

The Watchman #1
A Glimpse of God's Glory

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 1:1-28

Discussion Questions

1. Can you remember a time when you were left awestruck by something you saw? Share with the group.
2. In 597 B.C., the Babylonians attacked Judah (second Babylonian invasion of Judah) and carried Ezekiel away along with 10,000 other captives. Five years later, when Ezekiel was 30 years old, God called him to be a prophet. He never saw his homeland again. Ezekiel and the other exiles must have been very depressed because of their situation. If you had communication access to Ezekiel and the other exiles, how would you have encouraged them? Share how you encourage friends or loved ones who may be going through tough times.
3. God communicated to Ezekiel in visions, giving glimpses of His majestic glory that affected Ezekiel's whole life. Read Ezekiel 1:1-28. Discuss the vision that Ezekiel saw. What did he see and what was its significance?
4. Verse 4 describes Ezekiel's first glimpse of God's glory, described in four parts. Discuss the practical things that you can learn from this first glimpse.
 - a. *Part 1: Four Guardian Cherubim.* A glimpse of God's glory should remind us that we are on a mission (v. 5-14). Who are the Cherubim and what is their mission? God told Ezekiel to do strange things to show others God's glory. He was on a mission for God and persevered and focused on that mission. As God's children, what is the mission that God wanted you to do in relation to others? How are you fulfilling this mission that He entrusted to you? Why are faithfulness and perseverance important in accomplishing a task?
 - b. *Part 2: Four Wheels.* A glimpse of God's glory should remind us we are to be unified (v. 15-21). Describe how the four wheels were

united with each other. As His children, we should remember that we are on the same team when it comes to God's ministry. Therefore, our common goal should be for the glory of God. Discuss what causes disunity in the church. How does discord affect the work of the Lord? What could be avoided when the body of Christ, which is the church, is united in giving glory to God?

- c. *Part 3: The Expanse and the Throne.* A glimpse of God's glory should remind us we are to be humble (v. 22-28). What did Ezekiel see that caused him to fall face down in humble adoration? In time, every person of the world will fall before God, either in worshipful reverence and awe for His mercy or out of fear of His judgment. It will come naturally when we see the amazing and brilliant glory of God. How you live your life now will determine how you will respond to God's holiness. Why is being humble essential in our worship of the mighty God?

Walk

God called Ezekiel to be the watchman of His people, standing in the gap to make an impact in the world. As God's children, we are to make an impact in the community we live in. Having glimpsed God's glory should remind us that we are on a mission, that we are to be unified, and that we are to be humble in order to influence others who do not know God yet. As you think about your life as a Christian, how could you fill the gap and impact your circle of influence? Would you be willing to be God's watchman of His people? In what way can you accomplish this?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, You deserve to be worshipped and adored because You are the only true and living God. You show us glimpses of Your glory through your wonderful creations that leave us awestruck. We see it when a baby is born. We also see it when a person is born spiritually—how that person transforms into a new, beautiful creation. We see Your glory when You use a person like me to give glory to Your Name. How awesome You are! We give praise to You in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Watchman #2 Speaking to a Rebellious Generation

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 2:1-7

Discussion Questions

1. What is your greatest fear in life? Why?
2. We are called to speak to hostile audience called the world. How can we find courage to speak to them? Read Ezekiel 2:1-7. God sent Ezekiel with a mission to speak to the toughest crowd he could ever encounter—the rebellious Israelites—and tell them that they need to stand up to listen to God. What did God tell Ezekiel to do? What were the people of God guilty of? Do you think the job God asked Ezekiel to do was easy? As Christians, we are also commissioned by God to reach out to the world with the gospel. Describe the world that you live in—your community at school, work or your own family. Are the people there easy to reach out to? Share how you are at least trying to communicate the gospel to those in your circle of influence.
3. This passage tells us that God encouraged Ezekiel to reach out to a rebellious generation by telling him to remember three things, which as Christians we must also remember in our mission to tell an unreceptive world about Jesus:
 - a. *Remember not your own words, but God's word (v. 4).* Ezekiel was instructed by God to relay His message to the people of Israel by saying, “Thus says the Lord,” making it clear to the Israelites that the message Ezekiel was delivering was from the omniscient and unchanging God. How do you react to people who would tell you not to push what you believe on them? Share how you have grounded yourself on the Word of God. How is your Bible study life? What do you think will happen to your credibility as a Christian if you lack knowledge what the Word of God says?
 - b. *Remember that regardless of whether the people would listen or not, you should be a faithful messenger in word and deed (v. 5).* Ezekiel was called to give God's message to the people, whether they would listen or not. The most important was that the people knew that a prophet of God was among them. As God's children, we are modern prophets (God's messengers) who need to share the gospel

through word and deed. Discuss how your testimony is being watered down by your actions in your daily life. Instead of being a weak modern prophet, what should you do in order to have authenticity in your word and action? Share how you have earned respect as a Christian.

- c. *Remember not to be afraid because you are not responsible for other people's response (v. 6-7).* God gave Ezekiel the difficult responsibility of presenting His message to a rebellious and abusive people. Ezekiel's responsibility was to speak out God's Word; how the people would respond to God's message was beyond that responsibility. Discuss the different reactions or responses of people when the gospel is shared with them. Have you ever blamed yourself when someone with whom you have shared the gospel with reacted negatively? Should you blame yourself when someone with whom you share the gospel with reacts negatively? How does it encourage you to know that your only responsibility is to deliver God's message in love and that someone else's response to that message is out of your hands? Should it give you confidence and motivation to share the gospel instead of being afraid and intimidated of how people would respond?

Walk

Ezekiel was sent with a mission to a rebellious, obstinate, and stubborn generation as a watchman who stood in the gap to make impact in the world. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are also sent to speak about God to hostile audience. People might reject you, look you with disapproval and speak to you with cutting words, and yes, some of those people may even be your loved ones. But be encouraged that what you share is not your words, but the Words of the omniscient and unchanging God. Regardless of whether they will listen to you or not, be a faithful messenger in word and deed. Don't be afraid of how they will respond to the gospel message because their response is not your responsibility; your responsibility is to be the messenger. What kind of a messenger do you want to be? Do you believe that God's strength is powerful enough to help you speak and live for Him even under criticism? What encourages you to be a faithful messenger of God's truth?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, You filled Ezekiel with Your Spirit because of his open and obedient attitude. And because of it, he was courageous and full of trust to You who called him as messenger. Thank you Lord God that the measure of my success do not depend on how people would respond, but how well I obey You and thus fulfill Your purpose for me. Help me Lord to be a faithful and courageous messenger as I share Your word to my family members, friends and colleagues who do not know You. Help me not to be intimidated and afraid of rejection and disapproval, but may Your strength prevail so that I can accomplish with Your help the purpose that You have in my life as Your messenger. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Watchman #3
A Watchman for the People

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 2:8–3:27

Discussion Questions

1. What's the job of a spokesperson? What makes their job difficult?
2. Ezekiel was called to be God's spokesperson to the rebellious Israelites. Every believer is also called to be a spokesperson for our Lord Jesus Christ, which is not an easy responsibility because we have a skeptical and rebellious audience. Are there requirements for someone who is spokesperson of Christ? Yes. Read Ezekiel 2:8-3:27. We see in this passage how God prepared Ezekiel to be His voice to the Israelites, and ***the first requirement to be God's spokesperson is to be rooted in the Word (ch. 2:8–3:15)***. God asked Ezekiel to do an unbelievable task—to eat a scroll with writings of the impending judgment. The symbolic act of eating the scroll was to teach Ezekiel not to just read the Word of God but to really understand it, to digest it and assimilate it into his life by living it out. He needed to know the Word of God through and through. Discuss why we should digest or fully understand the Word of God to be able to speak about it with confidence? What are some of the biblical truths that you believe but find difficult to explain why you believe them? How could you remedy that difficulty?
3. The Scripture is not simply an opinion of another deity or sayings of the many religions around the world, but the Word of the Almighty and majestic God. The words of the Scripture should be handled and applied in your life with great reverence. Ezekiel could identify with God's anger toward the wicked and rebellious Israelites after digesting God's Word. He infused it into

his life for seven days. Discuss how a person can be rooted in the Word of God to be an effective spokesperson for Christ. How much time do you spend in the Word of God? How do you digest what you read or hear?

