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Chapter 17 – God the Holy Spirit: His Indwelling and Sealing

I. INDWELLING: A NEW MINISTRY OF THE PRESENT DISPENSATION

In the OT the Spirit was with men but not in men. This is signified by Jesus when He said, “*He abides with you and will be in you*” **John 14:17**. Therefore, the Holy Spirit’s ministry of permanent indwelling did not begin until the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). During this dispensation the Holy Spirit permanently indwells every believer in Christ. This ministry of the Spirit will be repeated in the Millennial Kingdom (Ezek 36:26ff).

II. INDWELLING: PERMANENT AND UNIVERSAL FOR BELIEVERS

During this dispensation all believers must have the Holy Spirit indwelling them or they do not belong to Christ. This is taught in Romans 8:9 “*But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*” The “Spirit of Christ” simply refers to the Holy Spirit who proceeded from Christ on the Day of Pentecost (John 16:7). If a person does not have the Spirit indwelling him then he does not belong to Christ. On the other side, in Jude 19 unbelievers are described as “devoid of the Spirit”. So, there are two people groups in the present age.

Believers

“those who have the Spirit”

Unbelievers

“those devoid of the Spirit”

This demonstrates that there is a permanent and universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers during this dispensation. From this fact, it should not be inferred that all believers will demonstrate the same degree of spiritual power or that all believers will manifest the same degree of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). Spiritual power and fruit of the Spirit depend on the filling ministry of the Spirit and should not be confused with manifestations of indwelling.

Indwelling

occurs once at belief

permanent

never commanded

Filling

occurs as often as believer yields

temporary

commanded

*Filling - Peter (2:4; 4:8); Stephen (6:3ff; 7:5); Paul (9:17; 13:9)

Since I have said that the indwelling ministry of the Spirit is permanent it should be demonstrated from Scripture that it is permanent. Can we commit some sin which causes the Spirit to no longer indwell us? If this were to happen it would be clear that we would be “devoid of the Spirit” and therefore would have lost our salvation. But Paul argues that

“Even Christians who are living outside the will of God and are subject to God’s chastisement nevertheless have bodies which are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Paul uses this argument in 1 Cor 6:19 to exhort the carnal Corinthians to avoid sin against God because their body is made holy by the presence of the Holy Spirit.”

The teaching of a carnal Christian is clear in 1 Cor 3.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. ² I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, ³ for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

Yet, Paul asked the carnal Corinthians “*Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*” (1 Cor 3:16) There is no sin that can cause the Holy Spirit to leave the believer. Such sins as a man having promiscuous relations with his father's wife (1 Cor 5:1), immorality, covetousness, idolatry, reviling, drunkenness, swindling (1 Cor 5:11), wrong doing and defrauding brothers (1 Cor 6:8) are all attributed to believers. Yet Paul says of them “*...you were washed...you were sanctified...you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God*” (1 Corinthians 6:11). No sin removes the indwelling Spirit of Christ. If it did we would lose salvation. And further, if it did we could not grieve or quench the Holy Spirit. He can be grieved or quenched precisely because He permanently indwells. If we sinned and He left then He would not be grieved or quenched but absent.

Further, the Holy Spirit is often declared to be a gift of God, and a gift by nature is something received without merit on the part of the recipient (John 7:37-39; Acts 11:17; Rom 5:5; 1 Cor 2:12; 2 Cor 5:5). God is not an Indian giver. He doesn't give the Spirit and then take Him back when you are no longer worthy. It's a gift given once for all who believe.

Additionally, the ability for a Christian to live according to the high moral standard of Scripture requires the indwelling Spirit who provides the necessary divine enablement.

III. INDWELLING: FOUR DIFFICULTIES

A. Passages that describe loss or possible loss of the Spirit

1 Samuel 16:14 Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him.

Psalms 51:11 Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

Response. To understand these passages one must not confuse dispensations. These statements come under the Dispensation of the Law when the Spirit did not indwell permanently but only temporarily and for specific services. For example, Israel's kings were indwelled by the Spirit of God so they would have divine wisdom to rule the people. This indwelling could be removed as with Saul. We live under the Dispensation of Grace and during this arrangement the Holy Spirit is given permanently to all who believe. He cannot be taken away no matter what wickedness we commit.

