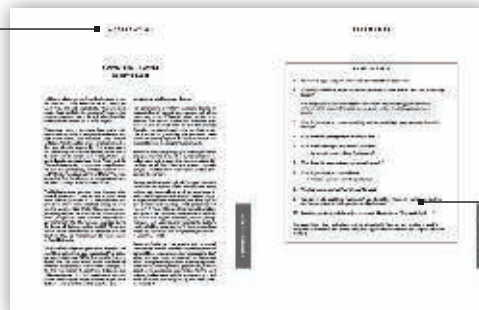
## HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.



**Tabs** indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.



Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 25, 2022

**LESSON AIM:** **Pray for God's glory to be seen in Christ's church.**

**UNIT:** Ezekiel (Part 2)

**THEME:** Hope for Sinners

**LESSON TEXT:** Ezekiel 43:1-12

**SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT:** Luke 2:8-20, 25-33; John 1:14; 17:1-5;  
Revelation 15:5-8

## STUDY

# GOD'S GLORY RETURNS

BY MARK SCOTT

"Temple" is a big deal in the Bible. Some scholars believe in the temple inauguration theory of creation (described by John H. Walton in *The Lost World of Genesis One*). That is, Genesis 1 might not be so much about the creation of the physical world but rather God taking up residence in his creation (temple).

When the patriarchs died, they left behind rock altars where they set off sacred space (temples). The tabernacle was a portable temple wherein God's glory dwelt (Exodus 40). The temple of Solomon was so glorious that when it was dedicated, the priests could not perform their duties because God's glory so filled the temple (1 Kings 8:11). The second temple lacked the glory of the first, but it was still nothing short of amazing (Ezra 3:12).

The temple was always more than a building. It was the reality of the presence of God. That is why when Jesus came and the church began, it could be referred to theologically as the "third temple." When the new heaven and new earth is revealed, there will be no need for a physical temple, because the Lord is the temple (Revelation 21:22).

In the lesson for August 28, God's glory departed from the people (left the temple) due to their sin. Now God's enemies (those who enticed Israel to sin) are defeated (Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38-39). Therefore, the temple can be cleansed and restored (chapters 41-42). God's glory can return to the temple, and the people can enjoy the new Promised Land (chapters 43-48).

### Glorious Temple

*Ezekiel 43:1-5*

*The man* probably is this strange figure we know as the "angel of the Lord." He appeared first in this ongoing temple vision in Ezekiel 40:3. Now he spiritually transports (cf. 3:14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 37:1) Ezekiel to the *gate facing east* of the rebuilt temple. Ezekiel saw *the glory of the God of Israel* coming toward the gate.

Linguistically *glory* means the shining brilliance and weighty presence of God. Theologically *glory* can refer to the return of the exiles from captivity (this passage) to Jesus' incarnation (John 1:14), to the church (Colossians 1:27), and to the return of Christ to earth (Revelation 21:23).

The voice of the glorious One is described as *rushing waters* (a symbol of power, Revelation 1:15). The whole land lights up when God's glory invades. Ezekiel likened what he saw this time with what he had seen originally (chapters 10-11). God's glory *filled the temple*.

### Eternal Temple

*Ezekiel 43:6-9*

In this paragraph, God promised twice to live among his people *forever*. In the Bible, *forever* can mean time unending or it can mean a long time. Depending on one's interpretation of what is being described here (the return from exile, the coming of Christ and the church, or the second coming) will determine the meaning of *forever* in this passage. We know one thing for sure: God is speaking in this vision (not the angel standing next to Ezekiel). God claimed his territory. His *throne* is there. His *feet* are there.

Since God is in the temple, nothing unclean can be there. There can be no defiling (polluting) of God's holy name. The kings of Israel, who so often led the people into idolatry, can no longer prostitute the land with idols. They cannot place an idol in the holy place like some kings did (2 Kings 21:1-6). They could no longer give themselves to *detestable practices*. These things cause God to destroy the people *in [his] anger*.

### Holy Temple

*Ezekiel 43:10-12*

God's *perfection*, evident in the temple, causes the people to see their unholiness. His mere presence in the temple compelled the people to *be ashamed of their sins*. His "otherliness" caused the people to sense their sinfulness. Everything about the temple portrayed holiness—from the *design, to its arrangement, its exits, and entrances*.