4. ***The second requirement for a spokesperson of Christ is to be a watchman for your people (ch. 3:15-21)***. A watchman warns the people of impending danger. As Ezekiel was called to be a watchman, so are you to be for the people of your generation. A watchman is a job with great responsibility; your warning must be on time and relevant for the times. People may not appreciate you for doing your job, but it is for the good of those who are in danger. Looking through the lenses of biblical truth, discuss the things that you should warn unbelievers about as a watchman for God. Why should you not wait until a person is about to die before you share the gospel with him/her? As a parent, in what areas are you responsible as a watchman for your children?
5. God not only instructed Ezekiel to be a watchman of the ungodly, but of the righteous people as well, in order to prevent them from sinning. Otherwise Ezekiel would be responsible (v. 18-19). Why do companies put warnings on their products? Share important warnings from the Scripture that every Christian should be reminded of constantly. Discuss what happens when the watchman fails to warn those who need to be warned?
6. ***The third requirement for a spokesperson of Christ is to live a life of restraint or limitation (ch. 3:22-27)***. God limited Ezekiel by putting him on house arrest to protect him from people who were unhappy about his warnings and also to punish the people's rebelliousness (by limiting their access to God's prophet). Additionally, God also made Ezekiel mute, allowing Ezekiel to speak only when Ezekiel needs to deliver God's message. Ezekiel was only able to talk to warn the people occasionally. As a Christian, you also ought to have limitations to make a difference. Contrast how a Christian should live against everyone else in the world. Do you find it difficult to choose to not do the things that you shouldn't? How can you say, "I will choose to do what is right" with honesty?

Walk

Just like Ezekiel, you are called to speak to a group of people—to your circle of influence. Your calling has nothing to do with your ability to speak (being eloquent), but it is your day-to-day life with your family, friends, co-workers, and any other people you have contact with that speaks for God. You will be an effective spokesperson for Him when you are rooted in the Word, when you act as a watchman for others, and when you live a life of restraint. Evaluate how you are living your Christian life by asking the following questions:

- a. How am I being rooted in the Word of God? Do I just hear it, or do I have the desire to go deeper in my knowledge so that I can share it with confidence?
- b. Do I warn the people in my circle of influence about God's impending judgment to those who don't believe in Him? How am I warning/ influencing my Christian brothers and sisters to prevent them from living in sin and falling into a pit that they cannot get out of?
- c. What limitations do I put on myself so that I can make a difference? What should I do when I am tempted to compromise my faith?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for calling me to be Your spokesperson to my people. It is a tough job. Forgive me when I fail to speak for You due to my lack of faith, sufficient knowledge of Your Word, and fear that leads me to just go with the flow instead of standing up for You. But thank You because with Your strength, wisdom, and sufficient grace, I know that I can do it. Help me to overcome my weaknesses and be bold in my witness in words and in deed. Thank You that You have done everything for me. I am just Your voice that my people need to hear to draw them closer to You. Help me to take my responsibility seriously and joyfully. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Watchman #4
A Four-Act Dramatic Tragedy

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 4-7

Discussion Questions

1. Was there a musical or dramatic act that has left a deep impression on you? Why did it do so?
2. From previous chapters we learned that one of the limitations God put on Ezekiel was He made Ezekiel mute. Ezekiel could only speak when God wanted to speak to His people. Read Ezekiel 4-7. These chapters tell us of four dramatic acts that God asked Ezekiel to do to convey to His people that He would soon punish them because of their rebelliousness:
 - a. **ACT #1: Laying of Brink (4:1-3) – Fact of a Siege.** Ezekiel acted out the rise and fall of Jerusalem before it actually happened. God gave Ezekiel specific instructions about what to do and say, and how to do and say it. What instruction did God tell Ezekiel to do (v. 1-3)? Would God listen to the Israelites when they cry for help during the siege? God had enough of their rebelliousness and so He allowed the Babylonians to besiege them. Discuss how this can be a warning if you are tempted to test God's patience.
 - b. **ACT #2: Laying on Side (v. 4-8) – Length of the Siege.** Ezekiel was restrained a few hours a day, not being able to flip to the other side. His actions symbolically portrayed the fate of Jerusalem. Ezekiel lay on his left side for 390 days to show that Israel would be punished for 390 years; then he lay on his right side for 40 days to show that Judah would be punished for 40 years. How does God's warnings of the consequences of

sins communicate to you? Share how a warning from God's Word had kept you from committing a grievous wrongdoing.

- c. **ACT #3: Eating Unclean Food (4:9-17) – Brutality of the Siege.** Ezekiel had to prepare food while lying down. The amount of food he was allowed to eat was very little, which signified the very little food during the siege. Then the food was to be cooked over dried human excrement as fuel, which was very offensive to a prophet like him. God allowed him to use cow excrement instead. Using excrement as fuel to cook food was an act of condemnation to Israelites (v. 13), because they would be eating defiled food. This shows that they would be driven out to the land of foreigners and eating their food would make them ceremonially unclean. How do you think it would have affected them as Jews? In your context, why do people call themselves Christians when they pick and choose what to follow from the Bible instead of following the entire Bible? Discuss why it is easy to say, "I am a Christian" yet live a life that doesn't represent a Christ-follower.
 - d. **ACT #4: Shaved Hair (ch. 5:1-4; 9-12) – Results of the Siege.** God told Ezekiel to shave his head and beard and then to divide the hair into three parts, symbolizing what was going to happen to the people in Jerusalem. The few strands of hair that Ezekiel put in his garment symbolized the small remnant of faithful people whom God would preserve (v. 3-4). Discuss what these acts of God tell you about the character of God. How should it guide you in your walk with Him?
3. These passages also gives us three takeaway lessons that we should learn:
 - a. **Judgment is meant to right a wrong (ch. 5:5-8, 13).** God disciplines His people to draw us back to Him. He disciplines the ones He loves. He will continue to discipline until you listen. Discuss how punishment or discipline can right a wrong in a family, work, or school situation. Share how God had corrected you to enable you to rectify something that you have done wrong.
 - b. **Judgment is meant to humble (ch. 5:14-15).** A loving God disciplines His people to humble them so that they will no longer be prideful, lest God's judgment continues in their life.

Discuss how proud people don't learn humbleness until they have suffered or have been disciplined.

- c. **Judgment can come in any form (ch. 5:16-17).** When God judges, he has an entire arsenal at His disposal. Discuss the many ways God could discipline His people in order to call their attention. Are Christians immune to the consequences of sin? What does 1 John 5:16 say could happen to a Christian as the consequence of his or her sin? How could this be avoided?

