



## **Grief in exile and the City of God: Reading Ezekiel with Augustine**

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### **Abstract**

There are many points of comparison between Ezekiel, writing in grief over the loss of his beloved Jerusalem and its temple, and Augustine, writing the *City of God* in grief over the devastation of his beloved Rome. This comparison gives us greater understanding of the heart, context, immediate audience and purpose of each writer. In addition, we discover that many idiosyncratic features of the book of Ezekiel may well be more fitting than we have realized for a grief-stricken community. Ezekiel, like Augustine, is not interested in merely comforting people in grief but in leading them forward, to take their eyes away from an earthly city to a future, eternal divine city.

### **Keywords**

*Ezekiel; Augustine; Grief; City of God*

## **1. Introduction**

Both Augustine and Ezekiel found themselves involved in, and needing to respond to, similar crises of shock and grief. For Augustine, the glorious city of Rome being sacked by barbaric Goths was unthinkable, yet the unthinkable happened. For Ezekiel, the city of divine favour and presence, Jerusalem, being conquered and ravaged by pagan upstarts, was unimaginable, yet the unimaginable happened. Two cities thought to be inviolable were violated. The pillars of their worldviews collapsed. Beyond the immediate matters of survival for the inhabitants of these two shattered cities was a fathomless grief that was palpable and extended to the furthest reaches of their respective kingdoms. The depth of grief challenged the very foundations of belief, perspective and hope. In the throes of deep shock, many questions were asked, many fingers were pointed, and many

ruminations common to the grieving process were indulged. Augustine laboured to address his people in his famous work *City of God*; Ezekiel, an exile among exiles, sent far from their beloved city of Jerusalem, received and passed on divine visions relating to their city of God.

My own doctoral studies were on *Prophetic ministry in Jeremiah and Ezekiel*.<sup>1</sup> The Book of Ezekiel has many unusual features which have provoked a range of scholarly responses without any strong consensus. David Halperin is one who attempts to read the prophet and his book through a psychological lens.<sup>2</sup> However, he focuses more on what he sees as the abnormalities in the person of Ezekiel than on the abnormality of the situation in which Ezekiel and his readers found themselves. The lack of attention given to the psychological and spiritual context can easily skew our perception of the prophet and his writing, as I think occurs in Halperin.

Alongside academic work, teaching and preaching, I am often involved in counselling believers. My reading has, therefore, also been informed by books on psychology and Christian ministry. In recent years, I have reflected on and written some short articles relating experiences of trauma and grief to relevant Old Testament material.<sup>3</sup> Many years ago, my writing was on lament in Old Testament narratives,<sup>4</sup> but I more recently applied biblical lament to contemporary case studies in counselling.<sup>5</sup> It is only in recent years that scholars have begun to study emotions in relation to biblical texts,<sup>6</sup> and to relate trauma theory to biblical studies.<sup>7</sup> Through

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- 1 Kathleen M. Rochester, *Prophetic Ministry in Jeremiah and Ezekiel* (Leuven: Peeters, 2012).
  - 2 David J. Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel: Text and Psychology* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1993).
  - 3 E.g., Kathleen M. Rochester, "Reading the Exodus Story alongside Case Studies of Abuse and Betrayal in Family Relationships," *The Expository Times* Vol. 129, no. 4 (2018): 158–164.
  - 4 Kathleen M. Rochester, *Israel's Lament and the Discernment of Divine Revelation: A Narrative Study* (Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambert Academic Press, 2012).
  - 5 Kathleen M. Rochester, "Unintegrated Suffering: Healing Disconnections between the Emotional, the Rational and the Spiritual through Lament," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, Vol 9 no. 2 (2016): 270–281.
  - 6 e.g., Daniel I. Block, "Text and Emotion: A Study in the 'Corruptions' in Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision (Ezekiel 1:4–28)," *BBQ* Vol. 50 (1988): 418–42.
  - 7 E.g., David G. Garber, "Trauma Theory and Biblical Studies," *Currents in Biblical Research* Vol. 14, no. 1 (2015): 24–44.

some personal experiences and observations of others in counselling, I began to wonder whether the emotional context of grief in the book of Ezekiel might helpfully inform our reading of the book.

