

The Holy Spirit In-Dwelling Man

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Introduction: The Holy Spirit and Man a Spirit

It is clear that in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit dwells in those persons who have submitted to the Lordship of Christ, believing in Him and so receiving eternal life. Before we go on to see the world-wide action of God in the Holy Spirit we need to see what Man is regarding his being a spirit, or a spiritual creature, and then to discover what he is in relation to the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit Which Dwells in Us

In talking of the powerful and transforming regeneration of Man, we have seen this comes about when the holy Spirit comes to a person and applies, or communicates, the work of Christ through the word of Christ. By 'the work of Christ' we mean that which Christ did, and none other could do for it is His work alone, though He was aided in doing it by both the Father and the Holy Spirit. That work is told by 'the word of Christ'. It is through the Holy Spirit that the word becomes effectively to us the applied work of Christ. We know that in Genesis 1: 1-3 there was the *tohu wabohu*- - 'the without form and void' condition - and only when the Spirit made His movement of power across the face of the deep and the word of God was spoken did all become transformed into order and beauty and coherence.

Together the word of God and the Spirit bring Creation to its true being, for being inseparable they are dynamic.

In James 4:1-12 the writer sets out two ways of life, the moral and the immoral:

What causes wars, and what causes fightings among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not have, so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and wage war. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. Unfaithful creatures! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is in vain that the scripture says, 'He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us'? But he gives more grace, therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. 'Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you men of double mind. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to dejection. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you. Do not speak evil against one another, brethren. He that speaks evil against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you that you judge your neighbour?

As we read the passage we are moved to see 'He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us', because whether the word 'spirit' should be written with a capital 'S' or a small 's', it tells us the state of God's heart when one who should be living according to the Spirit is not doing so. Even if the term 'spirit' is the correct one it tells us God's heart yearns jealously for us when we are not filled with His glory and not

living by its moral order, but rather are in that state where we are conformed to the world when we do not even belong to it!

We need, then, to take up the matter of the Spirit's dwelling in us. This of course is a momentous matter in our lives. That the Third Person of the Triune Godhead should dwell in a human person is astounding. Paul asks the question, 'Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?' (1 Corinthians 1:6). It is difficult to believe that human bodies can be a temple. It is the Spirit of holiness who dwells in that temple. Paul in other places is strong about the indwelling of the Spirit. In that grand chapter of Romans 8-which is all about the Spirit-he says, 'But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him' (verse 9). Everything comes to the one who has the Spirit indwelling him, and nothing comes to the one from whom the Spirit is absent. Look at the outcome of a Spirit indwelled life, 'If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you' (verses 10-11).

The amazing promise of the Spirit's indwelling was given by Christ to His disciples in John 14:15-17:

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him, you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

The Holy Spirit dwelled with the disciples, mainly through Jesus being with them, for He indwelt Christ. Soon-at Pentecost-he would come to dwell within them-an entirely different system altogether. Paul attests twice more to this. In Romans 5:5 he says, 'And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us'. This is a magnificent attestation, for the whole of God's love comes with the Spirit, given to us, and remaining within us. Again, in Timothy 1:14 he says, 'Guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us'.¹

Man is a Spirit

What we now wish to see is the state of Man as a spirit, and the place of the Spirit in regard to Man and His Creation. We saw in our first Chapter that in Genesis 2:7 God formed Man of the dust of the earth, and 'breathed into him the breath of life'. We saw that 'breath' in this text was *neshama*, and that in Genesis 6:17 'the breath of life' which is in all creatures is *ruach*, and in Genesis 7:22 this 'breath of life' is *neshama*, so that the two words are virtually synonymous. God only breathes into Man and not into the animals. From God's breathing *neshama* into Man he becomes a 'living soul', or 'a living being'. We saw that soul-*nephesh*-is different from animals. Man does not so much have a soul as he is one. he is a spirit, for God is 'the Father of spirits' as Hebrews 12:9 puts it, undoubtedly quoting from Numbers 16:22, 'And they fell on their faces, and said, 'O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be angry with all the congregation?'. The phrase, 'the God of the spirit so fall flesh' is used again

¹ It is important that we understand that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, leads into all the truth, bears witness to the truth, since truth is something we know and live in and do. We do the truth. See John 16:13; 1 John 5:7.

in Numbers 27:16. Man does not so much have a spirit as he is a spirit. This sets him apart from the animals. When we look at Psalm 104:29-30 we see that not only Man but all things, creatures and even vegetation, are created by the Spirit who constantly gives them life. 'When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed; when thou takest away their breath [ruach], they die and return to their dust. When thou sendest forth thy Spirit [ruach], they are created; and thou renewest the face of the ground'. This means not simply that the Spirit creates, and what is created is then simply sustained, as though that were the whole of the matter, but that the Creation is also praising God, and telling His glory, and even, in some way partaking in that glory. The Creation is in glorifying action! It is not only Man who is in action. Creation is thus purposeful, a fact borne out by the powerful doctrine of Creation which Israel knew.

Note on Aboriginal Spirituality.

