

PASTOR SCOTT: Hey, Freshwater.

Hope you guys are doing well here on the last day of May. Like, summer is here. Hope you guys are doing well. Today, we are going to be hitting Ezekiel, the last message here in this series. As we begin, I invite you to turn to Ezekiel 40.

I want to ask you a trivia question. What's the name of the song, and who wrote it, that is played at every coronation for any British royal for over 300 years? I mean, you want to talk about tradition. Google that. Try to figure that thing out.

While we're on the topic of England, I have to tell you, my favorite book ever, and movie ever, it's actually a trilogy, and it's "The Hobbit." Actually, "Hobbit" is second. It's actually "The Lord of the Rings."

"The Lord of the Rings" is my favorite one. It is written by this guy, obviously, J.R.R. Tolkien. Tolkien, as you start to read this book, you get this sense that this guy really believed this. Not only believed it, it wasn't about fantasy. It was much larger than that. This guy loved Jesus.

In fact, you read just his story, and you read the story of C.S. Lewis, C.S. Lewis talks about how J.R.R. Tolkien had a huge influence on him, moving from atheism to following Christ.

In the trilogy, "The Lord of the Rings," it's this story, obviously, of this hobbit, but the grander story is this prophesy that's over 1,000 years old, about a king who comes from a line of kings, that everyone had thought was long dead and the throne has been abandoned. This king would come back at earth's darkest -- or middle earth's darkest moment, right, and save the day. That's the story that chronicles through these three books.

The third and final book is called "The Return of the King." What's interesting is, as J.R.R. Tolkien was writing it, in the background, he is trying to communicate, how do I talk about Christ in a way that would capture people. This story, in the third book, actually, through it, you see how the land is groaning. You see how the people are groaning.

There's different responses to the

return of the king. You have those that don't even believe it's real. Like, that never happened, or it's not ever going to happen. You have those who want to believe but just doubt and have lost all hope. Then you have that remnant that does believe and is following the king and will die to see the king return to the throne.

For me, as I look at that, it's one of these things that now, as we come to Ezekiel, it is the return of the king. That's what Ezekiel 40 launches into. Actually, it started in chapter 36 and 37. Last week, what Pastor Sean talked about was this massive battle. It was God pulling all the enemies, all those who have been opposing Israel, and really God's kingdom, he pulls them together for this final battle. Of course, God wins. The king wins, right, and conquers them all.

We pick up in chapter 40 with, after the battle is done, now it's the mopping up process. Now -- well, actually, that was happening in 39. Now, it's the establishment of the throne and the kingdom of the king. We pick up in chapter 40. The first thing that

the king, Christ, does is he begins to rebuild this temple, right? He starts to describe this.

He gives Ezekiel a vision of the new temple. You have the east gate. He talks about the east gate and measures it, what all that is going to look like. He talks about the outer court. He takes him to that, shows him that, how that's laid out. The north gate, then you have the south gate.

What's interesting, you read through this, palm trees, of all things, palm trees show up a lot. God likes palm trees, which I didn't know. I spent so much time trying to figure out what's up with the palm trees in chapter 40. Apparently, God likes palm trees a lot. They're in the temple, which I think is kind of cool. So, anyway, that's free.

He goes to the inter court, and he starts to describe this, what that's going to be like. He gets over to the chamber for the priests, right? In chapter 40:35, he says to Ezekiel, right, this chamber that faces south is for the priests who have charge of the

temple, and the chamber that faces north is for the priests who have charge of the altar.

These are the sons of Zadok, who alone among the sons of Levi -- which Levi is the tribe of priests, but now he's saying, look, within the tribe, there were only these guys, the sons of Zadok, who can come near to the Lord to minister to him.

Then he keeps going on. Goes on and talks about the vestibule of the temple, the inner temple. You're like, wait, wait, wait a minute. Wait a minute. Time-out. Like, hardly anybody ever gets mentioned by name, specifically. When you look especially at chapter 40:36 all the way to the end, there is nobody getting mentioned by name except this guy, Zadok.

