
The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Does the Spirit of God Dwell in His People Today?

What works has the Holy Spirit done? Is He doing all these works today? Does He dwell in people today? If so, when and how does this begin? Is the indwelling the same as Holy Spirit baptism, miracles, and tongues? Does the Spirit of God lead or guide people directly apart from Scripture? Is it a direct, personal inhabiting of the believer? What is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and what effect does it have on a Christian's life?

Introduction:

The Holy Spirit is a topic of much current interest among religious people. Some folks believe they have Holy Spirit baptism, miracles, tongues, or direct guidance of the Holy Spirit today. Some preachers making such claims have become fabulously famous and wealthy.

Interestingly, these claims are made by people of all different faiths: Catholics, Pentecostals, Mormons, Lutherans, even some former members of churches of Christ. Surely we need to know the truth about the Holy Spirit.

The Bible mentions many different works done by the Holy Spirit at various times in history.

The Holy Spirit is a living spirit Being, one of the three members of the Godhead. As such He has been active throughout Bible history.

* He was active in creation and in sustaining the universe (Genesis 1:2; Psalms 104:30; Job 26:13; 33:4).

* He conceived Jesus in Mary's womb (Matthew 1:18,20; Luke 1:35).

* He revealed God's will to men who then taught this message to others (1 Corinthians 2:10-14; Ephesians 3:3-5; Mark 13:11; John 14:26; 16:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

* He then empowered these men to perform miracles to confirm that their message was from God

(Hebrews 2:3,4; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 14:3).

* He teaches, convicts, and sanctifies sinners (John 16:8-11; 1 Corinthians 6:11; John 3:3-5; Ephesians 2:18; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Peter 1:2).

* He gives Christians joy, comfort, unity, love, etc. (Romans 5:5; 14:17; 15:13; Ephesians 4:3; Acts 9:31; Galatians 5:22-25; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).

Note that some of these activities have been completed. Some works continue on, but others reach completion and cease. The fact the Spirit once did a work does not necessarily prove He is continuing to do it today.

The purpose of this study is to consider the Holy Spirit's work of dwelling in Christians.

Does the Spirit dwell in people today? If so, what is this indwelling and what does it accomplish? How does it relate to other works the Spirit has done? Do popular concepts of the Holy Spirit agree with what the Bible teaches?

Part I: Does the Spirit Dwell in People Today?

1 Corinthians 3:16 - We are a temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in us.

1 Corinthians 6:19 - Our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in us because we are bought with a price. Everyone who has been purchased (redeemed) by the blood of Christ also has the Spirit of God dwelling in him.

Romans 8:9 - We should be led by the Spirit of God. If the Spirit of God (Christ) does not dwell in us, we do not belong to God.

Clearly the Spirit does dwell in people today. In fact, the Spirit dwells in ALL true children of God, and He begins to dwell in us at the moment we become God's children (not at some later point).

[See also Acts 2:38; 5:32; James 4:5; Rom. 5:5; Eph. 5:18.]

Part II: Is the Indwelling the Same as Holy Spirit Baptism, Direct Guidance, & Miracles?

Whenever the Holy Spirit is mentioned, some people immediately think of Holy Spirit baptism, miracles, tongues, and direct guidance. They conclude that, if the Holy Spirit dwells in us, then we must have the supernatural manifestations. But remember that the Holy Spirit has done many different things at different times. When the Holy Spirit is mentioned, the only way to know what He is **doing** is from the context.

How does the Holy Spirit indwelling compare to Holy Spirit baptism, direct guidance, and miracles?

A. All Christians Received the Indwelling, but NOT All Received Holy Spirit Baptism, Direct Guidance, or Miracles.

We already showed that all Christians have the indwelling of the Spirit. However:

Not all people received direct revelation and miracles.

Note 1 Corinthians 12:29,30 - Not all were apostles or prophets. Likewise, not all had tongues, miracles, etc. [Note vv 4,7-11.]

Holy Spirit "baptism" was a special work that was never promised to all people.

Only two cases in the Bible are described as Holy Spirit "baptism."

The apostles received Holy Spirit baptism when the Jews first received the gospel. Compare Acts 1:2-8 to 2:1-11. Note the reference to "men of Galilee" in 1:11 cf. 2:7,14.

