

# The Glory Returns To The Temple

Ezekiel 43:1-12

## **MEMORY VERSE**

EZEKIEL 43:7

“Son of man, 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 children of Israel forever.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Poster board, markers or crayons, paper, scissors, tape and a couple of blindfolds.

Four– five cups of rice, a large bowl, a rubber glove for each child (available from the nursery) and one small safety pin for each child.

Various colors of markers.

## **ATTENTION GETTER!**

### **Take Me to the Temple**

Today we are going to learn about God’s glory. It had departed from the temple because of the people’s sin, but when they repented it returned to the temple. To begin let’s play a variation of Pin the Tail on the Donkey. You will need poster board, markers or crayons, paper, scissors, tape and a couple of blindfolds. Before class draw a temple on poster board and cut it out (make it fairly large 12”– 18”). At the beginning of class tape the temple to the wall.

Give the children a piece of paper and allow them to draw a person. Color and cut it out. Explain that we are going to play a game like Pin the Tail on the Donkey. Place a small piece of tape on the back of each person that is cut out. Then have the children take turns being blindfolded, spun around. Then they can attempt to stick their person onto the temple. Not many will make it.

Next, give them all another turn. This time, without the blindfold. Everyone this time should get his or her person to the temple. Have all of the children sit down together and explain that this is like what was happening in our story. The people's sin was blinding them and keeping them away from God. But when they asked for forgiveness the blinders were removed and they were able to have fellowship with God. God's glory returned to the temple. Sin can keep us from the Lord, but when we ask for forgiveness we can be restored.

## **LESSON TIME!**

What a blessing it is, that we live in a country where we can freely worship the Lord. Many people who do not follow Jesus are blinded to His wonderful freedom. And even though we are free to worship, those who are not born again are held captive by their sins. That is what it was like for the people of Israel during the time of the great prophet Ezekiel.

The Lord had warned the people through Ezekiel that they would be taken captive by their enemy if they did not repent; however, if they turned away from their sins, God would return to them and bring them back to their land. At this point, the people had repented and God was faithful to His promise.

God has also provided a way for us to come to Him today. We can ask Jesus to come into our hearts and have a wonderful relationship with God. The Bible promises that when we do that and ask for forgiveness of our sins that God is faithful to forgive and restore us to relationship with Him. We are also told that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. He comes to live inside of us. What a blessing to know that the glory of the Lord lives inside of our hearts when we ask Jesus to be our savior! **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

### sEZEKIEL 43:1-3

Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the east.

And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.

It was like the appearance of the vision which I saw; like the vision which I saw when I came to destroy the city. The visions were like the vision which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face.

The angel of the Lord was showing Ezekiel in this vision what the Lord was going to do in His restoration of the temple. And just as God had departed from the temple from the East, so He was returning in the same manner. God so wanted to bless His people and as soon as they turned from their sinful ways the Lord's glory returns immediately.

Sometimes we still sin even when we are Christians. When we sin we are told that we are grieving the Holy Spirit who lives inside of us. Wherever we go, whatever we see, whatever we do, the Holy Spirit is right there with us because He lives inside of us. Grieving the Spirit means that we make Him sad. He wants to see us grow in the Lord and walk closely to the Lord. It breaks His heart to see us walk away from the Lord. God wants us to remain close to Him always.

Once again here the Lord was revealing His glory and righteousness to Ezekiel just as He desires to do with each and every person in the world today. For Ezekiel, just as for you and me, to behold His glory causes him to fall on his face in worship. Could you imagine seeing this great vision? When we see the glory of the Lord face to face one day no doubt we will drop immediately to our knees and

worship the Lord. It is going to be so awesome. **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

**EZEKIEL 43:4-5**

**And the glory of the LORD came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east.**

**The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.**

The Lord was showing Ezekiel through the Spirit what it was like to be in the presence of the glory of the Lord. Since the Messiah had not come yet the temple was where the Lord was to be worshipped.

The Bible tells us that **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit** today. When we ask Jesus Christ to come into our hearts the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and lives inside of us. We do not have to go to a special place to worship the Lord. We can worship Him any time and anywhere. All we need to do is just begin to talk to Him or sing praises. Is it not wonderful that we can walk with the Lord all of the time and at any place! **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

**EZEKIEL 43:6-7**

**Then I heard Him speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me.**

**And He said to me, "Son of man, 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 children of Israel forever. No more shall the house of Israel defile My holy name, they nor their kings, by their harlotry or with the carcasses of their kings on their high places.**

God is painting a very clear picture here as to why He had departed originally from the temple and why He was now returning. In verse 7 the Lord says that no one, not even those in authority like kings, would defile His holy name. The temple was to be kept pure from any graven images and high priests and kings had brought their idols into the temple to worship them rather than the Lord.