Actually, this isn't the only time. He gets mentioned over in chapter 44, right at the beginning. Not 44 -- 44:15, "The Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray."

Chapter 48, Zadok is mentioned again. Three times. The king returns, is

building a temple, and guess who he talks about. Zadok. Like, how many of you guys have ever heard of him? Like, I mean, I really didn't know about this guy until I'm reading it. I had to study who this guy was. Nobody has heard of Zadok. Maybe some of you. But most of you are like, "Who is Zadok?"

He lived back during Solomon's time, and he was a priest. Israel was starting to stray from God, going into civil war and chaos. He stayed loyal to the throne, to the covenant of God, and he stayed loyal to ministering and keeping the temple worship going.

There was moments when his life was threatened, like, you didn't know whether he was going to survive or not. Here we are, God looks at that moment where he's loyal and Israel is going astray, and he gives this tribute to him, as he's pulling back his kingdom and restoring it. He's saying, "I want the sons of Zadok close to me because they stay loyal."

Here's what's interesting to me, you know what the song is that's played for 300

years in the coronations of the British royalty? It's called "Zadok the Priest." Because Zadok was there for the coronation of Solomon. The king -- I should have remembered which name -- back almost 300 years ago, commissioned Frideric Handel to write a coronation song. He took a psalm of Zadok. A little trivia there.

This guy, this is what I -- I just want to point out something. It's not because he waves some shiny, pointy sword, right, or rushed some hill with valor, or was strong or was this -- the wisest in the kingdom. You know, he wasn't Israel's most sexiest priest alive or whatever they do back there in the day, right? He didn't have anything other than -- this is what God said -- he was faithful. He never went astray.

It just stands out to me because I think, often, we want -- we idolize or we think, oh, that's what it's got to look like, to be this person that would be mentioned by God, that God would pay attention to. Yet, here we are, what, almost 350 years after Zadok lived, and God mentions him. The only reason

he mentions him is because he was a guy who never wavered. He just stayed true. Staying true to God is accessible to any of us. You don't have to be somebody famous. You don't have to be somebody important.

God -- there's this evidence within here, there's something about this that just shows how much God loves those, whether they're young, whether you're a student, whether you're old, no matter where it is, he loves the people, and he remembers the people who don't stray but just stay faithful. It stands out here as we look at the return of the king.

So he goes on, and he starts to talk about the vestibule of the temple and the inner temple. He measures these things and starts to describe different aspects of the temple itself. He goes into the temple chambers, and he starts to describe the temple chambers.

He finally gets to the end of 42, describing the outlay of the whole thing, and he says this in chapter 42:16, he says, "He measured the east side with the measuring reed, 500 cubits by the measuring reed all around.

He measured the north side, 500 cubits by the measuring reed all around. He measured the south side, 500 cubits by the measuring reed. Then he turned to the west side and measured, 500 cubits by the measuring reed. He measured on four side. It had a wall around it" -- guess how long -- "500 cubits" -- and guess how wide -- "500 cubits."

Now, if you're reading this, and you're like, okay, whatever, that's fine. I don't know. Okay. Great, we're measuring things. I don't know what a cubit is. What's a cubit? Here's the thing, if you were a Jew, hearing this vision for the first time, your jaw would have been, like, right? You'd have to put it up. Because he's describing something here, and it's massive.

Now, what you're going to see on the screen here is there's four different temples in the history and the future of Israel. So the very first one on that screen, you'll see a tiny rectangle. It's called the tabernacle. That was the portable temple, tent temple, they you could tear it down when wandering in the wilderness before the promised

land. Even in the promised land, they used the tabernacle until the first stone temple was built by Solomon.

So you see the second, you know, smallest image there, and that's the temple of Solomon. When you read that in 2 Samuel, you think, that's a huge temple. Fast forward, the temple is destroyed. Read that in Ezekiel here. The temple isn't rebuilt until king Herod officially, right? King Herod, you see now, the third largest temple. Compared to Solomon's, it's huge. It's more than double the size of Solomon's. Obviously, way bigger than a tabernacle.