Cornelius' household received Holy Spirit baptism when the Gentiles first received the gospel. Note Acts 10:44-46; 11:15-18; 15:7-9.

Everyone who received Holy Spirit Baptism spoke in tongues, but not all Christians spoke in tongues even though they had the indwelling.

In both of the cases of Holy Spirit baptism listed above, the people immediately spoke in tongues (Acts 2:1-11; 10:46). But not all Christians spoke in tongues even though all had the indwelling (see 1 Corinthians 12:4,7-11,29,30 above).

Whereas all Christians possess the indwelling, not all Christians received Holy Spirit baptism, direct guidance, or miracles. Clearly these are not the same work of the Spirit.

B. The Indwelling Was Received at Conversion, but Spiritual Gifts Came by Other

Means at Other Times.

The indwelling comes at conversion, but people had to wait till God decided to give them Holy Spirit baptism.

Acts 22:16 - Remember, people have the indwelling as soon as they are forgiven of sin. But they are commanded **not** to wait to be forgiven.

Acts 1:4,5,8 - In contrast, Jesus told the apostles to "wait" for Holy Spirit baptism. It would be given whenever God chose.

We have the power to choose whether and when we will be saved and receive the indwelling. But those few who received Holy Spirit baptism had no control over when or who. Clearly the indwelling is not the same as Holy Spirit baptism.

Some people received miraculous gifts through the apostles' hands, but that came at a different time from conversion.

Acts 8:12-19 - The Samaritans believed and were baptized (v12), so they were saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; etc.). When they were forgiven, they immediately received the indwelling (as above).

However, the Spirit had not yet fallen on them (v 15,16). The Spirit was indwelling them, yet in another sense they did not have the Spirit. They received this when the apostles came and laid hands on them (vv 14-19). Other examples of laying on of hands show that this involved bestowing miraculous powers, tongues, etc. (Acts 19:1-6; 2 Tim. 1:6; Rom. 1:8-11).

Again, these people had the indwelling but did not have miraculous powers. And even people who received them both, received them at different times and in different ways. So clearly the two are not the same.

C. Today The Indwelling Is Unchanged, but No One Does Miracles Like Those in the Early Church.

The indwelling must exist today just like in the first century, since all saved people have it. But no one today duplicates the miraculous powers of the first century.

True miracles can be distinguished from frauds.

1 John 4:1 - We must test people who claim miracles or direct guidance, because many are frauds. [Matt.

7:15-23; 24:24; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Peter 2:1; Deut. 18:20-22; Acts 8:9-13; 2 Thess. 2:9-12; Rev. 2:2].

Today when we question the claims of "miracle-workers," they usually do not show us miracles (they often say they cannot do them while "unbelievers" are present). Instead they offer arguments and testimonials.

Acts 8:5-13 - However, true miracle workers exercised their gifts in the presence of false teachers. Instead of offering testimonials or arguments, they just **did** the miracles so people could observe for themselves.

Acts 4:14-16 - Even the opponents of true prophets could not deny that true miracles occurred.

[Note John 11:47,48; Ex 7-12 (esp. 8:17-19); Num. 16 & 17; 1 Kings 18:20-40;; 13:6-12; 2 Kings 1 & 6; Dan. 2; Dan. 3; Dan. 6; 1 Kings 13:1-6; Jer. 28.]

Modern "healings" differ from true healings.

When we examine modern "miracles," they do not measure up to Bible miracles.

John 11:38-45 - Bible healings involved obvious organic diseases which were healed obviously, instantaneously, and completely. They never involved relapses, partial improvements, or gradual healings requiring days or weeks.

Further, Jesus and his apostles (after they received Holy Spirit baptism) always succeeded. No disease was too hard to heal, nor did they fail in any attempt to heal.

[Note 9:1,7,18-25; Acts 3:2-10 & 4:22; 5:12,15,16; Luke 13:11-17; 7:11-17; Mark 1:40-45; 2:10-12; 5:25-29, 35-42; Matt. 4:23f; 14:34-36; 12:10-13.]

So-called miracles today lack many characteristics of Bible miracles. True miracles were evident to everyone, even to God's enemies. Modern "miracles" are not convincing, but have the characteristics of frauds.

