

The “Fact” And The “Manner” Of The Spirit’s Indwelling

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. To argue that the N.T. states as a “fact” that the Holy Spirit dwells in the baptized believer does not necessarily warrant a conclusion concerning “how” or the “mode” of his indwelling.
2. The fact that the N.T. states that the Spirit is in us does not prove that he is in us directly, immediately, and personally. This, however is the conclusion many confidently affirm.
3. But a deeper and more serious exegetical analysis of the N.T. texts involved show that they do not prove what they are sometimes claimed to prove.
4. That fact that the Spirit is in us is clearly affirmed by the N.T.; how or in what sense he dwells in us is another matter, and to marshal a mass of N.T. references and set them in array in proof of the fact that the Spirit is in us does not prove the manner or mode of his indwelling.

II. DISCUSSION

A. N.T. REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BELIEVER USUALLY CITED.

1. Rom.8:9, “But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you (*en humin*, locative case, i.e., the case of location).”
 - a. This verse clearly affirms the fact that the Spirit of God dwells in the believer.
 - b. But it does not tell how or in what sense he is in the believer.
2. Rom.8:11, “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you (*oikei en humin*), he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give like also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you (*en humin*).
3. 1Cor.3:16, “Know ye not that ye are the temple, (*naos*, sanctuary) of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you (*en humin*)...”

- a. Here we have the fact stated that the Spirit of God dwells in a sanctuary (*naos*), which in this context, is the church not the individual believer.
 - b. This verse affirms the fact that the Spirit dwells within the body of Christ; it does not, however, state how or in what sense the Spirit dwells within the community of believers.
4. 1Cor.6:19, “Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you (*en humin*) which ye have from God?”
- a. Here the context has to do with the defilement of the human body through sexual immorality, and the sanctuary (*naos*) is the body of the believer.
5. In 2Tim.1:14 Paul speaks of “the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us (*en humin*),” but here again he does not enter into a discussion concerning the mode or manner of the Spirit’s indwelling.
6. Some also use Ac.2:38, “...and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” which, once again, says WHAT, but not HOW.
7. All these texts are usually cited in proof of the direct, immediate, and personal indwelling of the Spirit.
- a. It is an unwarranted assumption because it is without biblical evidence that that is the case.
 - b. In this case it is without biblical documentation and logical argumentation.
 - c. All of these texts merely state the FACT, not the MANNER or the HOW of the Spirit’s indwelling. For that reason it is mere assumption to cite the MANNER or the HOW of the Spirit’s indwelling based solely on the statements of these Bible texts which simple state the FACT, not the HOW.

B. N.T. TEXTS WHICH ALSO REFER TO CHRIST IN THE BELIEVER.

- 1. Jno.6:56, “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him (*kago en auto*).”
- 2. Jno.15:4, “Abide in me, and I in you (*kago en humin*).”
- 3. Jno.15:5, “...He that abideth in me, and I in him (*kato en auto*), that same beareth much fruit.”
- 4. Jno.17:23, “I in them (*ego en autois*), and thou in me.”

5. Jno.17:26, "...that the love wherewith thou lovest me may be in them, and I in them (*kago en autois*)."
6. Rom.8:10, "...if Christ is in you (*en humin*), the body is dead because of sin."
7. 2Cor.4:10, "...that also the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body (*en to somatic hemon*)."
8. 2Cor.4:11, "...that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh (*en te thnete sarki hemon*)."
9. 2Cor.13:5, "...know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? (*en humin*)."
10. Gal.2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (*en emoi*)."
11. Gal.4:19, "I am again in travail," he says, "until Christ be formed in you (*en humin*)."
12. Eph.3:17, "...that Christ may dwell in your heart (*en tais kardiais humon*) through faith (*dia tes pisteos* – lit., by means of faith)."
13. Phil.1:20, "...Christ shall be magnified in my body (*en to somatic mou*)."
14. Col.1:27, "...Christ in you (*en humin*) the hope of glory."
15. Col.3:11, "...Christ is all, and in all (*en pasin*)."
16. 1Pet.3:15, "sanctify in your hearts (*en tais kardiais humon*) Christ as Lord."
17. All these references state just as emphatically as those concerning the Holy Spirit dwelling in the believer that Christ dwells in the believer; but again, they do not tell us how or in what sense he is in the believer.
 - a. That is, with one exception. That of Eph.3:17, that he dwells in our hearts "by faith" – lit., by means of faith.
18. I know of no one who assumes Christ's dwelling in us is in a direct, immediate, personal manner. They don't make that assumption. Why do it in the case of the Holy Spirit's indwelling? No more reason for the one than for the other!