B. A Passage that conditions the Spirit on obedience

Acts 5:32 "And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

Response: The teaching here is that the Holy Spirit is both an external and internal witness to the validity of the events described in vv 30-31. His external witness came in the form of distributing spiritual gifts upon the first believers. His internal witness confirmed their hearts as children of God. This same Spirit was "*given*" to those who obey Him. "*Given*" is an aorist tense meaning undefined point action in the past. When was the Spirit given to them? When they "*obeyed*" Him "by receiving the gospel" (Hackett, *Commentary on Acts*,

81). This is no different than the obedience of faith in Acts 6:7. This is not obedience to a set of moral laws but obedience to the gospel.

C. Passages where there is a delay between believing and indwelling

There are two passages where individuals believe and only subsequently do they receive the indwelling Spirit. Does this mean that indwelling comes *after* salvation and not necessarily upon all believers? First, it is clear that there was a delay in giving the Spirit when the Samaritans first believed.

Acts 8:12-17 But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. ¹³ Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. ¹⁴ Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, ¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.

Why was there a delay? There was a delay because of the Samaritan religion which rivaled Judaism. The Samaritan's worshipped at Mt. Gerazim, the Jews at Mt Sinai. The Samaritans recognized the Torah as God's word, most Jews recognized the whole Old Testament. There was a real threat that the Samaritan Christians would set up a rival church. Thus, there was a delay in the giving of the Spirit. Two Jewish Christians, Peter and John were then sent to convey the gift of the Holy Spirit so that the early church would be united and not divided.

Second, Acts 19:1-6 shows a delay between believing and receiving the indwelling Spirit.

Acts 19:1-6 It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. ² He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they *said* to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." ³ And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." ⁴ Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized

in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying.

In Ephesus, Paul found some “disciples”. It was clear from talking with them that they were disciples but something was missing so Paul began to quiz them in verse 2. The 12 men had not even heard of the Holy Spirit. They had only heard a part of the story. They had heard John’s message and had been baptized into John’s baptism. After that they had left Israel and had not heard whether the one coming after John had come yet or not. Paul identifies the one coming after John as Jesus. When they heard this they were water baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and only then, after they had believed and were baptized did they receive the Holy Spirit. Again, a similar reason exists for the delay. There was a real threat that John the Baptists disciples would set up a distinct sect. Actually, today in the Middle East there still exists about 150 people who follow the teachings of John the Baptist. This was to introduce those who had the baptism of John into the baptism of Christianity and to avoid a schism. The delay until Paul laid hands on them would connect them with Christianity.

D. Is anointing distinct from indwelling?

The root word for anointing is “oil” and in the ancient world the word “oil” referred to a healing ointment that you would take internally or rub on the skin externally to heal a wound. Oil in the OT was also a symbol of the Holy Spirit (1 Sam. 16:13). Those Israelites who had special tasks; kings, priests, craftsmen, etc... were anointed with oil to set them apart for special service to God. During their appointment they were temporarily filled with the Holy Spirit to accomplish their special service (Ps. 51). In the NT, the anointing refers to the Holy Spirit being applied permanently to the individual believer in order to set him/her apart for special service and the ability to be taught the things of God. This anointing of the Holy Spirit abides in all believers during the church age (1 John 2:20, 27).

	ANOINTING	PURPOSE
OT	Temporary	Special service
NT	Permanent	Understand truth

What we have tried to prove this morning is that permanent indwelling is a new ministry of the Spirit during the Dispensation of the Church. All believers in Christ have the Spirit indwelling them. If they did not they would not belong to Christ. The only condition for receiving the indwelling Spirit is believing in Christ and indwelling occurs simultaneously with believing.