Modern "revelations" differ from true guidance of the Spirit.

Matthew 10:19,20 - True guidance of the Spirit gave men the infallible will of God, which could be expressed in exactly the words God wanted.

[Note; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2:10-13; Deut. 18:18-22; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Sam. 23:1,2; Eph. 3:3-5]

Modern so-called direct guidance involves vague leadings, impressions, feelings, and undefined urgings. Instead of stating the revelation clearly, people often say it is "better felt than told" and "you cannot understand until you experience it."

Further, direct guidance is claimed by people of many religious views - Catholics, Mormons, Pentecostals, etc. The "revelations" contradict one another and contradict the Bible. But the Holy Spirit does not contradict Himself, so these people cannot all be from God (1 Cor. 14:33; 1:10-13; Gal. 1:8,9; 2 John 9; etc.).

And there is no objective evidence to prove any of these messages are from God or to distinguish the true ones from the false ones. There is not a nickel's worth of difference between the claims and evidences of the various groups. This implies they are human imagination or doctrines implanted by Satan.

True revelations from God could always be distinguished from frauds by means objective evidence. This was the primary purpose of miracles. The indwelling of the Spirit continues today unchanged, but what are claimed as miracles today clearly differ from what existed in Bible times.

D. The Indwelling Is Still Needed Today, but the Purposes of Holy Spirit Baptism and Spiritual Gifts Have Been Fulfilled.

The indwelling is surely needed today, since without it we do not belong to God.

Holy Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts were given to reveal new truths and to confirm that those messages were truly from God.

Matthew 10:19,20; Acts 14:3 - Spiritual gifts of direct guidance revealed new truths before the Scriptures had been completed. Miracles confirmed that those messages were really from God (1 Cor. 14:37; 2:10-14; Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3,4).

Holy Spirit baptism on the apostles gave them power so they could preach the gospel by direct guidance and gave them power to confirm their messages (Acts 1:8; 2:1ff).

The purpose of Holy Spirit baptism on Cornelius' household was to reveal and confirm the specific message that Gentiles could be saved (Acts 10:45ff; 11:17f; 15:7-9).

Today, direct guidance apart from the Scripture is not needed because we have the completed Scriptures.

2 Timothy 3:16,17 - The Scriptures provide all we need to know to please God, revealed in a way that any honest person can understand. [2 Peter 1:3; Acts 20:20,27; Ephesians 3:3-5; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 14:33; 1 Peter 1:22-25; 2 John 2]

John 20:30,31 - Furthermore, the Scriptures contain eyewitness testimony of the miracles that confirm

the message is from God. No further miracles are needed to confirm the message. [Luke 1:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; 2 Peter 1:12-18]

Galatians 3:15 - Once a covenant has been confirmed or ratified, it does not need to be continually re-confirmed. The testimony of two or more witnesses is adequate to establish historical facts (such as the confirmation of a contract) - John 8:17. (Note Luke 16:27-31 and compare to modern contracts, the US Constitution, etc.).

Miraculous confirmation was needed as long as new truths were being revealed. But since the apostles received all truth, there is no new truth to be revealed (John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:3; Acts 20:20,27; 2 Timothy 3:16,17). Hence, direct guidance of the Spirit and miraculous confirmation are not needed today. They have served their purpose. But the indwelling continues to be needed.

E. The Indwelling Is Still for People Today, but Holy Spirit Baptism and Spiritual Gifts Have Ceased.

Remember that all people who belong to God will have the indwelling. But consider the evidence that Holy Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts have ceased.

Holy Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts were never promised to people of all ages.

Even in the first century, not all saved people had them. There is therefore no reason to expect people to need them today.

The purposes of miraculous powers have been fulfilled.

We no longer need direct guidance or miracles since the word has been adequately revealed and confirmed. Holy Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts have accomplished their purpose.

There is no means for people to obtain the power of miracles and direct revelation.

Whether people received the powers by laying on of apostles' hands or by Holy Spirit baptism, always apostles were present and were directly involved. Since Pentecost, not one case can be named in which anyone received these powers apart from the direct involvement of apostles.

But there are no apostles today, since no one today is an eyewitness that Jesus was raised from the dead (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; etc.). Hence, no one can obtain these powers today. But that is no problem because no one needs these gifts now.