But what Ezekiel is describing here is a temple that's 500 cubits by 500 cubits. It's massive. That's the largest temple, and it is in the future, but that's the largest temple that's going to be built. That's huge. It dwarfs everything. The Jews were hearing this, they're like, "500 cubits by 500 cubits, that thing is massive."

What Ezekiel is saying is, there is coming a day when the king returns. The first thing he's going to take care of is the temple.

In the royal city, he is going to build this temple, which is really interesting.

Here's another trivia question. What sits, right now, on the temple location, the historic temple location? The Dome of the Rock and another famous mosque. And I'm not -- I don't want to stir up any animosity toward Muslims. I'm just saying, what we think is happening -- we can get distracted by what's going on in the natural realm, right, on the natural plane. That's all we see, is what's in front of us. But this story is so much bigger than this.

To have the Dome of the Rock and that mosque on that place, it is so much bigger than one person. It is this revealing of a larger battle that has been going on since Satan fell from heaven and was cast out. It's defiance. Open defiance and planting that right there in defiance. So there is this moment right here, as God says, "I'm going to rebuild it."

It hasn't happened yet, but we know it's coming. God is going to come to that temple site, and he is going to rebuild the

temple. And as he describes that and finishes the description of the temple, he goes on in chapter 43, and here's probably the best part, I would say, of the whole book of Ezekiel. This is the climax right here, chapter 43.

It says this: "He led me," being Ezekiel, "to the gate, the gate facing east. Behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east." The glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. "At the sound of his coming -- and the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory.

"And the vision I saw was just like the vision I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I fell on my face. As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple."

It's the return of the king. He references chapter 1, the glory. He was by the Chebar canal and saw a vision of the glory of

God. If you haven't heard the message that Kevin Kutcel preached on that chapter, the glory of God, you have to listen to it. It helps understand what's going on here in chapter 43. But God left; fast forward to chapter 10 of Ezekiel, God left Israel. He's done. He left the land.

So what we have in this chapter 43 is the return of the king. The king is coming back. The king's returned. The battle has been won. The temple where he would reside, this majestic temple has been built, and his presence has restored or been restored to the land. It's the -- I don't know how you would -- how you picture this, but it's the glory of God.

What's interesting, as you fast forward, even to chapter 44:1, it says this, "He brought me to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east. And it was shut. The Lord said to me, 'This gate shall remain shut. It shall not be open and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered it. It is going to remain shut.'"

Which I love this. The king comes

through this gate. There's only three gates to the temple, if you remember the picture of the image. There's only three gates into the temple. Now, God comes through the east gate. They shut it, and no one else can use it because it's God's. He's holy. He's majestic. He's eternal and all that God is. He says, "That's my gate, and no one else is going to use it."

Kids, can you imagine? You had a door in the house, actually, the front door was your door, and nobody else could use it because you were just so awesome, right? Wouldn't that be cool? You tell your big brother or your little sister, whatever, "That's my door. You can't use it."

See, God comes in here, and he touches the gate, right, his glory comes through the gate, and he says, "No more will anybody use it. It's shut forever."

It is a promise here that the king has not only come, but chapter 44 is the promise that the king will never leave. It is to remain shut. The king's glory, his presence is now in the temple, and he's not going to

leave the land. Promises are fulfilled. The king is here to stay.

And I love what Ezekiel does. He falls on his face. I've been listening to a song, "What Would You Do if He Walked into the Room," and it asks that question over and over and over again.

Here, he's brought into the room with the glory of God, and he falls on his face. Falls, flat out. There was no forethought to it. There was no plan. It was the glory of God is so immense and all that it is described in chapter 1, and he just falls on his face. It's so awesome. It's so incredible.

What do you do in the presence of God? To the kings here, he begins to describe, "Hey, this is how I want you to worship me."

He talks about the altar. Chapter 44, he talks about the prince and how he wants him to rule. And who gets in and who doesn't get in. Talks about how the priests, you know, how he wants them to minister.

Chapter 45, he keeps going, talking about, "Okay, this is for this part of the

building. That's for that. This is what I want you to do here," the prince, the feast.