I was asked to read Augustine's *City of God* for a conference and to present a biblical theology paper in relation to it.<sup>8</sup> I quickly observed many parallels between the contexts of Augustine and Ezekiel. I discovered that reading Augustine opened up new and helpful ways of engaging with Ezekiel.

The parallels between these two writers and their contexts do not simply provide a point of passing interest, the importance of which vanishes nearly as quickly as it arises. Rather, we can discover something far deeper through their commonality of serious purpose. We are not here cherry-picking small pieces of text to examine rhetorical flourish. Rather, we look at larger characteristics, methods, movement and goals as these pastoral writers speak to their people after the shocking loss of their cities and journey through their grief. Augustine's *City of God* gives evidence that many of the unique features in Ezekiel's writing can best be explained as a pastoral response to profound community grief.

My approach in this article will be first to draw some parallels between the responses of Augustine and Ezekiel to the people in their respective crises, and then, in the light of this, look more closely at Ezekiel and offer a reading of Ezekiel that suggests a greater degree of coherence and purposefulness in his context than is often found.

## 2. Augustine and Ezekiel respond to grief

At least some of the five stages of grief famously proposed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in 1969<sup>9</sup>—denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance—can be found in the reactions of people addressed by both Augustine and Ezekiel.

*Denial.* Some Romans continue to assert the superiority of Rome and the inferiority, even impotence, of those who conquered it, in denial of the

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8 An earlier version of this article was presented in a Tyndale Fellowship Study Group, Cambridge UK, July 2017.

9 Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: Scribner, 2014)

reality of this seemingly impossible victory. Some leaders in Jerusalem ignore the signs of imminent attack, even after many have been sent into exile, and blithely advise people that life will continue as normal, even encouraging the building of new houses and fostering a false sense of safety due to thinking of themselves as exceptions (Ezek 11:1–12).

*Anger and Blame.* This is most clearly seen in the Roman accusations against Christians for causing the demise of their chief city, a view that Augustine rigorously exposes as being incompatible with reality.<sup>10</sup> We can justifiably surmise that, in their naïvely self-righteous view of their own religious practices in Jerusalem, at least some of the unspoken anger of Ezekiel's exiles hardens their hearts against their God for failing to protect them from the Babylonians.

*Depression.* If the Christians were not to blame for the attack on Rome and hope in the Roman gods has been severely challenged, then the situation appears hopeless for the future. Ezekiel refers to the people saying, "Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off" (Ezek 37:11).

*Acceptance.* Both Augustine and Ezekiel embrace acceptance themselves, and attempt to lead the people towards it, together with a realistic appraisal of what caused the crisis and hope for a better future.

People suffering bereavement undergo protracted reflection on the person who has died. They try to recapture, in their imaginations, every detail of the person and the events leading up to their death. The now absent person is mentally fondled like a precious stone, and every facet of their being is examined and re-examined with insatiable curiosity. No detail is too small, irrelevant or unimportant. Details and stories are recounted endlessly and the process of letting go is usually unable to proceed without this reflection taking place for an extended period. It is especially true after an unexpected death that questions about details leading up to the death are asked, again and again. Possible causes, however implausible, are traced

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10 E.g., *City of God*, iii.30, 31 (158–160). In his *Retractions*, ii.43, Augustine refers to his motivation for writing *City of God*. He notes that "Rome having been stormed and sacked by the Goths under Alaric their king, the worshippers of false gods, or pagans, as we commonly call them, made an attempt to attribute this calamity to the Christian religion, and began to blaspheme the true God with even more than their wonted bitterness and acerbity."

back as far as possible. The history of the person is obsessively pursued. Conjectures of “if only” are likely to dominate until they are exhausted, and reality can finally be faced.

When Rome is sacked, and Jerusalem is broken down, the loss of each of these powerfully significant cities causes bereavement on a wide social scale. Processing the loss of the city, to which people are emotionally, religiously, culturally, legally and even covenantally bound, has many parallels with processing the loss of a husband or wife. While others may provide for the initial and physical needs of comfort to those in distress, it is the role of these writers to deal with the thought processes. Both Augustine and Ezekiel address their people with the intuitive understanding of a grief counsellor, recognizing needs for detail, for repetition, for time, for history, for questions, for roots, for causes, for acceptance and, finally, for hope.