No one today practices the kind of miracles & powers done in the early church.

The miracles claimed for today do not have the characteristics of true miracles but instead have the characteristics of frauds. Miracles are no longer being done because they are not needed.

Ephesians 4:4-6 - There is only "ONE baptism" today.

Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism are two separate and distinct baptisms (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5). But by the time Ephesians was written, one or the other had ceased.

Some folks today claim to practice both water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism. But there can no more be two baptisms today than there can be two Gods.

Water baptism, administered by men in Jesus' name, is clearly still for today since all men need it to be saved (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:16; Acts 8:36-39; 10:47f; 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). But Holy Spirit baptism is something entirely different. It has accomplished its purpose and has ceased.

The Bible predicted that spiritual gifts would cease when their purpose was fulfilled.

1 Corinthians 13:8-11 - Prophecies, tongues, and miraculous knowledge are three of the gifts by which the Spirit delivered God's will (12:7-11). But love (chap. 13) is "more excellent" than these gifts (12:31). Why? Because the gifts served a temporary purpose and would cease (v8-10), whereas love, faith, and hope, would continue to be needed and abide (13:13).

Spiritual gifts would cease because they were "in part" (v9), and they would cease when "that which is perfect" or complete would come (v10). Note: "that which is perfect" is contrasted to the gifts that were "in part."

In what sense were the gifts "in part"? At the time Paul wrote, the gifts had only partially completed their purpose of revealing God's will. The revelation was delivered by means of these gifts, but that work was not yet completed.

"That which is perfect" must, therefore, refer to the completed or mature revelation of God's will ("the perfect law of liberty" - James 1:25). When it had all been completely and adequately revealed, the spiritual gifts would cease.

But all truth was revealed to the apostles and recorded in the Bible in the first century (John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16,17). After that, spiritual gifts were unneeded, so they ceased. Now the written word is the only inspired means we have to learn God's will.

Jude 3 - The faith was "once for all delivered to the saints" (NKJV). Elsewhere the phrase "once for all" describes Jesus' death, which occurred only one time, in contrast to animal sacrifices which were continually repeated because they could not really remove sin (Heb. 9:26,28; 10:10; 7:26,27; 1 Peter 3:18). Jesus' sacrifice was done so perfectly it did not need repeated. (See Thayer's definition.)

Likewise, the gospel was delivered to God's people only "once." When it was complete, it did not need to be repeated. We may as well affirm that Jesus' sacrifice needs to be repeated as to affirm that people still have spiritual gifts to reveal God's will again today.

So the indwelling is a separate work of the Spirit, different from Holy Spirit baptism, miracles, and direct guidance. The indwelling still exists but Holy Spirit baptism and the miraculous gifts, have ceased.

Part III. How Does The Spirit Lead Men Today?

People sometimes wonder, if there is no direct guidance from the Spirit today, then how does the Spirit instruct us to know God's will?

A. The Spirit Instructs Men through the Scriptures.

All spiritual truth about God's will was delivered to men in the first century and recorded in Scriptures. This message has been preserved, so we today can know the will of God through the Spirit's message in the written word.

John 14:26; 16:13 - Jesus spoke to the original apostles (cf. 13:1,21,22; 16:17 to Matt. 26:20,26) and promised that they would be guided by the Holy Spirit into all truth. The direct guidance of the Spirit did this for them, but this was never promised to all men.

1 Corinthians 14:37 - The inspired men then wrote down the message that the Spirit revealed to them. So the Scriptures now contain the message of the Spirit in written form. [11:23]

2 Timothy 3:16,17 - God intended for all good works to be recorded in the Scriptures, the written word. In this way, the inspired Scriptures are profitable to teach and instruct men in righteousness, etc.

Ephesians 3:3-5 - What Paul received by revelation, he wrote down so others could read and understand it.

John 20:30,31 - The written word tells enough that we can receive eternal life. [Cf. 1 John 1:1-4; 2:1-6.]

2 Peter 1:12-15- Having received all things pertaining to life & godliness (1:3), Peter wrote to others so that, even after he died, they could be reminded of the words and commandments of Jesus' apostles and prophets. [3:1,2]

Today, we need no further revelation because the Bible completely reveals all we need to know to please God and be saved. Any religious doctrine taught today, which was not taught by the apostles and prophets in the first century and recorded in the Bible, is not true, for those men received and wrote down all truth.

