

**Sunday 3 January**

**2016**

# The Presence of God

# Introduction

1. “*May the Lord strengthen him*”

We know him as “*Ezekiel*”

Heb: *Ezeki* = become strong: *El* = God

2. Born BC 622

Story begins when Ezekiel is aged 30 (**1:1**) BC 592

Became a Priest at the age of 30 (**1:3**)

God had other plans for Ezekiel to be a Prophet

3. Ezekiel an exile from Judea now in Babylon

Judah was taken into Babylon in three stages over 15 years

First deportation (incl. Ezekiel) : 597 BC

Second deportation ten years later: 587 BC

Third deportation five years later: (final fall of Jerusalem) 582 BC

# Introduction

## 4. Ezekiel's task:

To encourage Judah from spiritual depression: **33:10, 37:11**

## 5. His message:

Depressing Present due to Judah's sin: **1-39**

Glorious Future due to Yahweh's promises: **(37) 40-48**

## 6. Ezekiel's vision of the Temple - what is it?

Returning glory of the Presence of Yahweh: **43:1-2, 4-5, 7, 9**

Yahweh had left the Temple: **10:4, 11, 18, 22, 11:22**

## 7. BUT, Yahweh will come back!

Last chapter, last verse, last words, "*Yahweh is THERE*" **48:35**

# Introduction

8. What about a message for the NEW YEAR 2016 ?  
It is the message of Ezekiel  
The significance, reality, meaning of the PRESENT OF GOD
  
9. Ezekiel gave this as a New Year message:  
**40:1** “.....*the beginning of the year*”  
After “*twenty-fives years of exile*” **40:1**  
Another forty-five years (out of 70) in exile before restoration
  
10. Message for us in this NEW YEAR  
Recognise the significance, meaning and relevance of the  
  
PRESENT OF GOD in your life

**In 2016**

# 1. What is the significance of the Presence of God?

## 1. **Exodus 33:14-16** “*What distinguishes your people.....*”

What made Israel different from other nations?

Law? Circumcision? Sacrifices? Temple? No!

The Presence of God: **Exodus 33:15 - 16**

## 2. The Presence of God coveted by Moses

The Presence of God coveted by David: **Psalms 51:11**

The Presence of God coveted by Jonah: **Jonah 2:4**

## 3. What is the Presence of God?

Hebrew word means: “*the face of Yahweh*”:

The Presence of God is having the Face of God

God’s undivided attention

“*the Lord make His face shine upon you....*” **Numb 6:25**

The close friendship (confidence) of God: **Ps 25:14**

## 2. Where is the Presence of God?

1. The General Presence of God is everywhere: **Ps 139:7 -**

The Omnipresence of God  
God sees all, hears all, knows all: **Jer 23:24**

2. The Special Presence of God is with His People

OT: Tabernacle: **Ex 25:8** *“sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst”*  
Temple: **2 Chron 6:2** *“a house, place for you to dwell”*  
Ezekiel’s Temple: **Ezekiel 43:1, 4-5, 7, 9b**

3. Before we leave the Temple.....

4. Now we come to the NT and find something exciting.....

*“Your body is the TEMPLE of the Holy Spirit”*

## 2. Where is the Presence of God?

5. The Presence of God is no longer in the Temple

First: The collective Church is the Temple: **1 Cor 3:16 - 17**

Special Presence of God in the gathered Church

Second: The individual Christian is the Temple: **1 Cor 6:19**

Special Presence of God is the Christian

Two Greek words for “*Temple*”:

heron = Temple buildings

naos = Inner Sanctuary; Holy of Holies

Which word does Paul use?

naos: “*your body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit*” **1 Cor 3, 16, 6:19**



## 2. Where is the Presence of God?

### 6. The Special Presence of God is with His People

NT: “*Immanuel*” “*God with us*” : **Matt 1:23**

“GOD with us” : Not a prophet; teaching; good man

“God WITH us”: Among, in company with (**Jn 1:14** “*tabernacled*”)

“God with US”: Children of fallen Adam; sinners

### 7. Jesus explains the Special Presence of God

“*I am in the Father, you in me, and I am in you*”: **John 14:20**

“*We will come and make our home with you*”: **John 14:23**

“*eat the flesh..drink the blood...abides in me..*” **Jn 6:53, 56, (63)**

[The Mystical Union” Paul’s: “*in Christ*”]

# 3. Practical Applications

1. Is the Presence of God located in a building ?

What does **John 4:21** teach us?

No sacred buildings (**John 4:23** “*spirit and truth*”)

2. What makes Christians different?

Church attendance? Bible reading? Good living?

No! The Presence of God: **Exodus 33:16**

*Our “distinguishing” feature*

3. What is remarkable about the Presence of God

Question:

*“But will God really dwell on earth with men?”* **2 Chron 6:18**

Answer:

*“I live in a high and holy place, but also with him...”* **Isaiah 57:15**

# 3. Practical Applications

## 4. Who / what made the Presence of God possible for us?

The Presence of God was lost because of the Fall

Retrieved through the death of Christ: **1 Pet 3:18**

Made real by Justification through faith: **Rom 5:1-2**

## 5. How is the Presence of God made real to us?

The Holy Spirit is God's Empowering Presence

God dwells in us through the Holy Spirit: **1 Cor 6:19**

Make much of the Holy Spirit

Be filled: do not quench, grieve, resist the Spirit

## 6. How does this help us in the New Year?

Brother Lawrence 17th century monk

*"Practicing the Presence of God"*

Aware of God;

*"see Him who is invisible"* **Heb 11:27, 2 Cor 4:16-18**

# 3. Practical Applications

## 7. What is Authentic Christianity?

Church? Singing? Service? Giving? Good Works?

No!

Real Christianity is:-

Knowing the Presence of God in Jesus Christ

**John 17:3** *“this is eternal life...know you, the only true God...”*

# 3. Practical Applications

Real Christianity is:-

Realising the Presence of God in eternity

**Rev 21:1- 3**

*“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God”.*

# Conclusion

## Question:

How are you going to face 2016?

## Answer:

Get into the Presence of God thro' faith in Christ

Keep in the Presence of God

Enjoy the Presence of God

Practice the Presence of God

Look forward to the Presence of God in Eternity

*“God has made us for Himself;  
our souls are restless until they find their rest in Him”*

Augustine