Augustine’s *City of God* is far from being brief. For someone who is not emotionally affected by the loss of their beloved Rome, it can even be somewhat tedious to read. Can’t he just summarise his main teaching in a more concise manner? But his people in grief need the slow, winding path that sometimes revisits a point made before, noticing and re-examining different aspects along the way. His lengthy historical reflections trace the origins of the city, the sibling rivalry between the twins Romulus and Remus, the involvement of murder in the founding of the city,<sup>11</sup> various moral and ethical failures of its leaders,<sup>12</sup> and similar failures across its society. He makes a comparison between two founders who are attributed with divine favour and even divine essence – Romulus and Christ – and finds Romulus wanting.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to Romulus’s earthly city, which is limited in power and duration, Christ is the founder of a heavenly city, whose origins are of old, traceable in the Old Testament, and whose future extends beyond time to the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, described in the NT book of Revelation. The unethical behaviour of Rome’s gods has been reflected in the behaviour of its people. His version of Roman history is intentionally unflattering, because it seeks to illuminate possible causes of this present crisis. Even Rome’s philosophers have given quite

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11 *City of God*, xv.5 (657).

12 *City of God*, iii.15, 16 (134–138).

13 *City of God*, xxii.6 (1094f).

inadequate wisdom.<sup>14</sup> There is an absence of reliable authority within the Roman system, so Augustine points to the one God who has ultimate power over all, including Rome. He is the one who effects judgment but also offers secure hope.<sup>15</sup> The city of Rome has failed and been judged; its citizens need to seek the city of God in both the present and the future.

Ezekiel is often considered difficult reading, partly because of his strange, visionary and figurative language, and partly because of his repetitive, long-winded and detailed focus on aspects that at times appear to be peripheral. Why can't he just explain his points straightforwardly and transparently? He and his people have already experienced the rupture brought about by the exile; in that there has been grief enough. Then, already feeling alienated, they are shocked by news that their beloved temple, the most precious focus of their beloved city, has been destroyed. They do need this laborious journey. According to indications in Jeremiah 7:3–8 and what is represented of the teachings of the false prophets in both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, there has been misplaced trust in the physical temple as an assurance of divine protection. There has been a failure to regard ethical or unethical behaviour as accountable and consequential. And there has been a depressive hopelessness arising from their belief that God has abandoned them, appearing to contradict his promises. Ezekiel's recounting of the history of Israel (Ezek 20) is the most negative in the canon and can only be understood in this context of grief seeking answers to questions about causes. Like Augustine, Ezekiel gives the people the details they need, exposes the true nature of the causes, focuses on a God who is more holy than they have ever imagined, and portrays the clear differences between the earthly city of Jerusalem that was judged for good reason, and the new, heavenly city of God in which there is a basis for hope.

### 3. Ezekiel's version of the history

Ezekiel has a lot to say about leaders (kings, prophets, leaders, elders and priests)<sup>16</sup> who have given false bases for hope, have failed to separate clearly

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14 *City of God*, ii.7 (77).

15 *City of God*, ixx.20 (944).

16 Kings (Shepherds) are spoken of in Ezek 34:1–10; prophets (male and female) in Ezek 13; leaders in Ezek 11:1–15; elders in Ezek 14:1–11 and priests in Ezek 44:6–14.

between what is holy and what is common, have called good evil and evil good, and who speak and act out of their own imaginations and self-interests.

These sins of leaders have encouraged and exacerbated the rebellion of the people. Yet, Ezekiel shares in the lament of the people for the fallen princes of Israel (Ezek 19). Despite their imperfections, the structures of kingship and court have given identity, loyalty, national pride, protection and order. Ezekiel grieves with his people as a fellow-Israelite; he is far from being a detached onlooker. But he may not indulge in the luxury of wearing rose-coloured glasses. He has the task of retelling the history in such a way as to answer their questions of grief. The reality of the destruction of their city and temple necessitates facing the reality of the causes of this shocking crisis.