Part of what made the temple portray the holiness and glory of God were the *regulations and laws*. In other words, the *law of the temple* embodied the character, judgment, and love of God. These qualities live in perfect harmony in his presence. Just as Moses designed the tabernacle "according to the pattern shown to him on the mountain," so the renewed temple will bear witness to God's holiness. "Second temple" Judaism would give way to the "third temple" Christianity. ■

# APPLICATION

## FINALLY!

BY DAVID FAUST

I settled into my seat on the plane, thinking, *Finally, we're headed home*. Returning from a mission trip to Romania, Candy and I spent an uncomfortable night sleeping on a bench at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago. After 30 straight hours in cars, planes, and airports, we were disappointed when heavy storms canceled the last leg of our flight home.

The long night in the airport, however, gave us the opportunity to meet other passengers stranded along with us. Larissa, a university student from Germany and first-time visitor to the United States said, "My biggest fear about coming to America is tornadoes, and the first thing that happens is a bad storm!" She and my wife became fast friends. Greg, another stranded traveler, bought me a breakfast sandwich in the morning. He was returning to the U.S. after training ministers in Uganda. A French-speaking woman from Africa, two couples returning from vacation in Ireland, and a fellow worried about his diabetes—for one long night at O'Hare, this little band of travelers was united by a common dilemma. We all wanted to go home.

### Detours and Delays

Before leaving on the mission trip, Candy and I wrote a list of goals: "Trust God. Love well. Encourage others. Be flexible and available. Be positive. Listen well to others' stories." We should have added another goal: "Watch for what God teaches in unexpected ways."

In Romania we met dozens of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. One woman gave us a handmade cloth angel—yellow and blue like Ukraine's flag. Others told harrowing stories about children whose frost-bitten fingers had to be amputated after fleeing in the freezing cold, and about drivers who hadn't been behind the wheel of a car in 25 years hauling their children to safety on unfamiliar roads.

One mom showed us a photo of an unexploded Russian missile that landed three feet from her house near Kyiv. We met a 25-year-old mother who is fighting breast cancer; she couldn't get her scheduled surgery in Ukraine because the hospital was now for military use only. (Romanian Christians arranged for her to have the surgery free of charge in their country.)

The Ukrainians' sad faces put our minor frustrations into perspective. Temporary detours and flight delays are nothing compared to what these displaced people are enduring as they deal with situations out of their control, not knowing if or when they will ever go home.

### When the Glory Comes Back

For a prolonged season the Jews lived in exile and God's glory left the temple. But eventually God would be with them again, the land would be "radiant with his glory" (Ezekiel 43:2), and the Lord would say, "This is where I will live among the Israelites forever" (v. 7). Ezekiel's words echo another biblical prediction that stirs our hope for heaven: "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them" (Revelation 21:3).

Our world is marred by sin and scarred by war, but when we arrive at our destination, we'll finally be at home with the Lord. Finally, our frustrations will end. Finally, our exile will be over. God's glory will be obvious, his people will be at peace, and finally . . . *finally!* . . . we will be at home.

**Personal Challenge:** What have you learned from the detours and delays you have encountered in life? How have you seen God's glory displayed in unexpected or painful situations? ■

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## DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. How did you team with God last week to “preach” to “dry bones” (those who are spiritually dead) with the aim to see God bring his life to them?
2. If you had your choice, which would you rather design: a building, a car, a website, a dress or suit, or something else?

Ask two people to read aloud **Ezekiel 43:1-12** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then, as a group, quickly retell the passage in your own words.

3. What did Ezekiel see and hear?
4. What did God call Ezekiel and the people to do?
5. Imagine you are Ezekiel as you witness all this. He had earlier seen God’s glory leave the temple (10:18; 11:23). What emotions would you be feeling as the events of this passage take place?
6. What does this passage teach you about the nature of God?
7. What do you learn about humanity from this passage?
8. We live under the New Covenant, in which our bodies are now God’s temple (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). How would you apply Ezekiel’s prophetic vision today?
  - How do we defile what is holy by bringing what is detestable and worldly into our temples?
  - What function does feeling shame for our sins play in helping us to repent, confess, and then grow in intimacy with, faithfulness to, and obedience to God?
9. God promised that when we put away what is unholy from his temple, he will live among us forever. How can we encourage one another to live holy lives?
10. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: “This week, I will . . .”

**For Next Week:** Read and reflect on **Psalm 1** as we begin a new unit titled “Rooted.” You can also read next week’s supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. ■