IV. INDWELLING: CONTRASTED WITH OTHER MINISTRIES

Because indwelling occurs simultaneously with many other ministries of the Spirit it is necessary to distinguish this ministry from the others. Regeneration, indwelling, baptism, sealing, and initial filling all occur simultaneously at the moment of saving faith. However, this does not mean these ministries are all the same even though they are all works of God. Regeneration is the impartation of eternal life. Indwelling is the permanent residence of the Holy Spirit in all who have eternal life. Baptism of the Spirit puts a person in the body of Christ, the Church. Sealing seals a person in the body of Christ until the pre-trib Rapture. Filling empowers a Christian to live victoriously. Regeneration, Indwelling, Baptism, and Sealing are never commanded in Scripture. These ministries occur once, at the moment of faith in Christ. Filling, however, is commanded in Scripture (Eph 5:18). This ministry occurs multiple times in a Christians experience. Regeneration, Indwelling, Baptism, and Sealing are positional truths. Filling is an experiential truth. Regeneration, Indwelling, Baptism, and Sealing are the root of the Christians life while filling produces the fruit of the Christian life.

	Moment	Occurrence	Duration	Definition	Responsibility
REGENERATION	belief	once	Permanent	“born again”	Never commanded
INDWELLING	belief	once	Permanent	Spirit “in you”	Never commanded
BAPTISM	belief	once	Permanent	“in Christ”	Never commanded
SEALING	belief	once	Permanent	“until redemption”	Never commanded
FILLING	when yielded	multiple	Temporary	empowers	commanded

V. SEALING

A. The Holy Spirit is the Seal

Every passage indicates that the sealing is accomplished entirely by God. And 2 Cor. 1:22 indicates that the seal is none other than the Holy Spirit Himself, *“who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.”* The Holy Spirit is given as the “token of what will be brought to its conclusion at the day of redemption.”¹

B. The Sealing of the Holy Spirit is for All Christians

The seal of the Holy Spirit has often been taught as something that believers were to seek as a demonstration of their true salvation. Nevertheless, even the wild Corinthians were said to have been sealed (2 Cor. 1:22). There is no further sealing to be sought by believers. All believers are sealed at the moment they believe. Ephesians 4:30 is good evidence that all believers are sealed and not just spiritual Christians. The text there says, “*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*” If believers who grieve the Holy Spirit are sealed until the day of redemption then certainly all believers are sealed and not just spiritual Christians.

C. The Sealing of the Holy Spirit is Not Experiential

There is no experience or sensation that one undergoes that confirms that he has been sealed with the Holy Spirit. It occurs once and for all for all who believe unto the day of redemption of the purchased possession.

D. Sealing Lasts Until the Day of Redemption

This truth is revealed clearest in Ephesians 4:30 “*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*” The verse could read “*until the day of redemption*”. Ephesians 1:13 implies the same thing. The day of our redemption is the day we receive our resurrection bodies which means we will be sealed until the day of the pre-trib Rapture.

E. Sealing of the Holy Spirit Guarantees Eternal Security

Since the duration of the sealing is until the “day of redemption” then the believer is eternally secure until that day—the day of deliverance from the presence of sin. If we are safe until the day of redemption then it follows that we cannot lose our salvation, we are eternally secure. Our eternal security is not based on anything we do, we didn’t seal ourselves therefore we don’t secure our salvation. It is wholly a work of God and therefore our security is based on God’s power. The location of our sealing also conveys the idea of eternal security. Ephesians 1:13 says “*having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise*”. The location where one is sealed and secured is “in Christ”. Just as we were put “in Christ” when we believed we were also sealed “in Christ” so that we could never lose our salvation. Being sealed “in Christ” is like being imprisoned in the

Ultimate Alcatraz. There is no escape. The only difference is that being “in Christ” is a good place to be rather than a bad one. True freedom is “in Christ”, true bondage “outside of Christ”.

In conclusion, all believers are permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit during the present dispensation of the Church. It was temporal in the OT and could be lost. It is conditioned upon obedience if that obedience is defined simply as the obedience of the gospel or the obedience of faith. There are two examples of the indwelling coming sometime after believing. This occurred in Acts 8 and Acts 19. In both cases there was the real threat of a rival church setting itself up against the already established church. God delayed the indwelling Spirit to make sure no schism took place. This ministry of indwelling is not the same as regeneration, baptism, sealing or filling even though it occurs simultaneously with them the first three as well as initial filling.

The sealing ministry of the Spirit is a work of God for all believers. The Holy Spirit Himself is the seal. He is sealing us in the church, the body of Christ. It is not experiential but it does guarantee our eternal security because it lasts until the day of redemption which is the pre-trib Rapture.

ⁱ Walvoord, John F. *The Holy Spirit*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 157.

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