Walk

God has been very patient with His people, but they remained rebellious and chose to do what was evil. They did not heed the prophets' warnings. They were supposed to be a light to their neighboring countries but lived worse than most of them. God then communicated to His disobedient people in very dramatic acts through Ezekiel how He would judge them to right a wrong, to humble them, and to make them aware that His judgment comes in many forms. As a Christian, you are privileged to have a personal relationship with Christ. How are you living differently from those who don't have this kind of privilege? Are you representing Jesus Christ well by how you live your life?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for showing us in Your Word the consequences of sin. That You, being our righteous God, will not allow sin to go unpunished. Thank you that it is because of Your great love for us that you want to correct us. Thank you that through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross we are able to escape Your full wrath for sin. May you help us live humbly before you and to recognize it when we are entertaining sin or living with it in our lives. Thank you that we can live a victorious life through Christ. In Jesus Name, Amen.

The Watchman #5
The Day God's Glory Left

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 8—11

Discussion Questions

1. There are times when someone we love pushes us to threaten to leave the relationship. What are circumstances that make you want to leave someone you love? Share and discuss.
2. You may have thought that God wouldn't leave His people and even quote verses from scriptures that would back up what you believe. But there IS a passage in the scripture that says that God did leave His people because they wouldn't change and wouldn't stop in their sinful ways. It only happened once, but it was a very sad account in the scripture when God's glory left. The presence of God resided in Jerusalem, specifically inside the Temple in the Holy of Holies where the Ark of Covenant was located. Read Ezekiel 8-11. God took Ezekiel from Babylon to the temple in Jerusalem to show him the great wickedness being practiced there. The people and their leaders, even the priests, were exhaustively corrupt. People took God's presence for granted and sinned horribly. Discuss why many Christians are not growing in their faith, as if God's presence is not in their lives.
3. In these passages, we see the truth of **the ugly progression of sin**. Ezekiel saw how far the people's sins have gone (ch. 8:1-18). It was the reason God's presence was leaving them.
 - a. *Sin in plain sight—unchecked and accepted* (v. 8:4-6). What was the first thing that God showed Ezekiel? Why was God rightfully jealous? God will not fight for your attention. Sin will drive Him away. Is there anything in your life that would make God rightfully jealous? Discuss examples of possible

unchecked sins that have become accepted, which could happen in a Christian's life.

- b. *Sin in the hidden corners of life, unseen by many except God* (v. 7-13). What was the next thing that God showed Ezekiel? Who were involved in doing those detestable things in the sight of God? Discuss why Christians sin in the "dark," hiding them in the corners of their lives? Don't they know that God can see them even if the closest person in their lives doesn't? What makes sin that is hidden in your heart more dangerous than sin done in the open?
 - c. *An emotional connection to sin* (v. 14-15). What was the third abominable act of sin in the vision that God showed Ezekiel? Emotional connection to sin is when you love something more than God, just like these women who were weeping for a Babylonian god whom they thought was dead. Emotional connection to sin is also when you don't get embarrassed even if others are aware of the sin you have committed. Discuss how Christians "fall in-love" with sin then find it difficult to give that sin up. How can that emotional tie with sin be broken?
 - d. *Sin causing others to sin* (v.16-18). What was the last act of sin that God showed to Ezekiel? How did this sin affect others? Discuss how sin affects not only you, but your loved ones as well. Describe how sin, just like some illnesses, can contaminate others.
4. The second truth we see in these passages is that **God punishes those who sin (ch. 9:1-11)**. God's judgment was detailed in this chapter. After Ezekiel had seen how corrupt Jerusalem had become, God called one man to spare those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things done. Then He called the angels of death to kill the wicked people in the city. In the Christian life, how does God judge sin? Could you escape the consequences of sin? Why should God's judgment keep you from sinning?
 5. The third truth in our passage is that **God leaves when there is sin, but reluctantly, because of His love (ch. 10:1-11:25)**. God's glory departed from the temple because of the people's sin. His

perfect holiness demands judgment for sin. How can you commit yourself, your loved ones, your church, and even your nation to follow God faithfully so that you never have to experience God leaving you?

Walk

God's holiness required that He leave the temple because they had so defiled it. For 400 years since God left, His glory was not seen until the announcement of Jesus' birth to the shepherds (Luke 2). By sending His Son Jesus Christ to earth to be the propitiation of our sins, God assured us that He will never leave His people again. Have you placed your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? Ponder on this:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart today;
try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray.
See if there be some wicked way in me;
cleanse me from every sin and set me free.*

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, You have made us aware one more time the dangers of living in sin. We implore You Lord that by Your grace we will not allow sin to progress in our lives. That sin will not go unchecked, and will not nourish in the hidden corners of our hearts. We pray that You will break up any emotional connection we have with it. And You will not allow us to cause others to sin. We pray that when You search our hearts and convict us of the wrong things we may have done, that we will right away ask You to forgive us and cleanse us. Thank you that although You hate sin, being the Holy and Righteous God, You love us and wouldn't want to depart from us. Help us to always choose to be faithful to You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

The Watchman #6
Foolish for Following Fools

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 12-13

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever encountered a false prophet/teacher, either in person, in magazines, or TV? How did you distinguish if that person was a false teacher?
2. Read Ezekiel 12-13. God warned His people through Ezekiel against false prophets whose messages to the people were filled with lies. Their only intention was to attract the people, saying only things that would please the people. Similar to Ezekiel's time, our generation is filled with false prophets. As a child of God and a follower of Jesus Christ, it is your responsibility to be a watchman of your generation—to be able to discern whether the teachings permeating our society are false teachings by false teachers, so that you can avoid and warn others to avoid it—else you become a foolish man who follows fools. Can you trust anyone who claims to be a man of God and teaches His Word? What are the red flags that would enable you to determine if what he/she teaches is from God or not? What is the best way to discern if the teaching is true or not?
3. In Ezekiel 12, we see a finality in God's judgment of His people (v. 28) because of their foolishness in listening and believing the false prophets. They did not heed the true prophets of God and so they were condemned. Chapter 13 describes five condemnations God placed against these false prophets, from which we learn five warning signs we need to watch out for to see if someone is a false prophet/teacher:

- a. **Warning #1: Focusing or emphasizing emotions and experiences over the Truth (v. 1-3).** God condemned the false prophets for saying that their messages and teachings were from God when it was actually from their own mind and experiences. False teachers and false teachings emphasize emotions without filtering it through the Word of God. Discuss how you can filter your emotions and experiences through the Word of God. How would you explain or demonstrate this: *"We do not interpret Scripture in light of our experiences, but we interpret our experiences in light of Scripture."* What is the danger when somebody says; "God spoke to me through dreams." Why should you be skeptical about it?
- b. **Warning #2: Not calling sin as sin or calling out wrong as wrong (v. 13:4-5).** God condemned the false teachers for being "foxes in the desert" who look for holes to hide from the sun. Instead of filling the spiritual and moral holes prevalent during Ezekiel's time, these false teachers were looking for loopholes to hide in for their own benefit. They were not calling the people out for their sins or to repentance and change, like a true prophet of God is supposed to do, and so the people were not ready when the spiritual battle came. Today, the moral and spiritual walls of our society are falling apart, and many Christians do not do anything about it, afraid that they will be unliked and unpopular amongst their circle of influence. Discuss examples of wrong behavior you have observed that many Christians do not address. How would refusing to call out sin and wrong behavior be detrimental to the spiritual and cultural battles that every Christian face?
- c. **Warning #3: Making false claims, often prophetic ones (v. 13:6-10).** God condemned the false teachers of Ezekiel's time for teaching lies (v. 6-10). All of God's prophets are 100% accurate. If someone says he or she speaks for God, and that person is wrong once, then he/she is a false prophet. Discuss the dangers of the growing charismatic and pentecostal movement in the Christian circles. How do you hold these people to account when they claim that they are speaking for

God or that “God told me this,” or when they say “I prophesy that ___”? Another dangerous notion that is growing among Christians is that God promises to prosper you in this lifetime (i.e. God will give you the desires of your heart as long as you have faith), taken from God’s promise to the Israelites in Jeremiah 29:11. Discuss why this claim is wrong. What are the dangers of making claims that the Scripture does not teach?