In Ezekiel 20, before the exiles have received news of the fall of Jerusalem, some elders come again<sup>17</sup> to visit Ezekiel to inquire for a word, presumably of blessing, from God. The word of the Lord comes to Ezekiel to deny them this privilege. Instead, there is a retelling of Israel's history, highlighting their culpability for judgment. There is no pretence that this is a balanced view of history, where good and bad run in careful counterpoint. This is a history of rebellion; it is summarised evidence in broad brushstrokes, told with the purpose of proving guilt.

Guilt goes back to origins in Egypt. God's promise was to deliver the people; the people's responsibility was to get rid of their idols. God kept his part; the people failed to keep their part. Then, in the desert, Israel rejected God's laws and desecrated God's sabbaths. The root cause was that their hearts were still devoted to their idols. This is significant in view of the charge against the present elders in Ezekiel 14 that they have set up idols in their hearts. Then, following the history, the succeeding generations did similarly, despite warnings not to do so. In addition, their supposed gifts of worship—the sacrifices of their firstborn children—were absolutely abhorrent to God.

The unpalatable allegories regarding ungrateful and unfaithful female characters in Ezekiel 16 and 23 elicit revulsion, especially impressive as

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17 See Ezek 8:1 and 14:1.

representations of Israel. In the midst of a grief that is desperately seeking for words of comfort, and hopes to stay hidden in denial, it is difficult to penetrate the facade of self-protection without adding another shock to the one they have already received. Words about rebellion can be side-stepped and objectified, since all peoples can be found to be rebellious, at least to some degree. But “Why *me*? Why *our* city? Why not the baddies in some other nation?” The allegories are painted in lurid colours, with the aim to shock. The relationship bond between God and Israel includes the most powerful core emotions, like acceptance and rejection, love and hate, longing and abandonment. Sexual imagery breaks through claims like “God does not see” (repeated several times in this book) and evokes a range of powerful emotions on God’s behalf.

#### **4. Separate identities: God and people**

One of the noteworthy distinctives of this book is the emphasis on separation. In grief, a lot of emotions and thoughts become blurred and erratic. What is needed is order, and order requires separation into different categories.

In addition to the need for order, there is the forensic need to understand the legal basis for what has happened, if, as the best prophets indicate, the catastrophe has occurred as an act of divine judgment. This book abounds in references to the law and to priestly matters. The law brings a clear separation between the rights and responsibilities of each citizen. Criminal offences transgress and even violate the boundaries between citizens. A law court must consider the needs, rights and responsibilities of each person involved in a case, balance those needs, rights and responsibilities, and ascertain whether and where healthy boundaries have been transgressed. In Israel’s case, Ezekiel needs to speak as a legal advisor who determines that there has, indeed, been a problem in boundaries between the people and God.

Even though rebellion has occurred, there has been an unhealthy enmeshment of identity on the part of the Israelites, between themselves and God. A glib over-familiarity has blurred the boundaries between what belongs to God and what belongs to the people, between the responsibility of God and the responsibility of the people. The people’s attitude can be



likened to a spoilt brat mentality where differentiation from parent is insufficient and unhealthy dependence is expressed in “What’s yours is mine” or “You will give me whatever I want”. Rebellion may signify some awareness that a change in the relationship is needed, but it is the wrong change with destructive consequences. This distorted dependence on God’s automatic protection has compounded their grief. What happened to their relationship? What went wrong? Is God detached and uninterested? Must they now be forever cut off from this God who they once thought was close?

Ezekiel sees the need to establish separate identities, themselves and God, each with their own needs and responsibilities. In doing so, he is helping the people to grow up.

The separateness of God, rather than his closeness, is emphasised. He has independence of movement, unexpectedly turning up far from his supposed abode; his visionary appearances inspire awe rather than comfort; his decision to strike well-known leaders is one that is totally free, and appears, even to Ezekiel, shocking. Puzzlement is often felt by readers today about what Ezekiel says is God’s motivation for action or inaction: that it is for the sake of his name. Other prophets tend to stress that divine decisions arise from either compassion for his own people, or judgment against his enemies. While God’s compassion and judgment do appear in good measure in this book, we may be a little unsettled to discover that God makes decisions motivated by his *own* needs. In Ezekiel 20:9, 14 and 22 God decides not to punish people who deserve his punishment, not because he feels sorry for them, but for the sake of his own name. This indicates that God, himself, has needs. He considers the mockery that surrounding nations would hurl towards him, and he decides that he will not expose himself to that. This reminds us of Moses considering God’s own needs and pleading with him not to abandon his people and make himself a laughingstock of the nations (Ex 32:11–14). Rare even among the prophets, Moses and Ezekiel take God’s personal needs seriously. Healthy relationship between God and humans must begin with a genuine respect for God as his own, free person, who is never enmeshed with anyone, even the people he loves.

