

## Small Group Guide: The Glory Departed

Based on Ezekiel 4-32



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### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to understand His Word and to help the group apply these truths to their lives today.

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### Icebreaker (10 minutes)

**Question:** Have you ever had to use a visual aid or object lesson to help someone understand an important message? What was it, and did it work?

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### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **God's Patience Precedes Judgment** - God warned Israel for hundreds of years through multiple prophets before judgment came.
2. **Visual Prophetic Messages** - When people stop listening with their ears, God sometimes uses dramatic visual demonstrations to get their attention.

3. **The Glory Departed** - The most heartbreaking moment in Ezekiel's vision was seeing God's glory leave the temple (Ezekiel 10:18).
  4. **Spiritual Warfare is Real** - Behind national conflicts are spiritual powers and principalities (Ezekiel 28).
  5. **Judgment Leads to Restoration** - God's pattern is always judgment followed by redemption and restoration.
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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text (15 minutes)

1. **Why did God ask Ezekiel to act out these strange visual demonstrations rather than just speak a message?** What does this tell us about the spiritual state of God's people at that time?
2. **Read Ezekiel 4:1-8.** What was the significance of Ezekiel bearing the iniquity of Israel and Judah on his sides? How does this foreshadow Christ?
3. **Discuss Ezekiel 10:18-19.** What did it mean for the ancient Israelites when "the glory of the Lord departed from the temple"? Why was this so devastating?

### Applying to Our Context (20 minutes)

4. **The sermon mentioned that we live in a "post-Christian society" where God's glory may have departed from many places.** Where do you see evidence of this in our culture? In some churches?
5. **God gave Israel hundreds of years of warnings before judgment came.** How does this demonstrate both God's justice and His patience? What does this teach us about His character?
6. **Read Ezekiel 28:12-17.** This passage reveals spiritual powers behind earthly nations. How does understanding spiritual warfare change the way you pray for your community, nation, or world events?
7. **"It's so easy to get us focused on each other that we miss the war going on behind the scenes."** How can we avoid this trap? What practical steps can we take to remember the spiritual dimension of our struggles?

## Personal Reflection (15 minutes)

8. **Ezekiel had to deliver hard messages about judgment.** Have you ever had to share a difficult truth with someone? How did you balance truth and compassion?
  9. **The sermon ended with hope: "After judgment comes redemption and restoration."** How does the gospel demonstrate this pattern? Share a time when you experienced God's restoration after a difficult season.
  10. **Where in your life might God be trying to get your attention right now?** Are there areas where you've stopped listening to His voice?
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## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

#### Option 1: Spiritual Warfare Prayer

- Spend 10 minutes each day praying specifically for spiritual breakthrough in your community, church, or nation
- Use Ephesians 6:10-18 as a guide
- Keep a journal of what God reveals to you

#### Option 2: Personal Inventory

- Ask God to reveal any areas where His glory may have "departed" from your life
- Identify one specific area where you need to repent and invite God's presence back
- Share this with an accountability partner

#### Option 3: Study God's Patience

- Read through the book of Jeremiah this week (or portions of it)
  - Note how many times and in how many ways God warned His people
  - Reflect on how this reveals God's character and patience with you
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## **Memory Verse**

**Ezekiel 10:18-19a** "Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight."

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## **Looking Ahead**

Next week we'll explore Ezekiel 33-48, focusing on God's promises of restoration, the end times, and future hope. Come prepared to discuss how judgment always leads to redemption in God's plan.

