

## The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit – Part 1

### The Holy Spirit Dwells in the Christian Literally and Personally

That the Holy Spirit dwells within the Christian is admitted by all who understand and love the Scriptures. How the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian is a matter of controversy within the Lord's church. The Holy Spirit either (1) really and truly dwells in us as faithful Christians in a literal or personal manner, or (2) He dwells in us through the Word of God alone, or (3) else He does not dwell in us at all. Since the third view denies many plain and easily-understood passages, we dismiss that view totally.

Brethren holding to the two differing interpretations, as to exactly what constitutes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Christian, need to understand that neither view is without problems. So long as no one is contending for modern-day miracles (**1 Cor. 13**) nor for a direct operation of God's Spirit upon the human heart (**Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12**), there is surely room for honest disagreement among us. **So long as we agree that the Holy Spirit directly convicts, leads, directs, and edifies the human mind only through the Word, whatever other differences we might exhibit should not be used as a basis for withdrawal of fellowship.**

We all must reject the view set forth by those who give "lip service" to the Word of God, and argue (from such passages as Acts 5:32, Rom. 8:15-16, and 1 John 4:13) that we can only understand the scriptures by a necessary direct, internal work of the Spirit upon our minds.

**Let me say to all that may read this article that there are no scriptures that lead us to believe the Holy Spirit convicts, leads, directs, and edifies by any other way than through the Word of God!**

This week we will review the stance of those who believe each Christian has a literal and personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Those who hold to the view that the Holy Spirit Himself actually dwells in the Christian, rather than doing so through some agent (e.g., His Word, His "influence," et al.) do so based on their belief that the gift of the Holy Spirit in **Acts 2:38** is the Holy Spirit Himself as a gift to all who receive remission of sins upon their obedience to the Gospel plan of salvation. Again, they believe that the Holy Spirit, as the "gift," is bestowed upon the obedient believer (**Acts 2:38; 5:32; 1 Cor. 6:19**), and is an abiding presence in his life.

Let us consider several facets of this matter.

In Wayne Jackson's article, "What Is the "Gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38?", he makes the following comments:

**According to Acts 2:38, the baptized believer is promised "the gift of the Holy Spirit." Is this a gift consisting of the Spirit, or a gift given by the Spirit?**

**Actually, from a strictly grammatical viewpoint, it could be either. Some, though, have suggested that grammatically the phrase cannot refer to the Spirit as a gift. That simply is not correct.**

**The fact of the matter is, almost every Greek authority known to this writer contends that the genitive of Acts 2:38 is epexegetical (appositional), i.e., the Holy Spirit is the gift. These sources are not cited as theological experts, but as language authorities; the authors obviously did not feel that it is grammatically impossible for the gift to consist of the Spirit himself, as some have alleged.**

**That "the gift of the Holy Spirit" can be the Spirit himself is demonstrated by a comparison of Acts 10:45 with 10:47, even though the respective contexts reveal that different endowments of the Spirit are under consideration in Acts 2 and 10.**

**It is probably safe to say that most of the scholars within the restoration heritage have also argued this interpretation of "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38, even when differing on the nature of receiving the Spirit.**

**J.W. McGarvey wrote:**

**"The expression means the Holy Spirit as a gift, and the reference is to that indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which we bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and without which we are not of Christ."**

**Moses Lard commented: "Certainly the gift of the Spirit is the Spirit itself given."**

**For further reference we would suggest consulting Goebel Music's massive work, A Resource and Reference Volume on the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is a study that no serious New Testament student can afford to ignore on this topic.**

### **Supporting Evidence**

**The most forceful argument for this view that the "gift" of the Spirit is the Spirit himself, is the subsequent testimony of the New Testament regarding the reception of the Holy Spirit by the believer. Note the following:**

- **The Holy Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit**

Within the Roman letter, in a context which discusses the indwelling Spirit as a possession of the saints (cf. Rom. 8:9,11,16,26,27), the apostle Paul declares that the Holy Spirit and the human spirit bear dual witness to the fact that we are children of God (v. 16).

- **Does our spirit actually dwell within us?**

Some would suggest that only the Holy Spirit's influence through the Word is here considered. Notice, though, it is the indwelling Spirit himself who bears testimony with us (see also Rom. 8:26).