- d. **Warning #4: Not teaching the whole truth of the Word of God, but only selective truth (v. 11-16).** God condemned the false teachers in Ezekiel’s time because they were selective in their teaching of the Word of God. A half-truth or partial truth is a lie. Why is systematic and expositional teaching of the Word of God important instead of hopping from one verse to another? Discuss why reading a devotional book is not enough to feed you spiritually. What are the dangers of using verses out of context?
- e. **Warning #5: Replacing trusting God with mystical actions and “magical” objects.** God condemned the false prophets for telling the people to carry with them good luck charms or amulets. How is this behavior manifested in your culture/tradition? What kinds of people are usually easily swayed to use good luck charms? Could spells from evil people affect a Christian? Discuss this biblical truth: “Only God can pre-ordain your life. As a child of God, the Holy Spirit seals you.”

Walk

False teachers and false teachings are condemned by God because they emphasize emotions rather than truth, they don’t call sin as sin (or wrong as wrong), they make false claims (often prophetic ones), they don’t teach the whole truth of the Word of God, and they tell people to replace their trust in God with mystical actions and magical objects. What steps do you need to take so you can be a more discerning Christian and protect yourself from being influenced and/or controlled by people who bend the truth for their own selfish purposes?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for opening my mind that I should learn how to discern the truth about You. May Your Spirit guide me as there are many false teachers and false teachings out there that may confuse what I know about You. Help me to be hungry for Your Word, that I would learn how to thoroughly listen to it, study it and correctly apply what I learn in my life so that I will be firm in my faith and knowledge of You instead of being easily influenced by false teachings. Help me to know what is right and what is wrong in your sight. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

The Watchman #7
Idols of the Heart

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 14:1-23

Discussion Questions

1. We often think of an idol as a wooden or porcelain statue that people worship or pray to. However, the biblical definition of an idol is that which replaces the worship of the One True God in priority and in practice. A good example is social media, which many of us spend too much time on, sometimes even more than we spend praying or reading God's Word. When you are engrossed with something or someone (e.g. career, advancement, next opportunities for growth and expansion, family, yourself) to the point that it takes priority over God in your life, then you are guilty of having an idol in your life. An idol of the heart is hidden in the privacy of your heart, and so it may not be as obvious as worshipping a wooden idol, and therefore unnoticed. Discuss the things or people that have taken over your Christian life at the expense of your time and relationship with the Lord.
2. Idols of the heart are worse than going to a temple to worship a wooden idol, that's why it is addressed in the book of Ezekiel. These idols have to be dealt with so that you can be an effective watchman of your generation and help the Church to continue to have an impact in the community. Read Ezekiel 14:1-23. God reproved the elders for having the audacity to come to Ezekiel, God's prophet, for advice while worshipping idols in their hearts (v. 1-3). What makes the idol of the heart so damaging is that it is hidden in a place no one can see. Discuss the following:

- a. **The DANGER: Idols of the heart cause us to sin (v. 4-5).** Although many idols of the hearts are not sinful by itself (e.g. Facebook, cars, sports, shopping, etc.), if these things have priority in your life over the worship of God or over the desire to please Him in your life, then they can lead you to sin. Discuss how some of these basic things in life could actually keep you away from God and lead you to sin. In what way can other people's lifestyle keep you from appreciating God's blessings in your own life? How can giving God the priority of worship in your life set a boundary in order not to stumble into sin?
- b. **The RESPONSE: Repent and change (v. 6).** According to God Himself, if you stumble into sin, the response should be of repentance and change, which means turning from it and having a change of mindset in the way you live. Discuss how you can turn yourself away from the idols of the hearts. Do you think you can survive if you give them up? Why? If you are in a relationship with a person who is taking you away from God, what should you do about it? What does repentance entail?
- c. **The REMINDER: God will take action to recapture the heart of His people (v. 7-8).** The Israelites were God's people and He wanted them back. The same can be said of you. You are His child, and He wants to recapture your heart because He loves you. The notion that God will allow you to continue to live in sin is wrong. He takes action in order to recapture your hearts. How does God take action in order to lead His erring back to Him? Why should you not wait until God takes action before you give up the idol in your heart?
- d. **The WARNING: God does not answer those who worship idols in their hearts (v. 9-11).** God has no obligation to answer the prayers of hypocritical people who come to Him with idols in their hearts. Discuss what you think of people who only come to God when they are in great need. Why is it important to check your heart before you come to God in prayer? Should you expect a Pastor or someone to take the responsibility of praying for you? Why or why not?

- e. **The CHALLENGE: To (individually) live faithfully in an unfaithful world (v. 17-23).** God is a patient God, but if there is persistent unfaithfulness in a Christian's life, the Lord will still take action and punish that person. God judges; however, He protects the righteous ones. Share how you as an individual can live faithfully to the Lord in this unfaithful world.

Walk

*Jesus, my Lord will love me forever,
From Him no pow'r of evil can sever,
He gave His life to ransom my soul, now I belong to Him;
Now I belong to Jesus, Jesus belongs to me,
Not for the years of time alone, But for eternity.*

As a child of God, having been saved by grace thru faith in Christ Jesus, you belong to Him. He should be the only One to reign in your heart. No idol, a person or a thing, should take priority in your worship of Him. There are imminent dangers when you keep an idol in your heart. Come to God, allow Him to search your heart and see if there is anything there that has been keeping you from having a good relationship with the Lord.

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, You are our creator God who is awesome, great, loving and faithful. You are the Only One who deserves to be worshipped because of who You are. We know this truth, and yet we are guilty of keeping idols in our hearts. Please forgive us. Help us to honor only You as our God who should take priority in our lives. Keep us away from anyone or anything that might make us unfaithful to you and would keep you from having you first and foremost in our lives. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

The Watchman #8
A Love Story Gone Wrong

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 15-17

Discussion Questions

1. What usually makes a love story go wrong?
2. This parable of an unwanted and unloved baby growing up to be a mature and beautiful woman who prostituted herself depicts how Jerusalem has turned from God and betrayed Him in spite of how God raised her up from a lowly state to great glory as His bride. Read Ezekiel 16. This passage gives an account of how the beautiful love story between God and Israel had gone wrong.
 - a. ***From absolutely unwanted to unconditionally loved (ch. 16:1-14).*** What makes the baby in this parable unwanted and unloved (v. 1-5)? No one seemed to care if this baby dies, until someone came along (v. 6-9). What did that person do to save the baby? How does this parable describe how much God loves Israel? How is Israel described in verses 13-14?
 - b. ***From unconditionally loved to unashamed betrayal (ch. 16:15-34).*** Israel had perfect beauty because of the splendor that God had given her. Just like Israel, God had shown you His great love by picking you up and saving you from your sin through Jesus Christ who died for you. However, this beautiful love story between God and Israel did not end how it should. God cared for and loved her but she turned away to false gods of other nations. Israel had grown and became well-known, but had forgotten who had given her life. How was this spiritual adultery described in this passage? How far did Israel go in her defiance and rebelliousness to her God (v. 20-21)? Are you shocked of how Israel acted? Discuss how

every one of us could identify with Israel. How are Christians guilty of spiritual adultery?