[See also I Cor. 11:23; 2:10-14; 15:3; 2 Thess. 3:6,14; Jude 3; Rev. 1:11; Acts 20:20,27; Gal. 1:8-12; James 1:25; Matt. 28:20; Col. 4:12; Heb. 13:20,31.]

B. Note that Whatever the Spirit Does in Leading Men, the Same Is Said To Be Done by the Word.

| Holy Spirit | Work | The Word |
|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Eph. 5:18f; 1 Cor. 6:19 | Dwells in us | Col. 3:16; 2 John 2 |
| Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18 | Leads or guides | Psa. 119:104,105; 2 Tim. 3:16,17 |
| 2 Thess. 2:13 | Sanctifies | John 17:17,19 |
| Gal. 5:22f | Bears fruit | Col. 1:5f,9f; Luke 8:11,15 |
| Rom. 15:13; Eph. 3:16 | Gives power | Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12 |
| Rom. 8:16; Eph. 1:13f | Testifies we are God's | 1 John 2:3-6; 1 Peter 1:23 |
| Acts 9:31 | Comforts | Rom. 15:4; 1 Thess. 4:18 |
| Heb. 2:3,4 | Gives evidence | John 20:30,31 |

Ephesians 6:17 - The word is the sword of the Spirit. The Spirit and the word are two separate things - they are not the same. But the word is the means the Spirit uses through which to reveal His will and lead men to obey Him today (cf. Heb. 4:12f).

There is no means for knowing God's will today besides the Scriptures. This is why so many passages exhort us to study and teach God's word (Acts 17:11; 8:4; Matt. 28:20; 22:29; 2 Tim. 3:16f; 2:2,15; Psa. 19:7-11; 1:2; etc.).

Indeed the Spirit does dwell in every Christian today. But this is not the means by which the Spirit leads men to know God's will. The indwelling is a different work from that of revealing God's will or guiding men.

When a man claims the Holy Spirit guides him today in ways in addition to the Scriptures, he has rejected the Scriptures as a complete and perfect guide. Whether he realizes it or not, he is not satisfied to simply follow the Bible; he wants something else other than what the Bible says.

Part V. What Is the Indwelling of the Spirit?

A. The Holy Spirit Dwells in Us Like Indwelling of the Father and Son.

Many people become completely flustered trying to grasp the idea that the Holy Spirit dwells in them, yet they seem to have no problem whatever with the fact the Father and Son also dwell in them!

The Father also dwells in us and we in Him.

2 Corinthians 6:16 - We are a temple of God (the "Father" - v18). He dwells in us and walks in us if we are His children, His people.

1 John 4:14-16 - The Father sent the Son. If we confess Jesus to be the Son of God (the Father), then God dwells in us and ***we in Him*** . [Cf. also v12,13.]

Christians are not just a temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us; we are likewise a temple of the Father who dwells in us. And we dwell in the Father. Who would claim that this is a direct, personal indwelling? Does God somehow inhabit our bodies?

[Eph. 2:20-22; 1 John 2:24]

The Son also dwells in us and we in Him.

Ephesians 3:17 - Christ dwells in our hearts by faith.

John 15:4-6 - As a branch abides in the vine, so disciples abide ***in Jesus and He in us*** .

2 Corinthians 5:17 - If anyone is "in Christ" he is a new creature. Old things are passed away and all are become new.

Romans 8:1 - No condemnation to those "in Christ."

Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3,4 - We are baptized ***into*** Christ. But baptism is essential to be forgiven of sins and become a child of God (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; etc.). Therefore, all who are forgiven of sins are in Christ.

Note that these concepts are usually taught to people even before they become Christians, yet no one finds them particularly difficult or confusing. And no one assumes that these passages refer to some kind of direct, personal inhabiting of our bodies by Jesus' spirit.

Just as the Holy Spirit dwells in us, so also Jesus dwells in us and we in Him.

[Cf. 2 Cor. 13:5; John 6:56; 14:20; 1 John 3:24; 2:5,6,24,27,28; 5:20; Col. 1:2,27; Rom. 16:3,8-13; 8:10; Rev. 14:13; Gal. 1:22; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1,14; 1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Peter 5:14.]