Compare the language of John 4:2 where it is stated that while the Lord representatively baptized disciples, he "himself baptized not." There is a difference between what one does himself and what he accomplishes through an agent

- **Our body, the temple of the Holy Spirit**

Paul inquired of the Corinthian saints:

**"Or know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19).**

The Greek word for "temple" is naos, and it is an allusion to that holy sanctuary of the Mosaic economy wherein God actually made his presence known (cf. Ex. 25:22).

Here is an interesting question. If the Holy Spirit bears a relationship to men today only "through the Word," and yet, admittedly, he influences the alien sinner through the Word, would it be proper to suggest that the sinner's body is "the temple of the Holy Spirit" to whatever extent he is affected by the Word?

- **Christians made to drink of one Spirit**

Consider 1 Corinthians 12:13.

**"For in one Spirit [i.e., the Spirit's operation by means of the gospel] were we all baptized into one body ... and [an additional thought] were all made to drink of one Spirit."**

**What is the difference in the Spirit's relationship to us before baptism and after baptism? In Paul's dual references to the Spirit in this passage, is he suggesting the identical concept in both statements?**

➤ **The Holy Spirit sent into our hearts**

**In Galatians 4:6, the Spirit is said to be sent into our hearts because we are (i.e., in consequence of being) sons of God. Would not this suggest a relationship that is different from the mere influence of the Word, since the sinner has the leading of the Word before he becomes a child of God? The "earnest" of the Spirit promised to Christians only**

**If the relationship of the Holy Spirit is exactly the same to both sinner and saint (i.e., only through the Word), can it be affirmed that the sinner, to whatever extent that he is influenced by the Word, has the "earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; cf. Eph. 1:13, 14)? Do not these passages, and those above, set forth a precious promise that is exclusively confined to the Christian?**

Other points to consider from those holding to this view of the Holy Spirit's indwelling:

The New Testament teaches in several passages that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian (**Rom. 8:9–11; 1 Cor. 3:16–17; 6:19; Eph. 2:21–22; 2 Tim. 1:14; etc.**). The purpose in mentioning this fact and citing these passages is not to discuss them or to argue the case that He does actually dwell in the Christian. I mention the indwelling doctrine because of its relation to "the gift of the Holy Spirit." Since the Holy Spirit takes up His abode and dwells in the Christian (as numerous New Testament passages affirm), when does He do so? **Acts 2:38** is only one of various passages that answers this question. Here, the stated time or point is when one has received remission of sins upon believing in Christ, repenting of his sins, and being baptized (vv. 37–38a).

Now consider some corroborating passages:

**Acts 5:32: "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him."**

This passage clearly states both that (1) the Holy Spirit is the gift God gives and (2) He gives the Holy Spirit (no room to quibble about a gift from the Holy Spirit here) to those who obey Him. Some try to confine this gift to the apostles and their baptism in the Spirit on Pentecost, but such cannot be. Peter and the apostles (v. 29) are the "we" who were the witnesses (along with the Holy Spirit). The "them that obey him" in the last part of the verse—to whom God has given the Holy Spirit—are clearly distinguished from the "we are witnesses" (the apostles). Them refers to those besides, apart from, the apostles who obey God.

The details of this obedience are found in Acts 2:38, where those who obeyed God in repentance and baptism were given the Holy Spirit. Here, likewise, God gives the Holy Spirit to those who are obedient. Acts 5:32 is therefore a commentary on the meaning of Acts 2:38 relating to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 6:19: “Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own....”**

Paul was addressing children of God (“unto the church of God which is at Corinth” [1:2]). This passage is an absolutely unmistakable affirmation that the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians—specifically in their mortal bodies. I wish to emphasize here that this passage also clearly affirms the source of the indwelling Spirit—“which ye have from God.” If we allow words to have their ordinary meanings, Paul here states that God gave us the Spirit Who dwells in us as His children.

**Galatians 4:6: “And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”**

This passage declares that God sent the Spirit of Christ (another term for the Holy Spirit [Rom. 8:9; Phi. 1:19; 1 Pet. 1:11]) into some hearts. The hearts belong to those who are God’s sons, and He sends the Spirit into their hearts because they are such.

Much more could be written on this subject, but I have tried to give you a sense for the foundation of this belief.

Next week we will study the belief that the Holy Spirit dwells in us through the Word of God alone.

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