The separateness of these people from their forebears must also be expressed. In Ezekiel 18, a proverb is quoted: “The fathers eat sour grapes,

and the children's teeth are set on edge". The proverb shows insufficient separation between the rights and responsibilities of parents and children, of one generation being too enmeshed with the next. This idea also leads to ready blame of anyone apart from themselves. Perhaps God is punishing this generation because he was displeased with their ancestors. They charge God with being unfair (Ezek 18:25)! It is a typical grief reaction to express anger by blame-shifting. But God won't have it. A clear separation needs to be established between the rights and responsibilities of each generation and, in fact, between each citizen. God respects each person and refuses to blur the distinctions between them. That means that each person is responsible and accountable for their own attitudes and actions.

The basis for God's people, and subsequently the earthly expression of the city of God, Jerusalem, is a covenant which was entered into by the superior ruler, God, and a people (see Exodus 24). Both parties came to this covenant freely, each with their own needs, rights and responsibilities, and each would continue to remain separate entities in a bond of respect. God's directions for the functioning of this community were also based on mutual respect, not only between himself and the people, but between each of its citizens. It can only be when this respect, implying boundaries and appropriate separation, is restored, that the people will be able to know that Yahweh is their God and that they are his people.<sup>18</sup> The people of Jerusalem imagined that they had functioned as the city of God, but there were serious distortions in their fundamental relationships.

Ezekiel himself becomes a living example of how this separation and yet belonging can function. When he is confronted by the majesty of the representation of the divine being in his first vision, he instinctively falls facedown (Ezek 1:28). He is clear about God's superiority and holiness and demonstrates his utmost respect. There is no blurring of boundaries here. Yet God wants to speak with him and will not do so until Ezekiel is on his feet (Ezek 2:1–2) and can function as a free agent, to answer, to think, to question and to act. God helps him to rise to that position, for God respects Ezekiel enough to engage with him as one free person engages with another. Mutual respect is established. As the book unfolds we see the

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18 This is a common recurring phrase, with variations, throughout the book e.g., Ezek 6:10; 11:20; 20:20.

development of an ordered yet bonded community between this man and his God, a foretaste of what might occur in a restored city of God.

## **5. The dysfunctional, old city of God**

In chapters 8 to 11, Ezekiel experiences a leisurely, visionary tour of the heart of the old city. It meets the need for grief to examine and linger over the details of that which was precious and is now lost. It responds to the conjectures of “if only”, refuses to engage in imaginary scenes or self-pity, and elucidates the hitherto unspoken reality of what, in reality, was wrong in the secret places. Scholars debate whether the details represent the exact situation at that time. As a vision, chronological liberties are possible. Figurative and historical depictions may be intermingled. But there is no doubt that in the city of Jerusalem at this time, as in its previous history, integrity is more than compromised and professions of true allegiance to God are too often two-faced. A pillar, set right near the king’s entrance to the temple, arouses a response of jealousy in God because its function is idolatrous. Did these people not consider how God might feel? God does have a need for truthfulness and faithfulness in his people. After all, his people expect that from God. A very large group of elders, including one man, Jaazaniah from a well-known godly family (a son of Shaphan who had supported Jeremiah), pays outward tribute to God, but the group “has a bet both ways” by secretly trying to please Egyptian idols. Jaazaniah proves the truth of the individual responsibility principle. He won’t be saved by his father’s virtue. Some women are mourning for Tammuz, following Babylonian customs, and another group of leaders comes to the temple early in the morning, ostensibly to worship God, but they turn their back to the altar (and so to God), prioritizing their worship of the sun. Outward worship may be conducted conventionally, but in practice these leaders show a secret contempt for God.