C. MOREOVER, THE N.T. ALSO REFERS TO GOD THE FATHER DWELLING IN THE BELIEVER.

1. 2Cor.6:16 (quoting Lev.26:12), "...even as God said, I will dwell in them (*en autois*), and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

2. Eph.4:6, "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (*en pasin*)."
3. 1Jno.3:24, "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him (*en auto*)."
4. 1Jno.4:4, speaking of God, "...greater is he that is in you, (*en humin*) than he that is in the world."
5. 1Jno.4:12, "...If we love one another God abideth in us (*en hemin*)."
6. 1Jno.4:13, "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us (*en hemin*), because he hath given us of his Spirit."
7. 1Jno.4:15, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him (*en auto*), and he in God."
8. 1Jno.4:16, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him (*en auto*)."
9. Again, all these texts tell us that God dwells in us, but do not tells us HOW or in what MANNER.
10. No one assumes a personal indwelling of God, the Father, based on these texts. Yet they do it on similar texts and statements about the Holy Spirit's indwelling. Why?

D. THE BIBLICAL SENSE IN WHICH THE BELIEVER IS INDWELT BY GOD AND CHRIST CONSIDERED.

1. In all these references it is clearly stated as a fact that God is in the believer; as it is in the numerous statements that Christ is in us, and the Spirit is in us.
 - a. But these statements of fact do not necessarily tell us how or in what sense or manner he is in us.
 - b. For Paul to state the fact that God is in his people (2Cor.6:16) does not warrant the conclusion that God is in them personally.
 - c. His language affirms the fact that God dwells in his people and walks in them, but it does not tell how or the sense in which this is to be understood.
 - d. Surely no one would assert that God directly, immediately, and personally dwells in and walks in his people. It's unreasonable. No language or reason would suggest it or allow it.
 - e. Rather, it is through revelation that he dwells in and walks within his people. When heir lives are full of the

revelation of God, or God's word, their thoughts, words, and actions are godly, God reigns in them; then it can be said that God dwells in and walks in them.

- f. This is the true sense of 2Cor.6;16 and the many other kindred statements of Scripture pertaining to God's indwelling the believer.
2. The same is true of the mass of N.T. statements that affirm the fact that Christ is in us.
 - a. For Paul to say that he no longer lived but Christ lived in him does not tell us how or in what sense or manner Christ lived in him.
 - b. This must be determined from the context, both immediate and remote, as well as the total N.T. teaching on the subject as interpreted in the light of reason.
 - c. Surely no one would affirm that Christ directly, immediately, and personally was inside Paul's human body. Again, it's unreasonable. No language or reason would suggest or allow it.
 - d. The sense in which Christ dwelt within Paul was indirect, mediate, and representative, i.e., Christ dwelt in Paul through revelation; his inspired instruction lived and reigned within the thoughts, words, and actions of Paul.
 - e. Surely, this is obvious to the man who will reason the matter out. What we are talking about in a word is "Christlikeness." This is what the expression "Christ liveth in me" means; that is the sense or manner in which Christ dwells in all believers.

E. NOW CONSIDER THE LAW OF CONSISTENCY WITH REFERENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT'S INDWELLING THE BELIEVER.

1. The question to be raised at this point is this: Why should our reasoning be any different with reference to those N.T. texts concerning the indwelling of God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, in us than of those affirming the indwelling of the Father and the Son in us?
2. Here is where the law of consistency of language is breached and our love of logic and rational argumentation is laid aside.

3. The belief in a direct, immediate, and personal indwelling of deity (whether of the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit) within the baptized believer is unreasonable, unscriptural, inconsistent, and stands in violation of the established principles of sound biblical exegesis.
 - a. Brethren recognize this with reference to the Father and the Son's indwelling, but not with the Holy Spirit's indwelling.
 - b. Why the difference? If there is a difference, there must be good reason for it. If there is, what is it and where is it?
4. It would seem that we are trying to make the matter far too complicated and, to some degree, even mystical, in the matter of the Holy Spirit's indwelling.
5. The simple truth of the matter is that:
 - a. God in us is simply "Godlikeness," (or godliness).
 - b. Christ in us is simply "Christlikeness," (or Christliness).
 - c. And the Holy Spirit in us is simply "Spiritlikeness," (or spirituality), being guided by the word of the Spirit.
6. What could possibly be simpler than this; what could be more reasonable and in complete harmony with the whole of the revelation of God?
7. The very idea that deity, either one of the Godhead three, directly, immediately, and personally indwells humanity in the person of the Father, and/or the Son, and/or the Holy Spirit seems ill thought through.
8. We constantly make the argument that the miraculous age does not occur in the 20th century; yet, contending that in the form of the Holy Spirit, deity literally, (or personally) indwells humanity would logically demand the miraculous.
9. It is either the case that the miraculous does not now occur, or it does occur. Which is it?

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