The Father & Son dwell in One Another.

John 14:10,11 - We should believe that the Father dwells in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father.

John 14:20 - Jesus is in the Father, and we in Jesus, and Jesus in us.

John 10:37,38 - We should know and believe that the Father was in Jesus and Jesus in the Father.

The Father and Son are distinct individuals, just as we disciples are separate beings from one another. Yet the Son was in the Father, and the Father in the Son.

[Note John 17:20-23.]

Christians are in one another.

2 Corinthians 7:3 - Paul said to the Corinthians, "You are in our hearts."

Philippians 1:7 - "I have you in my heart."

So the Spirit does dwell in faithful Christians. But the Father and Son also dwell in us, and we dwell in them. And Christians are even in one another.

If we can believe that the Father and Son dwell in us without become all confused, why are we so confused by the fact the Holy Spirit dwells in us? If we can understand how the Father and Son dwell in us and we in them, then we can understand how the Spirit dwells in us, since the same language is used for all these cases.

B. The Indwelling Is Not a Direct, Personal Habitation.

The human spirit dwells directly and personally in the human body as in a temple or tabernacle. In that sense our spirits inhabit our bodies, and Jesus' spirit inhabited His body. Note 2 Cor. 4:16; 5:1,4; John 2:21; James 2:26; Heb. 10:5; 2 Peter 1:13f; Luke 23:46. Is this how the Holy Spirit dwells in us?

Do the Father and Son personally indwell us, etc.?

If the Spirit personally dwells in us, then the Father and Son personally dwell in us, we dwell in them, and Christians dwell in one another, etc. Do our spirits inhabit God's body, etc.? Do all these spirits inhabit our bodies? Such is unreasonable, and the language does not require it.

Some people will argue at length that the Holy Spirit "personally" indwells Christians, yet they never argue that the Father and Son "personally" dwell in us or we in them. Why not? Why do we not see just as much effort to prove a personal indwelling of the Father and Son as the Holy Spirit? Why not argue that we personally dwell in the Father and Son?

Evidently we all know the Father and Son do not personally dwell in us, we in them, etc. So why conclude

that the parallel language for the Spirit means a personal indwelling?

Consider the consequences of "God in the flesh."

When Jesus' spirit dwelt in His body, that was an example of personal, direct indwelling. But He was God in the flesh. If the Holy Spirit personally and directly inhabits our bodies (and so do the Father and Son), then wouldn't that make us God in the flesh like Jesus was? If our spirits personally dwell in the Father, wouldn't that make us God? Surely such ideas would be blasphemous, and no one really believes these things to be true. So why claim that the Spirit dwells in us directly and personally?

What work does the Spirit do that would require a direct, personal indwelling?

He does not do miracles today, as we have seen. What does He do that would require a personal indwelling?

Some emphasize that the Spirit intercedes for us (Rom. 8:26f). But why would this require a personal, direct indwelling? This is not a work done *in* us, but a work done in heaven on our behalf.

There is no Bible evidence that the Spirit directly, personally indwells us, but there is considerable evidence against it. The concept of personal indwelling places does not fit the terms used in Scripture.

At this point we know that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is ***not*** : (1) Holy Spirit baptism or miraculous powers, (2) direct guidance apart from the word, or (3) a direct, personal inhabiting of our bodies. Furthermore, whatever explanation we give for the indwelling of the Spirit, that explanation must harmonize with these facts: (1) The indwelling is for all Christians from the moment of conversion on; (2) The Spirit dwells in us like the Father and Son dwell in us, etc.; (3) The indwelling is not any of the things we have just listed.

C. The Indwelling Involves Fellowship with the Spirit Based on the Influence of God's Word and Resulting in the Fruits of the Spirit.

The indwelling involves fellowship or a close relationship with the Spirit, including all the blessings that are associated with such a relationship.

John 17:20-23 - For disciples to be "in" the Father and Son, they "in" us, and they "in" one another means to be "one." This is a close spiritual relationship of harmony, unity, and fellowship.

John 15:1-6 - We "abide in" Jesus as a branch abides in the vine - close contact. It is the opposite of

being cut off or separated from Him (v2,5,6).

