

The Holy Spirit In The Christian

Introduction. False doctrines about the Holy Spirit and how He operates have abounded and obscured a beautiful relationship. This relationship is not as mystical and mysterious as people make it out to be.

Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 that Christians have a special fellowship with God, and especially with the Holy Spirit, which should inspire us to live holy lives giving glory to God. This delightful lesson is illustrated and reinforced by introducing the role of the tabernacle and temple in Israel's history. These two signified the presence and fellowship of God with His special nation, proclaiming His holiness and glory through the people who worshiped at them. By dwelling in the Christian, the Spirit makes the child of God a temple which proclaims His holiness and glory to an unbelieving world. You matter and what you do matters!

I. God Dwelled In The Tabernacle In The Mosaic Age

- A. God existed before the universe and will exist after it no longer exists. He dwells in heaven, transcending the universe, rather than dwelling on earth (Matthew 6:9). Yet, the Bible refers to God as dwelling from place to place, or in His people, or His people dwelling in Him. Such passages do not reflect His literal geographical location, but to some point of reference regarding His relationship, manifestation, and work among men on earth.
 - 1. For instance, before His death, Moses pronounced a blessing on Israel. He first reminded them of how God gave them His law and promised to guide and protect them as their King (Deuteronomy 33:2-3).
 - 2. God did not literally live on Mount Sinai, literally extend His hand with His Law in it, literally hold His people in His hand, or literally have them seated at His feet while He taught them.
- B. When the tabernacle was completed after the pattern God gave Moses, "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" in the form of a cloud (Exodus 40:38). God who dwells in heaven signified His power, presence, and fellowship with Israel on earth by the pillars of cloud and fire.
- C. A few hundred years later, God had King Solomon build the temple after His pattern. When it was completed, "The cloud filled the house of the Lord," signifying, "The glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 8:10-11). Solomon proclaimed, "I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever" (v. 13). After explaining how God had kept His covenant with David, Solomon clarified in v. 27 that God did not literally dwell in the temple (cp. Acts 17:24). The tabernacle and temple signified God's care and special relationship with His people, who thus had every assurance that God heard their prayers (v. 30).

II. God Dwells In His Temple In The Gospel Age

- A. In the gospel age, the church is called God's temple because God the Spirit dwells there (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). This figure of speech is based in the Old Testament. The truth of the gospel must be proclaimed and protected, and false teachers must be exposed and opposed, lest God's temple be desecrated and

destroyed. God still dwells in heaven, but His truth, His mercy, and His glory are manifested by the church.

- B. In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Paul proclaimed that each Christian is also God's temple. The Christian is the temple of God because of our close relationship with God. Because the will and work of the Spirit are seen in our lives, God is manifested and glorified.
- C. What does it mean for someone to dwell in someone else? Persons do not literally inhabit other persons in terms of geographical location, but one person may be said to dwell in another in terms of relationship, attitudes, and conduct.
 - 1. Our fellowship with the Godhead is very close and intimate. For example, we commonly say, "I can see the father in the son," or, "I can see the mother in the daughter."
 - a) It does not mean the person of the father literally takes up residence in the body of the son. It means the habits and influence of the father are evident in the attitude and conduct of the son. It has this same normal meaning when we read that the Godhead dwells in Christians, not that the Godhead literally takes up residence in us.
 - b) The Father is in the Son, the Son is in the Father, and Christians are in both the Father and the Son (John 17:21). The Father is in the Christian and the Christian is in the Father (1 John 4:12-16), the Son is in the Christian and the Christian is in the Son (Ephesians 3:17; John 6:56), the Holy Spirit is in the Christian and the Christian is in the Spirit (Romans 8:9; Galatians 5:25). All these terms refer to our spiritual fellowship, not to the geographical location of the persons.
 - 2. Furthermore, Satan is in unbelievers and they are in him (1 John 4:4; 5:19; Revelation 2:13). However, Satan does not literally inhabit people but his sinful attitudes and deeds do (Luke 22:3; John 13:2). The Holy Spirit as a part of the Godhead dwells in the "new man," an intelligent person made in God's image and cleansed of sin (Ephesians 4:24; Genesis 1:26; 1 John 1:7).
- D. The Holy Spirit's great role in our salvation was to convict and convert sinners through the divine power of the truth He revealed (John 16:7-13) Jesus said sinners must be "born again" and "born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:3, 5). Peter spoke of men who were saved by "obeying the truth through the Spirit" (1 Peter 1:22-23). The Spirit operates on the human soul by the power of His word.
 - 1. We are baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, meaning when we submit to Christ in water baptism we enter into spiritual fellowship with God (Matthew 28:19).
 - 2. We are baptized into Christ and we put on Christ (Galatians 3:26-27), but this refers to our relationship with Him, not that our bodies and souls take up residence in the person of Christ.
- E. In a similar way, the Spirit dwells and works in Christians through the revealed word (John 15:7). Man's fellowship with Christ occurs as His words abide in us. The Spirit convinces both sinners and saints that Jesus Christ is the Son of God through His words, "because the Spirit is truth" (1 John 5:6; cp. 1 Corinthians 12:3). This means the Spirit uses the agency of truth to operate on sinners and saints. Christians are to be "filled with the Spirit," which is manifested in songs of

praise (Ephesians 5:18-19; cp. Colossians 3:16). The Spirit revealed “the word of Christ,” and those who are truly filled with it are “filled with the Spirit.”

- F. If the Holy Spirit takes up personal residence in our bodies and souls to guide us, it would mean we could never commit sin again. In that case, our internal guidance system operated by the Spirit would prevent us from all sin because the Spirit cannot join with sinners to commit sins. It would mean also if we did commit sins, then the Spirit is a participant in those sins because of His personal residence in our bodies and souls.

III. The Temple Of God Is Holy

- A. To be holy is to be separated from sin, and separated to the service of God. This holiness is achieved through the word (John 15:3; 17:17). Urging saints to protect the truth of the gospel from false teachers, Paul said, “For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:17). When local churches become corrupted with sin and error, they are no longer temples of God saturated with the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is driven out when the truth is driven out. This is why the lamp stand is removed (Revelation 1:20; 2:5).
- B. When urging Christians to not fall back into sin, and especially to avoid sexual immorality, Paul reminded us that we are temples of the Holy Spirit in which God must be glorified. When saints embrace sin, they drive out the Spirit of God and “grieve Him” (Ephesians 4:30), they bring shame rather than glory on God’s name, and they invite Satan to fill their souls.
- C. So remember that the next time you have an impure thought, the next time you lose your temper and lash out in anger, and the next time you lie to further yourself or stay out of trouble. Maintain your purity and holiness in this wicked world and produce the Spirit’s fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). You matter and what you do matters!

Conclusion. When individual saints and local churches are faithful to God and to His truth, we have fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Our holiness reflects the holiness of the Spirit of God, and thus we as temples of the Holy Spirit bring glory to our great God (2 Corinthians 13:14).

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