He finally gets to chapter 47, and we have this scene here. He says, "You brought me back to the door of the temple. Behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the temple faced east. The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.

"Then he brought me out by the way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east, and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side."

Do you get that he didn't even go out the east gate right here? He had to go out a different gate, which I love. Gate is shut. "Going east with the measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits and he then led me through the water, and that was ankle deep. Measured a thousand, and it was knee deep. Again he measured a thousand, led me through the water, and it was waist deep. Again he measured a thousand, and it was a

river that I could not pass through, for the water has risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said to me, 'Son of man, do you see this?'

"Then he led me back to the bank of the river. As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. And he said to me, 'This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea.

"When the water flows into the Dead Sea, the water will become fresh. And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live. There will be very many fish. For this water goes there, and the waters of the sea may become fresh, so that everything will live where the river goes.

"Fishermen will stand by the sea from Engedi to Eneglaim and it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the great sea, the Mediterranean. But its swamps and its marshes will not become fresh, for they are to

be left for salt. And on the banks of both sides of the river there will grow all kinds of trees for food.

"Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month. Because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."

So what happens here is the king comes, his presence is now established in the temple, and, immediately, water starts going from the presence of God. It happened in Eden, water flowed out of Eden. River established from the presence of God and flowed out and brought life. The Bible ends with the river flowing from the presence of God.

Here we have -- it is an incredible moment of the river of God is flowing once again. It points back to chapter 36 or 37 -- I can't remember -- where God says, "I'm going to make it better."

It is chapter 36, I think. He says, "I'm going to make Israel restore the land. It is going to be better than it was before. It is going to be like Eden."

So there is a piece of this, that this is a literal description of what's going to happen when God's presence comes. It is literally going to transform the land, just like this. It is going to be amazing. It is going to be like it was always supposed to be and how it was created to be back in the beginning, with God's presence in the land bringing life to everything.

Yet, it's not just relegated to a literal fulfillment. This vision is also describing the spiritual reality that happens when Christ, the king, comes. Even now. So there is a partial fulfillment that happens here, and that will ultimately be fulfilled when Christ returns here to earth.

What do I mean by that? Well, Paul says, very clearly, that anyone who follows Christ, believes in him, they have become the place, the temple of God, right? We are the -- I think I touched my mic. Sorry about that, Sean -- we're the temple of God, right? So it is now in us.

Christ's presence resides in us. Guess what happens when the king comes to live

within us. His presence is a metaphor -- or the water is a metaphor for his presence. So his presence flows in us and flows out of us. What does it bring? It brings life. It brings healing. It brings food. It transforms everything that's dead into life. That's the resurrection power of the king. It's a powerful vision of that.

Jesus said, "Hey, look, if you believe in me, you are going to have streams of living water flowing within you."

He says it twice in the book of John, references that idea of water, living water flowing in us. That's the presence of God. So it's a prophesy not just that is a literal one for the land and for Israel, but it is a spiritual one for anyone who believes.

The church, it is part of the universal church, every Christian swept into this promise. Every church that follows Christ, that doesn't go astray, right, that stays true to Jesus, this is what should happen.

If you're newer to our church, this is where we get our name, Freshwater. Came out

of a vision, and that is a whole other story, but this is where we got it, out of this passage. We believe that God gave this vision, this name to us, and named us Freshwater. He said, "This is what I want to do with the people of faith, the people who love me at Freshwater."

I wonder, as you're looking at this and reading this, are you settling for something far less than this? Is your life described as the presence of God flowing in you and flowing out of you and bringing transformation to your community, to your home, to relationships, bringing life, bringing healing, bringing food, right, spiritual food to people longing to eat?

I wonder sometimes if our vision for our lives is so small, that we don't realize the king is in us and the king, the king wants to pour himself in us and through us into this world.

The final chapter and a half of Ezekiel focuses in on the division of land. What could happen is, if you read through the book of Ezekiel, by the end, you're like, all

right, okay, we're doing this. They get this part, they get this part, and you skim through it. For us, it's like, well, that's not a big deal.

