**The Land Was Radiant with His Glory**

**The Word**

Read together Ezekiel 43:1-6 and 47:1-12

**The Big Idea**

God promises Israel a glorious future in which his glory dwells with them and in which his blessing is poured out to them and the land forever. As Christians, we are called to be men and women of hope whose lives, while challenging and painful at times, are marked by the hope of a certain future in eternity together with God.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. On Sunday it was suggested that many Christians’ picture of eternity is often fairly boring, uninteresting, and uninspiring, and it bears little impact on their daily lives. Do you relate with that description? When you think of eternity, what images most naturally come to your mind based what you’ve been taught or simply absorbed in the past?

2. Consider the conversation about God’s glory on Sunday based on Ezekiel 43. What stood out to you most about the discussion of God’s glory?

3. Consider the image of the river from Ezekiel 37 as well as Revelation 22:1-3. What stands out to you most in those visions, and what questions do they raise about eternity in your mind?

4. As you reflect on our Ezekiel series over the past three months, what one main idea stands out to you that you’d like to remember and allow to shape how you live moving forward?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

Introduction

I. Ezekiel in review

 A. Ezekiel presents us with a wild and “awe-ful” picture of our God

B. “Before we can yawn at God, we must first replace the majestic, holy, awesome Tiger of Scripture with a domesticated kitten, conformed to the standards of the world, measured by the yardstick of political correctness. Who wants a God who roars, who threatens, who judges? Why not rather fashion a god in our taste — a friendly god we can pet, leash, and export for popular appeal?” —Tony Reinke

II. A hopeful vision of the future (Ezekiel 40-48)

 A. Interpretive issues

1. Some Christians see in this a literal prediction to be fulfilled for ethnic Israel sometime in the future (most likely in the millennial kingdom)

2. Other Christians see in this a more figurative prediction to be fulfilled for all of God’s people in the new heavens and new earth.

B. Whatever our interpretation, this vision is intended to give us hope for the future so that we can live well in the present.

C. “A continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next.”—C.S. Lewis

The Passage

I. The glory of God returns to the temple (Ezekiel 43:1-6)

 A. This is the same vision of God he saw back in chapter 1 (v. 3)

B. God’s glorious presence living among them is what distinguished Israel from all the other nations

C. The departure of God’s glory from the temple (see ch. 8-11) was the spiritual low point of the book

 D. Here God’s glory returns and the King takes his rightful place in his temple

 E. Eternal life will be an experience of the glorious presence of God

 1. See Revelation 21:1-4 and 21:22-23

2. God’s glory is the outward manifestation of his own inner perfection

-Consider a diamond: it’s internal symmetry and purity gives is a radiance and splendor; so it is with God.

3. We were made for the glory of God

a. When we encounter God’s glory we will say, “this is what I was made for, this is the answer to all of my deepest longings and desires.”

b. Consider experiences in this life of finding something you feel like you were made for (a sport, a hobby, a musical instrument, a certain place, a specific relationship, etc.)

c. God’s glory will be like coming home and like entering a new adventure all in one.

4. God shares his glory with his people and his creation

a. The land radiates with God’s glory (v. 2)

b. The new Jerusalem is filled with the light of God’s glory (Rev 21)

II. The river of God flows from the temple bringing life to the land (Ezekiel 47:1-12)

A. This river starts out as a trickle and becomes a mighty river that no one can cross.

B. The river runs into the Dead Sea and brings life and fruitfulness to a completely dead land.

C. The river is a picture of the life-giving blessing of God that brings healing, refreshment and life

D. See Revelation 22:1-3. The vision is similar there with some significant progressions, particularly the more international blessing to all the nations.

E. Can you imagine what it will be like to live with the uninhibited blessing of God?

1. We experience so many blessings in this world: food, creation, music, sex, friendship, community, etc.

 2. Imagine how much more blessing awaits us in a world freed from the curse!

Conclusion

Let’s live as people of hope no matter what we’re going through today (see 2 Cor 4:16-18)