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 - God dwells in us as His temple if we are His people, sons and daughters. The point in context is fellowship vs. separation. We must fellowship God or sin - one or the other. If we separate from sin, God will fellowship us - He will dwell in us as His temple and we will be His sons and daughters.

1 John 1:3,6,7; 2:3-6 - The subject is how to fellowship Father and Son, and how to know we are right with them. What is called "fellowship" in 1:3,6 is called "knowing" God or "abiding in" God in 2:3-6.

Ephesians 2:1-5,11-22 - We are a temple or habitation of God in the Spirit. Again, He dwells in or inhabits us. In what sense? The whole context shows we now have fellowship or union (reconciliation) with Him - access to Him - where before conversion we were separated or alienated from Him.

This fits what we have learned because it is sin that keeps us from having fellowship with God (Isaiah 59:1,2). As soon as sin is forgiven, we have fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit. This is exactly when and how we have learned the indwelling of the Spirit begins.

When the Bible says the Father and Son "dwell in" us and in one another, etc., it means we have a close relationship of unity and fellowship with them. Why assume it means something different when used for the Spirit dwelling in us?

Many other Scriptures talk about having fellowship with the Spirit. Note 2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1; Heb. 6:4.

[Note: This concept is also confirmed by lexicons that define "dwell" and "in."]

This fellowship results from the influence of the Holy Spirit through the word.

The indwelling begins the moment we are forgiven of sins by obeying the gospel, God's word. Note other verses that tie this indwelling to the word.

1 John 2:3-6 - We know we know God and are in Him if we keep His commands.

1 John 3:24 - If we keep His commands, He dwells in us and we in Him (cf. 2:24).

Ephesians 3:17; Romans 10:17 - How does Jesus dwell in our hearts? By faith. But faith comes by hearing God's word.

Ephesians 5:18,19; cf. Colossians 3:16 - These are parallel passages. One says we are "filled with the Spirit" (this is not miracles but the indwelling, since all Christians are commanded to do it). The parallel says, "Let the **word** ... dwell in you..."

Ephesians 6:17 - The word is the sword of the Spirit. The word is not the Spirit, but is the agent used by

the Spirit. If we know and obey the word, then we have fellowship with the Spirit and the Spirit is continually directing and influencing our lives through the word. (Cf. John 8:31; 15:7-10; 2 John 9.)

This fellowship and influence of the word results in fruits of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-25 - When we are led by the Spirit, our lives produce the "fruits" or qualities listed. This fruit, however, is produced, not by some mystical, miraculous, unexplainable influence of the Spirit, but through the influence of the word - Col. 1:5,6,9,10; Luke 8:11,15.

John 15:1-6 - When we abide in Jesus as branches in the vine, we bear fruit. This occurs because we let Jesus' word abide in us and keep His commands (v7-10).

Galatians 2:20 - Christ lives in me. When I live by the rules or principles He lived by, it is as though He were living His life through me. [4:19]

When a child acts like its parents, we say, "You can sure see his Daddy in him." Paul Overstreet wrote a song entitled "I'm Seein' My Father in Me." So when we are in fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit, and we let their word work in our lives so we obey it, then we bear the fruits of their teachings. People can truly say, "You can see Jesus in him," or "You can see the Spirit of God in Him."

If I say that God has fellowship with me as I obey His word, He influences me by His word, and produces fruit in me by His word, would anyone object to that? Would anyone claim that having the Father dwell in me involves something more than that? If not, then why not conclude that this is the sense in which the Holy Spirit dwells in us?

Note: Some say "The Spirit dwells in us through the word." I do not disagree with that but have attempted to give a fuller, more detailed explanation.

Conclusion

Do the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit dwell in you? To have them, you must obey the word revealed by the Spirit so your sins will be forgiven, and then you must remain faithful. To be forgiven you must hear the gospel, believe, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38,42; 22:16; Rom. 1:16; 10:17; 6:3,4). Then you must continue serving God faithfully (Rom. 6:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 John 2:3-6).

The indwelling of the Spirit is not nearly so difficult or mysterious as many people make it out to be. Nevertheless, it is a great blessing, and you should be sure you have that fellowship with God by receiving forgiveness and developing the character that His word can produce in you.

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