- c. ***From unashamed betrayal to purposed punishment (ch. 16:35-43).*** The behavior of the Jews was so revolting that even their enemy, the Philistines who were loyal to their false gods, was shocked by the Jews' lewd conduct. It would shock you, too, how Israel could be so vile in paying other nations to prostitute her! However, you are as guilty as they are. Christians betray their Lord everyday by offering themselves to a world that gives them either short-lived pleasures or nothing, and by paying the world with their time, energy, and resources so that they will be accepted and adored. Because of this unashamed betrayal, God purposely punished the guilty. How did God punish Israel? Discuss why God doesn't always give you what you ask for. How could getting everything you want in life be a form of discipline? Why should the consequences of sin keep you from temptations that will sink you in sin?
- d. ***From purposed discipline to loving restoration (ch. 16:53-63).*** Losing something we value is a wake up call. God punished Israel to get her attention. When His people turn back to Him, He would forgive and renew His covenant. This covenant was put into effect when Jesus died on the cross to pay for the sins of mankind. Would any one who trusted in the Lord as his Savior lose his salvation when he commits sin? Is God's forgiveness a license to sin more? Are you, as a Christian, exempted from the punishment of sin? Share how God has restored you into a beautiful relationship with Him after turning away from sin back to God.

Walk

Man's relationship with God is a love story gone wrong, but made right by the Savior. It started with being absolutely unwanted to unconditionally loved, from unconditionally loved to unashamed betrayal, from an unashamed betrayal to purposed punishment, and from purposed punishment to loving restoration. How do you want your story to be written (or how do you want it to end)? No one ends after the first phase; most people end after phase 2 and 2, and very few end after

phase 4. What steps should you take so that your story ends with loving restoration?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that we often sin against You. We betray You in our behavior and attitude. Please forgive us. Thank You so much that through our Savior Jesus Christ, there is great hope in our condition, because when we humbly acknowledge our shortcomings, You are willing to forgive and restore us. Thank You that your discipline is a call to get our attention to turn around and get back to You. Help us to be sensitive to Your voice and listen when You are calling our attention. May our story end with loving restoration because of Your grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Watchman #9 Stop Blaming Your Family

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 18

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been blamed for something you didn't do? Share how you felt about that experience.
2. The Israelites believed that they were being punished for the sins of their forefathers, and not because of their own sin. Just like God reminds the Israelites in Ezekiel, God reminds you that you have a responsibility to own up to your own sin so that you can deal with your sin problem. Why do people like to blame someone or something else for their actions? Discuss some of the things that people blame others for instead of taking his or her own responsibility.
3. To be a watchman of this generation, you as a follower of Jesus should stop looking at others to blame, start owning up to your own actions, and accept the consequences of your sins. Read Ezekiel 18. In this passage, we are reminded about three truths about God:
 - a. **Truth #1: God's judgments are based on each individual's personal actions (v. 19-20).** A popular Israeli proverb teaches that children are suffering because of their parents' sin. The Israelite during Ezekiel's time believed that they were suffering from Babylonians because of their ancestors and not because of their own sin, hence blaming God. What are the three scenarios that were mentioned in verses 5-18 that explain how God punishes man for his sin based on his personal actions? Generational sin (sin that is passed down to the next generation) is becoming a popular belief even among Christians. How do verses 19-20 refute this belief? Should parents be blamed when their children don't turn out well even after they have done their best in raising them up? Do you find yourself "rating" your holiness based on how you compare against others? Based on God's standard of holiness made clear in His

Word, how does your "holiness" compare? Do you still think God owes you His best?

- b. **Truth #2: God's desire is to see the wicked turn to righteousness (v. 21-23).** God takes no joy in the death of the wicked; He would rather that they turn to Him and have eternal life. Is there any great sin that God cannot forgive? How did Christ's death prove that God is loving and merciful?
- c. **Truth #3: God's ways are always fair. Previous good does not offset current evil (v. 24-29).** Good works you have done before do not negate or invalidate God's punishment for the sins that you are committing now. God judges you for what you do NOW. If a person lives righteously but later on turn to wickedness, will he be saved from punishment of his wickedness? Does this punishment refer to salvation? What consequences of sin could result from living in sin? What should you do so that your sin will be forgiven and forgotten by God?

Walk

In a culture where close family ties is foundational, guilt by association is very difficult to break away from, but it is not impossible. The Bible teaches us that with a renewed heart that seeks to follow Christ, you can choose to break the evil act that is part of your family's heritage. You can choose righteousness. Is there anything in your life that you need to give up to allow God's power to work in you? Do you acknowledge that it is something that you cannot do by yourself, but through the Holy Spirit? Pray for God's new direction by turning to Him and owning up to your own actions instead of putting the blame on your family or someone else.

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for opening my mind about how You deal with sin. A lot of times, I tend to blame others, even my own family, for the wrong attitudes, actions, habits, and believes that I live by. Give me the humility to take responsibility for my actions, and the courage to correct what is wrong. I trust in Your power to change my heart and my mind. Thank You that there is no such thing as generationally inherited sin, and that through the blood of Christ my ties to sin have been broken. Help me in my resolve to live each day with You in control. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Watchman #10 Our Adversary, the Devil

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 19-32 (with focus on Eze. 28:11-19)

Discussion Questions

Important: We highly encourage you to listen to the full sermon at www.gccp.org.ph/sermon before your group discussion in order to view the message in its full context.

1. How do you know that Satan is real and not just something similar to a Marvel or comic book character?
2. Ezekiel 19 describes the impending destruction of Israel in the hands of the Babylonians. Ezekiel 22:30-31 says that God looked for a man among them who would stand in the gap, someone who would do what is right, but He found no one in authority who could turn the nation around. In chapters 25-32, seven nations were mentioned, which were prophesied to receive God's judgment because not only did they turn away from God, but their ungodly influence caused Judah to fall. Tyre was one of those places, a very powerful city that was judged because of its pride, whose prince even thought that he was a god (ch. 28:2,10). Read Ezekiel 28:11-19. There is a change in the actual subject of this passage from talking about prince/ruler of Tyre (v. 2) to the term *king* of Tyre (v. 12). The term used to describe this "king" could not be someone mortal because the descriptions go beyond a normal person. This "king" referred to in the passage describe Satan, the demonic ruler influencing Tyre. From this passage, we can see the origin story of Satan, of how he fell from being the beautiful and perfect Lucifer, the morning star. It is important to understand the creation and fall of Satan because how he fell is the technique he would often use to lure you to fall as well. His

tactic is to do to others what he did to himself. How was Satan created? The passage gives us three descriptions:

- a. **Created in Perfection (v. 11-12).** How do these verses describe how Satan was created? How is it so different from how people perceive Satan now?
 - b. **Unmatched in beauty (v. 13).** The Bible describes that Satan was in the Garden of Eden. What does this imply? (What did he witness?) Like everything God made, Satan was made to give glory to God. He was created not only full of wisdom, he had unmatched beauty as well. How was Satan's beauty described? What was the special role God had for Satan (as Lucifer)?
 - c. **Unparalleled in power and influence (v. 14).** Cherubim angels were special angels that have the high privilege of being closest to the throne of God. They were created to guard the holiness of God. What power and influence did Satan have as an anointed guardian cherub?
3. Satan was blameless in his ways from the day he was created until sin was found in him. It is important to note that God did not create Satan to be a monster; Satan was perfect when he was created. The problem of evil--why God allowed sin to enter the perfect world He created--has long frustrated us, because in His sovereign wisdom, God does not reveal His reasons to our full understanding. It will remain a mystery why sin somehow was found in Satan, and God allowed it to happen. But looking at what the Scriptures focus on from Genesis to Revelation, we see that the Bible focuses not on how sin came to the world, but on the SOLUTION to the sin problem. What are the actual sins by Satan, and what lessons can we learn from the account of his downfall to avoid going the same way?
 - a. **Lesson #1: Pride in power and influence leads to destruction (v. 16).** Satan's self-generated sin is the sin of pride. As one of the chief angels who had access to all of heaven and even the throneroom of God, Satan was so influential that he was able to convince 1/3 of God's angels to rebel against God (remember that angels can think for themselves). How was Satan judged because of his pride? Discuss how pride in power and influence lead someone to

destruction. How could you avoid the same fate as Satan if you are in a position of power and influence?

- b. **Lesson #2: Pride in the focus of oneself leads to downfall (v. 17).** Satan was so into himself that it corrupted his wisdom. He forgot where his beauty came from. Discuss how being so self-centered is so prevalent in the society. How does being into oneself make a person proud? Where should your focus be in order to avoid this pitfall?
- c. **Lesson #3: Pride in unrivaled perfection leads to disgrace (v. 18-19).** Satan thought that he could do no wrong because he was made perfect. He looked and thought so highly of himself, which led him to disgrace. His destruction is so assured, but why do people still follow him in spite of who he is? Share what you have learned from Satan's destruction. How is God taking the form of a man in the person of Jesus Christ so different from the downfall of Satan?

Walk

A truly humble heart never takes credit for what belongs to God. A prideful heart takes credit that belongs to God alone. Examine your heart through th. Is it one of humility or pride? Is there anything in your life that manifest pride at being powerful because of your position and influence in your community? Are you so full of yourself that you fail to focus on Jesus and others? Do you think that you are so “perfect,” equal to no one? Search you heart and allow God to take this pride out of your heart before you self-destruct.

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for opening my heart and mind to recognize how my prideful heart could be destructive and may cause me my downfall and disgrace. Please help me to be humble before You and to follow the example of my Lord Jesus who humbly gave Himself to save me from the eternal destruction of sin. Please give me the strength to overcome the wiles of my enemy, Satan. Help me that through Your power, I can overcome any temptation that will affect my walk with You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Watchman #11
A Comfort in Troubled Times

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 33-34

Discussion Questions

1. What comforting thoughts come to your mind when you feel alone in your struggles?
2. Ezekiel was re-commissioned by God to be a watchman of His people (ch. 33:1-20). He was first commissioned to pronounce judgment upon Israel and the surrounding evil nations for their sins, then for seven years, Ezekiel was silent. But after the fall of Jerusalem (v. 21-22), God opened Ezekiel's mouth to speak of comfort, salvation and restoration. His message is now about God's comfort. God doesn't enjoy disciplining His children, but He does it because He loves them. His grace, compassion and mercy overflow, and He blesses those who are faithful to Him. As God's child, how should you pay attention to Ezekiel's message of warning and hope? How should a person who continues to rebel against God react to His warnings? How should a person who remains faithful to God find encouragement to God's promises?
3. Ezekiel's ministry is to comfort God's people during a troubled time. These people must have been looking for someone to lead them, but chapter 34 accounts that there was no good leader to lead God's people. Verses 1-10 describe how bad the leaders were who were just taking care of themselves instead of taking care of their people. As a result, the flock of sheep (people) were scattered because no one took care of them. Where would Israel find their comfort in this trouble time? It was revealed in verses 11- 31 that their future Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, would be their Shepherd and Comforter in troubled times. Here are four

characteristics of this Good Shepherd that bring us comfort in troubled times:

- a. ***Comfort that God cares enough to look for you (v. 34:11-16).*** God seeks and searches for His scattered sheep. In the millennium, God will gather the entire Israel nation. God, who doesn't change, looks for you just as He did His people in the Old and New Testament. He is actively seeking you out. The Holy Spirit intercedes for you. How does it encourage you that Jesus Himself is the Good Shepherd who cares for you in times of trouble? Share a testimony of how you knew that God had been there for you while you were going through something that made you felt lost, confused and alone.
- b. ***Comfort that God gives you the best when He gives you rest (v. 13-15).*** Peace is not in the absence of trouble or conflict. God promised that He would feed them with the best of everything—good pasture. In correlation with feeding the sheep, the sheep would also lie down to rest. Most animals won't relax until they have peace (they feel safe). How important is being restful for you? Discuss what are the things that make people restless? What promises in the Scripture could you claim that give assurances of peace in spite of a seeming lack of solution to your problem? What does Psalm 23:4 tell you about rest and comfort?
- c. ***Comfort that God judges to make things right (v. 16-22).*** Irresponsible shepherds will be judged and dealt with. God will separate the good sheep (the righteous) from the bad sheep (unrighteous). These bad sheep did not only share with others, nor leave something for them but destroyed the leftovers so that nothing would be left for others. But God promised that He would protect these unfairly treated sheep. How does this promise encourage you when you think of people who do not only take advantage of others but abuse them as well? With all the unfairness and evilness that abound in the society, what comfort do you have that God judges to make things right?

- d. **Comfort that God gives everlasting peace (v. 23-29).** In contrast to the evil shepherds, God would send a perfect Shepherd in the person of Jesus Christ, who would take care of every need of His people and would set up a kingdom of perfect peace and justice. There will not be any more war or any trouble because there would be peace. What kind of peace does this passage talk about? Why is peace beyond conflict possible? Discuss the results of how people base their peace on instead of focusing on the Lord? How does the Holy Spirit give you peace?

Walk

Why should I feel discouraged? Why should the shadows come?

Why should my heart be lonely And long for heaven, heaven and home?

When, when Jesus is my portion, My constant Friend is He;

His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.

Our comfort in troubled times is knowing that our God is there for us (v. 30-31). He cares enough to look for us. He gives His best when He gives us rest. He judges to make things right. And He gives everlasting peace. Is there anything that is troubling you right now? Instead of trying to solve your problem on your own, why not in humble spirit commit to Him what is troubling you. Allow Him comfort you.