Any time we worship anything above God that is sin and the Lord tells us that he will judge that. The people in that day would worship idols in “high places.” These were places that were dedicated to idol worship. They also did very bad things while worshipping the false gods. So often, one sin leads to greater sin. We must continually ask the Lord to search our heart for our “high places.” Our hearts need to be kept free from anything that tries to be more important than Jesus. **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

#### EZEKIEL 43:8-9

"When they set their threshold by My threshold, and their doorpost by My doorpost, with a wall between them and Me, they defiled My holy name by the abominations which they committed; therefore I have consumed them in My anger.

"Now let them put their harlotry and the carcasses of their kings far away from Me, and I will dwell in their midst forever.

The Lord again is reminding Ezekiel to tell the people they must continue to put away their idols and be careful not to allow anything to take the place of God in their hearts. We cannot continue to turn from God to our wicked ways and expect Him to forever be there and bless us. One of the things that the Holy Spirit also does in our lives is to show us areas that are sin in our lives. That way we can ask for forgiveness and continue to grow in Him.

The Holy Spirit also works in people's lives that are not Christians. He is showing them that they need to come to Him and follow Him. But He doesn't force anyone to accept Him. If people resist the Holy Spirit then they will live a life separated from God and if they die that way they will spend an eternity separated from God. When we come to God, He is just and true and willing to forgive us our sins.

Each of us must make a decision to follow Jesus Christ, allowing Him to become the Lord of our lives. God wants us to come to Him. He has done everything that we need. It is a free gift to come to Him. Have you accepted that free gift? **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

## Treasure Hunt

For this game you will need 4 – 5 cups of rice, a large bowl, a rubber glove for each child (available from the nursery) and one small safety pin for each child. Fill the bowl with the rice and mix in the safety pins. Have the children line up, put on a rubber glove and take turns trying to find something in the rice (don't tell them what they are looking for). See if they can find something (with the glove and very small pins- most hopefully won't find anything).

After everyone has had a turn, allow them to take another turn. This time remove the glove and allow them to look. This time everyone should be able to find a safety pin.

Explain to the children that sometimes there can be things in our hearts that keep us from the Lord. The people of Israel worshipped idols and sinned against God; but when those things were removed from their lives, the glory of God returned to the temple. When we remove those things that do not bring glory to God in our hearts, then the Holy Spirit can fill us and use us for His plans.

### EZEKIEL 43:10-11

"Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern.

"And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple and its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, its entire design and all its ordinances, all its forms and all its laws. Write it down in their sight, so that they may keep its whole design and all its ordinances, and perform them.

How awesome it must have been for Ezekiel to be shown this glorious vision by God. And now the Lord was telling him he was to be a witness of all of these things to this rebellious people of Israel. God is showing us the future hope of heaven too when we believe in Jesus as our savior.

God also calls us to go and tell all the nations about His good news and the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The Lord was also telling Ezekiel if the people were truly sorry for their sins against Him then Ezekiel was to tell them more of the visions that the Lord had given. The Lord will continue to reveal more to us as we walk obediently with Him, but we must repent first and believe in Him. **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

### EZEKIEL 43:12

"This is the law of the temple: The whole area surrounding the mountaintop is most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple.

We need to remember that God's temple is holy and should not be defiled. We have learned today and are told in the New Testament that we are the temple of God's Spirit today. We need to remain close to the Lord and not allow anything to defile our temple. We



need to keep from grieving the Holy Spirit and continue to grow and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The main lesson that we can learn from this story is that we can seek forgiveness for our sins and be forgiven. We can be restored and have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. God will fill us with His Holy Spirit and empower us to live a life that glorifies Him. We need to keep on being yielded to the work of the Spirit in our lives. **We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

Praise the Lord that He is doing a work in each one of us. If you have never asked Jesus to come into your life that is the place to start. Ask Him into your life and begin a wonderful relationship with Him. Teachers, you may want to share the gospel with your children and allow them to respond and ask Jesus into their lives.

## **A Hands-on Relationship**

Using the rubber gloves from the last activity have the children think of five ways that having Jesus in our hearts will affect what we do. For example: kindness, love, obedience, etc. Using a marker have them write one thing on each finger. Then using different color markers allow them to decorate the hand any way they would like to and take home with them.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to follow Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.