For every Jew that's sitting there, they're listening to this, waiting for their tribe to be mentioned. This is huge, right? Israel was kicked out of the land. The whole nation is destroyed. What God does here at the very end, after removing them from the land, and they think the heritage is gone, the covenant is shattered, never to be returned, the king comes and he says this, "I made a covenant with you, that you would be given land. And I'm restoring that covenant in full."

He goes tribe by tribe by tribe, "This is what you get. This is what you get. This is what you get."

Every tribe is mentioned. This is -- this is like, you know, at the end of the movie, where you have the last 10 or 15 minutes, and all the things you want to see resolved get resolved. It's the resolution. The French call it the denouement, right? It's

this, Ah, right?

Now, when you get to the end of Ezekiel, you've seen the land restored. You've seen the king returned, the glory of the lord is there. The temple is restored. Worship is restored. The presence of God is there. His presence is now going and flowing through the land, turning everything that was dead. The land is no longer groaning. The people are no longer groaning. The people are now back in the land, back in the promise, all covenants have been fully restored, fully fulfilled.

It ends with this phrase, "And the name of the city from that time on shall be The Lord is There."

That's how Ezekiel ends. The return of the king. Forevermore, the king will be there. It'll be known as the city where that's where God is. The city of God.

If you read through 1 Corinthians, if you read through some of the teachings of Jesus, when he talks about how, you know, this end will come, the judgment, when you go into Thessalonians, and it talks about the return of Christ, and you get into Revelations, you read

Daniel, there's all these stories that talk about it, and you put all the pictures together of this moment that's going to happen when Christ will come back, the king is going to return. He is going to sit on the throne.

I just want to speak into this because so many of us could start to waver, just like in "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, where you come to person after person who has given up believing in it, who no longer believes the king is ever going to come back, because it is just impossible. It's just myth. You have those who are struggling with doubt because evil is so great. Suffering is so great.

You see the suffering in our world. You see the land groaning. You even feel that we groan when we look at this. Even what's happened in Minnesota, like, how many of you groan? Like, I can't watch that. In one weekend, you see that, and then you see what happened with this African-American in Grand Central Park, I think it was, where he's just totally -- just racism. It is just awful. Our hearts groan. This should not be.

How many of you go through sickness, go through death? Even this year, there's so many families here that have brushed up against death. We groan. Jesus says, "I am coming back."

That is one of the things for the Christian Missionary Alliance; there's four things we focus in on with Jesus. Like, we are a denomination that focuses in on Jesus is our savior. Jesus is our sanctifier; he makes us more like him. Jesus is our healer; he heals us spirituality, emotionally, physically, relationally, every which way. He heals us. And he is our coming king. We hold on to this. We win in the end, guys. We win in the end.

There is a day coming where we will -- we will be in the presence of Christ, the glory of our king. I just -- I was reading a book recently, "The Clapham Sect," the story of a bunch of men and women in England who were -- who really had a profound impact in the late 1700s, early 1800s, on the national course of England. These men and women were spiritual giants, just had this passion to see their country change and transform.

One of them, who had lived a long life, was on his deathbed and, actually, was aware -- the doctor, I think, told him that he had just hours to live. He got so excited, he lived another 24 hours. He thought he was going to die, but the thought of seeing Jesus kept him alive longer because he was so excited to see his king.

Folks, when we see the nations rage, when we see evil triumph, when we see the darkness, I am just telling you right now, the king is coming. The return of the king is eminent. Every generation since Christ has been looking for it. I think our generation is going to see it, and every generation is convinced of that. But I look at all of this, and I go, how in the world is Jesus not coming?

Will you be ready for that? Will he find you waiting, faithful like Zadok, on your face, ready to worship him when you see his glory? I want to just leave you with that. Our king is returning. We win. We win. Like, we win. I just want you to keep that in mind. Keep that in mind.

I want to end with this, Jesus says

at the end of Revelation, "I am coming."

John says, "Amen. Come, Lord
Jesus, come."

Amen.