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## **Closing Prayer (5 minutes)**

- Pray for sensitivity to God's voice and presence
  - Ask God to reveal any areas where we've hardened our hearts
  - Thank God that through Christ, judgment has been satisfied and restoration is available
  - Pray for spiritual discernment in recognizing spiritual warfare
  - Ask for God's glory to be present in your lives, families, and church
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## 5-Day Devotional: From Judgment to Redemption



### Day 1: The Patience of God's Warnings

**Reading:** Jeremiah 18:1-11; Ezekiel 3:16-21

**Devotional:** God's judgment never comes without warning. For hundreds of years, He sent prophets to call His people back to faithfulness. This reveals something profound about God's character—He is patient, not willing that any should perish. Before consequences arrive, God provides countless opportunities for repentance. Today, consider where God might be speaking warnings into your life. Are there areas of compromise or disobedience you've been ignoring? God's warnings aren't meant to condemn but to redirect us toward life. His patience is an expression of love, giving us time to turn back. Don't mistake His patience for approval or His silence for absence. Respond to His gentle corrections before they become necessary disciplines.

## **Day 2: When Glory Departs**

**Reading:** Ezekiel 10:1-19; 1 Samuel 4:19-22

**Devotional:** "The glory of the Lord departed from the temple"—perhaps the most heartbreaking sentence in Scripture. God's presence had dwelt with Israel for generations, but persistent rebellion caused Him to withdraw. This wasn't vindictive abandonment but the natural consequence of rejecting His holiness. Today, many churches and individuals use Jesus' name while ignoring His words, experiencing a departure of genuine spiritual power. God's presence cannot coexist with unrepentant sin. Examine your own life and community: Is God's glory genuinely present, or merely assumed? The good news is that God desires to dwell with us. Through Christ, His Spirit lives within believers. Guard that presence carefully through obedience, worship, and surrendered living. Don't take His presence for granted.

## **Day 3: The Spiritual Battle Behind the Scenes**

**Reading:** Ezekiel 28:11-19; Daniel 10:10-21; Ephesians 6:10-18

**Devotional:** Ezekiel's prophecy against Tyre reveals something startling: spiritual powers operate behind earthly kingdoms. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. The fall of Lucifer, once a guardian cherub in God's presence, reminds us that our true enemy works in darkness, influencing nations and individuals. This reality should transform how we view conflict. When we fight each other, we're distracted from the real battle. Political divisions, cultural wars, and personal conflicts often mask deeper spiritual warfare. Our weapons aren't physical but spiritual—prayer, truth, righteousness, faith. Before you engage in earthly battles today, ask: What's happening in the spiritual realm? Pray for discernment, put on God's armor, and fight the real enemy with spiritual weapons.

#### **Day 4: Bearing the Weight of Sin**

**Reading:** Ezekiel 4:1-17; Isaiah 53:1-12

**Devotional:** God commanded Ezekiel to bear the iniquity of Israel and Judah, lying on his side for hundreds of days as a visual representation of their sin. This prophetic act foreshadowed the ultimate sin-bearer: Jesus Christ, the true "Son of Man." Ezekiel's temporary suffering pointed to Christ's permanent solution. Where Ezekiel bore sin symbolically, Jesus bore it actually, completely, and finally on the cross. All the judgment we deserve was placed on Him. This should overwhelm us with gratitude and transform how we live. We no longer carry the weight of condemnation. When guilt threatens to crush you, remember: your sin has already been borne by Another. Live in that freedom today, not carelessly, but gratefully, allowing His sacrifice to motivate holy living.

#### **Day 5: After Judgment Comes Redemption**

**Reading:** Ezekiel 37:1-14; Romans 6:1-11

**Devotional:** The pattern throughout Scripture is consistent: judgment followed by restoration. Israel faced consequences for rebellion, but God promised future redemption. The gospel follows this same pattern—we all deserved judgment, but Christ took it upon Himself, making redemption available. If all judgment was satisfied at the cross, none remains for those in Christ. This is profoundly liberating. You don't live under condemnation but under grace. Yet this isn't cheap grace that ignores sin; it's costly grace that transforms us. God's redemptive work doesn't end with forgiveness—He makes dead things live again, just as He promised to breathe life into Israel's dry bones. Whatever feels dead in your life today—hope, purpose, relationships, faith—God specializes in resurrection. Surrender those dead places to Him and watch Him breathe new life into what seemed beyond restoration.