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, I cannot thank You enough for Your comfort when I need it. Thank You that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, I am never alone in handling the problems and troubles that I may go through in this life. Thank you that in spite of everything that's not going well in my life, I can still enjoy rest and peace because of You. Help me to always remember that I am not alone because You are always there to comfort me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Watchman #12
The Valley of Dry Bones

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 35-37

Discussion Questions

1. Give an example of impossible things that human beings cannot do.
2. Ezekiel 35-37 gives as an account showing that God will do the impossible in order to give hope to the hopeless people. In order to make an impact in this generation, you as a follower of Christ need to come to the realization that the God you worship and acknowledge CAN do the impossible. If you don't really believe that God can do what He says He will do, your faith will wilt. Share from your experience something that God had done in your life that seemed impossible from the human standpoint. How did it strengthen your faith?
3. The first half of the book of Ezekiel talks about condemnation because of sin, but the latter half changed to a theme of encouragement and comfort to God's people who were feeling hopeless. Historically, the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem had just taken place. Judah had just fallen in the hands of the Babylonians and were exiled in 586 B.C. During this time, Ezekiel was re-commissioned to encourage God's people. How did God use His messenger to do so? What prophecy did Ezekiel give to the nation of Seir (or Edom) in chapter 35:1-2? Why would this prophecy encourage God's people? Aside from prophesying against the people of Edom, what else did Ezekiel prophesy in the rest of the chapter? What was God's purpose for doing what was prophesied (v. 14-15)?

4. Ezekiel's prophecy in chapter 36:1-15 further encouraged the children of Israel, saying through a mountain metaphor that other nations would be judged but Israel would be restored. Verses 16-38 describe how God would restore and bless His people. What were God's promises in verses 25-27? Do you think Israel deserves this restoration after being disloyal to God? What is the basis why would God restore them? Whose reputation is at stake if God would not help them (v. 36)?
5. In Chapter 37, God brought Ezekiel to a valley full of very dry bones, which means that those people have been dead for a long time. Israel was considered culturally dead because she had no more land, no people, and no rightful king. Everything they had was gone. The valley of dead bones was a metaphor for Israel. What did God tell Ezekiel in verse 3? What did God instruct him to do (v. 4-6). If you were Ezekiel, would you believe God and do what He instructed? For you to believe that God would do the impossible, you need to believe in the following:
 - a. **The power of God's Word (v. 3-6).** Faith is believing in what you cannot see. Discuss how Christians believe not in what God said He would do, but only when they see the results. If God did not answer your prayers, would you still believe in His Word? Do you believe God for who He is and not just for what He does? What does shifting from results-oriented faith to a character-oriented faith in God mean?
 - b. **The ability of God's action (v. 7-13).** Ezekiel must have been in shock at the display of God's power in restoring the dead to life. God could certainly restore Israel as well. Historically, the Israelites were a hated people, and many nations tried many times to annihilate them. But God has always been protecting them. What does it tell you about the extent of God's power through His ability to do the impossible? Is there a seemingly impossible thing in your life that you are dealing with right now? Discuss how you could you trust God's ability to work it out for you.

Walk

“I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it,” says the Lord.’ “ (Ezekiel 37:14, NKJV)

God’s spoken Word should be sufficient for us to believe Him, and His actions have proven that His word is correct. With God’s enabling power in you, is there anything that you cannot do?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding me that Your word is sufficient enough for me to believe in You. Forgive me if my tendency is to believe only when I see the result of Your work instead of believing in who You are and in Your character. Help me to believe in Your ability to do the impossible instead of trusting You based on my small faith and understanding of what You can really do. Help me to live in faith, trusting You for every detail of my life because You know what is best for me. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

The Watchman #13
The Return of God's Glory

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 38-43

Discussion Questions

1. The phrase “to God be the glory” is so commonly said by Christians, but what does it really mean to give God the glory? Site some instances that you usually say, “Praise God!” or “To God be the Glory!” At the time you ascribed glory to God, could you honestly say that God is indeed glorified because you were faithfully walking with Him and living according to His Word?
2. In the beginning chapters of the book of Ezekiel, we see God's physical presence leave Jerusalem because of the terrible sins of His people. When God's glory left, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the temple along with it. Because of this, the Israelites thought that the glory of God would never return to reside with them again. But in a message to encourage His people, God promised that His glory would return (ch. 38-43). The Bible tells us that the glory of God will be declared to all the nations in the future Millennial Kingdom, and as part of that restoration of His people a new temple will be built, signifying a new relationship between God and His children under the new covenant. Four temples are mentioned in the Bible: Solomon's temple, Zerubabel's/Herod's temple, the Tribulational (Great Tribulation) temple, and the Millennial temple. In verses 40:1-4, God shows Ezekiel a vision of the Millennial temple which Ezekiel describes in great detail in chapters 40-43. Why is the Millennial temple different from the other temples that were built in the past? What would make this temple very special? How would this temple encourage those who are feeling hopeless in their standing before the Lord? Why

would the presence of the living God residing in the temple make a big difference in a worshipper's life?

3. In Ezekiel's vision, the glory of God returns in a very dramatic way. It came in the full grandeur and majesty that it left with. It is the same vision of God's glory that Ezekiel saw in chapter 1. The fullness of God's glory is not diminished when it returns in the Millennium temple. Why did God's glory leave the temple in the first place? Why is He able to return this time? What changes have been done? In chapter 43:1-12, we find three conditions that must be met for God's glory to return (for Him to be truly glorified in our lives):
 - a. ***God is glorified when our life's focus is only on Him and no one else (v. 5-7).*** God cares more about how you honor Him in faithful focus on Him, rather than in what is actually achieved. Why is focusing on worship more important than service to God? Is it okay to miss worship service because you are involved in serving in the choir, children ministry, or other ministries in your church? Why or why not? How do you give glory to God by doing your best in whatever endeavor you are involved?
 - b. ***God is glorified when in our lives, evil things and sin acts are far away (v.8-9).*** The further sin is taken away, the greater God's glory in our lives can be made evident. Discuss why sin hinders God's glory. What does 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 tell you about living in holiness and being separated from sin? Share how you could stay far away from sin.
 - c. ***God is glorified when we live our lives according to His standards in preparation for when we see Him (v. 10-12).*** Through the Scriptures, God has given us His standard on how to honor Him. His standard never changes; He is never out of touch with the culture nor the times. Why is your own standard of goodness not enough to give glory to God? Do you live according to the standard God has set for you? How are you able to do it?

Walk

In the future there will be the restoration of the ideal relationship between God and His people. God is ready to be in a working relationship with His people when they consecrate themselves—setting their lives apart. Consecration begins with a self-examination of your life. Ask yourself:

- Is there anything that takes my focus away from my sole focus and attention on the Lord? Are there idols in my life that I need to get rid of—the idol of possession, prestige, position, material things?
- Are there any sinful acts/attitudes and evil objects that I need to separate from my life in order to glorify God?
- Is there anything in my life that is lived against the standard of God? Have I twisted God’s clear instructions for how I should live my life? Am I willing to make a concerted effort to realign my life to God’s standard so that I may glorify Him with my life?

Through the way you live your life, God’s glory should be so evident that others can say of your life, “Glory be to God’s name!”