Society is no longer functioning as it should. Injustice, violence and the shedding of innocent blood are endemic. Judgment is justified, and, within the vision, is carried out. God demonstrates his freedom once again. He leaves. He will not tolerate such pretence, nor the blurring of sacred and wicked, or even sacred and secular. Sometimes people think he cannot see, or perhaps is not even interested in seeing. God does, however, care

passionately and he will not be mocked. He makes his way out of the temple, even though it was supposedly *his* temple, towards the east, and disappears from sight. What was supposed to be the city of God is now a city devoid of God. Who will protect it now? What is left is not much more than the shell of a disused city of God.

## 6. A true city of God

Many Jerusalemites are under the arrogant delusion that God favours them and has abandoned the exiles. However, they miss a surprising truth: God has actually gone with the exiles as a portable sanctuary (Ezek 11:16). This is a surprise to the exiles too, as they have considered themselves to be cut off from God. There has been judgment, but judgment is not the last word. The last word is God's comforting presence after judgment, together with a promise of restoration for those who do not go back to the old ways. Their grief is not forgotten.

Some considerable time elapses before Ezekiel receives the new vision of hope. The book gives clear chronological markers, indicating that the visionary journey to the old city occurs in the sixth year of the exile. The news of the fall of the city and temple comes to Ezekiel in the twelfth year, and the vision of hope occurs in the twenty-fifth year.<sup>19</sup> There are, of course, many words of comfort before this final vision, but these chronological markers indicate that the journey towards perceiving a different future than the one previously imagined takes time. The healing of grief cannot be instant; it is realistic to expect that the process of understanding more deeply, accepting more fully, and imagining anew must take years.

The grand vision in chapters 40 to 48 has variously been taken as a blueprint for a new temple or a symbolic picture of the restored people of God. I take the second view. The lingering over details which might, to others, appear trivial addresses the need of grief regarding that which was lost. So, there is a reference to the past. However, what was lost becomes transformed. It does not simply remain, in the imagination, as the exact image of the old temple but has subtly altered dimensions and more rigorously purified

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19 I am grateful to Dr Terry Boyle for making a comment alerting me to the connection between the chronological markers and the time required for the grieving process.

practices. It becomes larger and grander than the old, is based, to a greater degree, on justice and righteousness, and becomes an inspiration for a future filled with bigger and better things. It answers the need in grief for a hope that goes beyond a mere recapitulation of the past.

The theme of separation dominates. The man with the measuring rod and line is endlessly occupied with measuring walls and boundaries. With separation comes order. Perhaps there is an allusion to the separations and orderly progression in the days of Creation (Gen 1). There is a proper place for everyone and for everything. Some things are holy, meaning that they are to do with God. Other things are secular, meaning that they are to do with ordinary human life. As Jesus advised, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matt 22:21), or, in other words, don’t be sloppy in boundaries, be respectful and give to each according to their needs and rights.

There is a need to revisit worship, gifts and sacrifices, and to ensure that attitudes and practices are not polluted by indifference, hypocrisy or secret idolatry. It is necessary to reconsider the use of space and land to ensure that everyone called to a special function on behalf of the wider society, for example, priests and princes, has sufficient space to perform their duties, but not an unbounded amount lest they trample on the needs of others. Let each tribe be given land according to size and need, rather than according to greed.

The restored city of God will once again welcome its rightful ruler into its midst (Ezek 43:1–9), and God will be delighted to be there. He will be seen once more as provider and healer (Ezek 47). Just as the most important aspect of Moses’ journey through the wilderness was that God was with him (Ex 3:12; 33:14) people will know that the most important feature of this city is that “the Lord is there” (Ezek 48:35).

## **7. Conclusion**

Recently I read a short reflection on grief, concluding that the grieving process is not something that you merely get through or get over. Rather, the grieving process changes you. You cannot be the same at the end as you were at the beginning. Both Ezekiel and Augustine recognize this truth and help people to face the reality of loss, and the true causes of that loss.

But they go further: they aim to move their people from the perception that their primary habitation is an earthly city to the realization that the city of God is their true home. The first is transient; the second is eternal. Foundations of the city need to be re-examined; boundaries and order, worship and giving need to be purified. The new city of God has beginnings in the past and present yet will be developed in far-reaching ways in the future. The presence of the Lord will permeate it, engendering relationships which thrive. And these same people who are now in grief will have the opportunity to be there, with the true Lord of the city, who will be there.

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