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, my prayer is that I will glorify You in my life. I know that it can be easily said than done because a lot of things in this world can easily distract me to focus only on You. I fail You by being tempted to fall in to sin instead of running away from it. And I certainly don’t live according to your standard. If this is so, how could I ever glorify you in my life? But thank you Lord that I can do it with Your help. Help me to live my life to please You and that when others see me, they would see You and glorify You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

The Watchman #14
The Way of Worship

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 44-46

Discussion Questions

1. Describe an instance when your attitude affected the people around you or the way you were doing something.
2. To encourage the hopeless people who were living in exile, God told Ezekiel to tell the people that there would be a future temple that would be built in the millennium where God's glory will return. Certain conditions must be met in the building of this temple, as described in chapters 42-43. In the next chapters God gives specific details of how this future temple should operate, and we see that some Old Testament practices of worship will be reinstated. Read Ezekiel 44-46 and identify some of these practices. In the New Testament we are told that these OT practices are insufficient to atone for the sins of mankind. If this is so, what purpose do these OT practices serve in the Millennial Kingdom? What does the Bible say about what will happen in the future that makes the reinstating of these practices necessary (Revelation 20:8)?
3. The worship of God is not a "freestyle" kind. God tells us how He wants us to worship Him and is very specific in indicating that there are protocols/rules as it relates to how to properly worship Him in the millennium temple. From these instructions we draw out three attitudes we need to proactively cultivate to align our worship with how God wants it done:
 - a. ***Worship is a self-examination of oneself for holiness and faithfulness (ch. 44).*** Who is the prince mentioned and what will be his responsibility (ch. 44:1-3)? Would everyone have full access to the millennium temple (ch. 44:4-5)? Why or why not? What are the conditions for those who can enter the temple (ch. 44:6-9)? God also enumerates some of the rules that govern those

that will serve in the millennium temple (ch. 44:10-31). Surprisingly, the Levites would no longer be allowed to serve as priests (v. 10-14). Why is this so? Who will have the special privilege of close access to the holy things of the temple instead (v. 15-16)? On what basis did God allow this group to do so? When God's people worship Him whether individually or corporately, He looks for holiness and faithfulness in the people who worship Him. Could you genuinely worship God if you are living in sin? How should you prepare yourself before coming to God in worship? Discuss how you can be faithful to God in spite of your circumstances, just like the sons of Zadok.

- b. ***Worship is giving to the Lord, fairly and wholeheartedly (ch. 45).*** The Israelites in their greed have used inaccurate measurements in dealing with everything, which God certainly opposed (ch. 45:9-12). God told them to do what is just and right and to use an accurate scale when they allocate things for Him, not taking things that belong to Him. You are not under compulsion to give, but when you do, make sure that you are giving God wholly His fair portion. What are the things that you give to God as an act of worship? In what ways are you being unfair and half-hearted in giving back to God what is His in the first place? Share a testimony that has showed that you cannot out-give God.
- c. ***Worship is intentional, orderly, and purposed (ch. 46).*** God has completely planned out the details of His worship service, down to how to enter and exit the temple, showing how orderly and intentional He is in what He does. His instruction is clear that worship should be intentional. It is not a response or an afterthought, but a proactive intentional act of the will. Discuss why you should not worship only when you feel like doing it? Why is order and intentional preparation in worship important, as opposed to a free-flowing program? Why is it not okay to come unprepared to worship God? How do you prepare yourself to worship God?

Walk

*Worthy of worship, worthy of praise,
worthy of honour and glory;
worthy of all the glad songs we can sing,
worthy of all the offerings we bring.
You are worthy, Father, Creator.
You are worthy, Saviour, Sustainer
You are worthy, worthy and wonderful;
worthy of worship and praise.*

God sent His Son Jesus Christ to die in your place so that you can have eternal life in heaven (John 3:16). As a sinner saved by the grace of God, God is very much worthy of your worship. He has stated in His Word how He desires this done. Is your worship really true and acceptable worship? Ask yourself these questions:

- Are you proactively examining your life for holiness and faithfulness before you step out to worship Him?
- Are you proactively giving wholeheartedly and fairly as you put aside part of your time and resources to give to Him?
- Do you intentionally prepare your heart before you worship Him, or are you coming to church just for a show, meaning your heart is not really in it?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for enlightening me the real meaning of worship. Forgive me that many times when I come to worship You, I really don't think much about it. I don't search my heart if there is something that might hinder me from truly worshipping you, or if I am short-changing you by not putting aside what really belongs to you in terms of time and resources. No wonder there are times that I don't feel that I have really worshipped you. Help me to be intentional in preparing my heart by pursuing holiness, faithfulness, and whole-hearted giving to Your, for You are worthy of my utmost worship. May I have a heart of worship that is always acceptable to You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Watchman #15
The Best of Restorations Results

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 47-48

Discussion Questions

1. How do people usually restore their relationship with a friend or loved one with whom they had a conflict?
2. Scripture talks about two types of restoration pertaining to your relationship with the Lord. One is *complete restoration* in your glorified state at the end of this life, and the other is *relational restoration* when you confess your sin and ask God for forgiveness, and you live a transformed life that enables you to enjoy close fellowship with Him. Seeking a restored fellowship with the Lord has several benefits:
 - a. **Result #1: Healing and blessing (ch. 47:1-11).** This passage is a picture of the life-giving nature of water that flows from God's millennial temple. The Dead Sea, a body of water so salty that nothing can live in it, will become fresh because of its source, which is the Lord. When God heals the land, blessings follow. He mends what is broken. Discuss how healing and blessings go hand in hand. What steps do you take to mend a relationship with God that is not right? Share how a broken relationship with the Lord that has been restored brought blessings in your life.
 - b. **Result #2: Conditioned only on one person (ch. 47:12).** Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their fruit will serve as food and their leaves as medicines for healing because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. In your life, the Lord is the only source of restoration. Give examples of actions/offenses that some people may find

difficult to forgive and so may result in relationships that are difficult to restore (in your family, work/school life). Discuss how this encourages your Christian walk: that your restoration to fellowship with God is His decision alone, and not a committee or through somebody else's approval. How does a restored relationship with the Lord affect your relationship with others and allow God's grace to shine?

- c. **Result #3: Promises fulfilled (ch. 47:13-48:29).** The reason why God is doing the restoration of His people is because of His promises thousands of years ago that the land will be allotted as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel. Non-Jewish Christians will receive inheritance as well. The many promises of God in the scriptures find fulfillment only when we are restored fully in our relationship and standing with God. Discuss why you cannot claim God's promises when you are living in sin. Is God obligated to bless you when you are not walking rightly with Him? The Israelites will receive their promises only after the nation turns back to God. What promises of God do you claim, and what are the conditions of those promises?
- d. **Result #4: Fellowship with God (ch. 48:30-35).** The name of the city in the millennium will be "The Lord Is there". Because of the restored relationship with God, you can fellowship with Him and say, "The Lord is there." Do you fear being transparent about your life (e.g. past misdeeds) because you are afraid to be judged by other people? How does knowing that God will forgive and accept you regardless of the seriousness of the sins you have committed encourage you in coming to God openly and without fear? Do you believe that when God forgives, He completely does so and will not use your forgiven sin to condemn you?

Walk

A restored relationship with God brings about many great results in your life. Restoration brings healing and blessing. It is conditioned only on One Person, which is the Lord. It results to fulfillment of God's promises, and it allows you to fellowship with Him. Would you beg someone whom you have a broken relationship with to restore that relationship with you? If you can do it with someone, how much more to God?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for how, in the book of Ezekiel, you have shown me Your holiness that I should never ignore. Thank you for the promise of the new temple, the new city and the new people in the millennium, which demonstrate Your Holiness. Thank You for Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross, that through Him I can have a restored relationship with You in spite of all my sins. Help me to live a life of a person who is not condemned, but a person who lives life joyfully and peacefully because of the fellowship I have with you as a restored person in your sight. In Jesus' name. Amen.