Aborigines know they do not have in their own spirits the power and wisdom to understand life. They need their culture. They need the spirit who has always been in action from creation i.e. the spirits of their Dreaming Time. They draw from this and they give to this in their rituals, corroborees, singing, etc. They strengthen what they see as dynamically there. They live by the word -passed on-and the spirit or spirits of the Creation as they know them. They need something from outside, but at the same time see themselves as part of this spirit-creation. They know this and adhere to it. Their law is oral, not ever written.²

The Word and the Spirit Together in Creation

With this significant reference to the Spirit in Psalm 104:29-30, we have Psalm 33:6-7, 'By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath [ruach] of his mouth lie gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he put the deeps in storehouses'. God created and He has set the 'fixed order' of the waters (cf. Psalm 148:5-6;³ Jeremiah 31:35-36). This refers to both the word of God and the ruach of God employed in creation and continuing creation. Elihu in the Book of Job states the creative power of the neshama of God, 'The spirit of God has made me; and the breath of the Almighty gives me life' (job 33:4), i.e. God is involved continuously in creating and upholding it. In Job 4:9, Eliphaz states the destructive side of God's ruach against those who do iniquity, 'By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of his anger they are consumed', and in Isaiah 11:4 Messiah is said to slay with the breath (ruach) of His lips. In respect to creation we have the presence of the Glory Spirit in Genesis 1:1-3. Out of this event comes the whole of Creation, including Man, but then in Genesis 2:7 we have the special creation of Man as God breathes into him His neshama, and the woman is created from the Man, so that he is her source. Was the Spirit there in the whole act of creation and did He remain with all creatures and all elements of Creation? The answer is 'yes', as shown in some of the previous references.

² I once spoke at the Katharine Convention in the Northern Territory, Australia. I think about half of the folk attending were Aborigines. They devised a corroboree in which they showed that the old relational customs were changed-transformed they would have said-by the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of Man-the true Family of God made by the incarnation and work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. They had changed from one 'spirit relationship' to another-that of the fatherhood of God.

³ Psalm 148 is a Psalm which should rightly go with Psalm 19:1-4. All Creation praises God, and is ontological in its order-its 'fixed order'.

Man's Spirit: the Holy Spirit, and God's Covenant

The Spirit is always associated with the Covenant of God, for He is both the Spirit of Creation and the Spirit of love and relationships. Naturally, then, tie is the Spirit of God's law, the perfection of moral glory, and is so even in Eden. Isaiah 63 tells of his doings with Israel as they went through the wilderness. Events took place which meant disobedience to both God's Covenant and his law. Later the prophets, filled with the Spirit, recalled Israel to the law. In Ezekiel 36:24-28⁴ the Holy Spirit comes to Israel and creates the spirit of Israel-Man-afresh in that he now obeys the covenantal laws, commandments and ordinances of God, i.e. he is one with the glorious law of God, and so with God Himself.

The Holy Spirit: the River of God

Without doubt, in John 7:37-39 Jesus calls the Holy Spirit, rivers of living water'. We might say 'the river of living water' because the river in Genesis arose within Paradise but flowed out as four rivers, designed to water the whole earth. We surely have to say that nothing has life without water, and that the Holy Spirit sustains all life, meaning that the Spirit is the river arising in Eden and becoming rivers to water the whole earth. In Revelation 22 the river is surely that of the Holy Spirit, just as in Jerusalem. As Psalm 46:4 tells us, 'There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High'. There was no river in Jerusalem as such. Yet in Ezekiel 47 the river flows from the south of the altar, as in Revelation 22 it flows from 'the throne of God and the Lamb'. In Revelation 22-as in Ezekiel 47-the river waters the tree of life which is on both sides of the river, and its fruits are perpetual as its leaves are, also, for the healing of the nations. We always associate the Spirit with flowing, life-giving water. We associate film with fruitfulness-'the fruit of the Spirit' as in Galatians 5:22-23. We associate him with healing-'the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations'.

The Spirit, Always the True Source of Creation and Created Life

All of this tells us that the Holy Spirit is the true Source of all life. We know the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of hope, is linked with the renewal of Creation. Romans 8:18-30 certifies that. But we now think in terms of the Spirit sustaining all life. Therefore all things, and Man in particular, are never deserted by the Spirit, except there be judgement on the land. In Isaiah 24-which we have seen-the earth languishes because of Man's immorality, but then this is what happens following the fall.

One thing is surely clear: The difference between Cain and Abel, the first being the carnal-'unspiritual'-man, and the second being the spiritual man.⁵ Cain was still a spirit, a spirit sustained biologically by the Holy Spirit, but a spirit in whom was not the Holy Spirit. Cain was said to be of the Devil (I John 3:12) and Paul describes this Devil 'as the

⁴ The passage of Ezekiel 36 is surely linked with 37:1-14-the promise of covenantal regeneration by the Spirit of God. The passage of Jeremiah 31:31-34 speaks of the regeneration of God's people and surely this is parallel to, or juxtaposition with, Ezekiel 36:24-28.

⁵ We have pointed out, before, that following the ejection from Eden there have been two streams of humanity, those who follow the way of Cain (cf. Jude 11-13) and those who follow the way of Abel (cf. Hebrews 11:4; 1John 3.10-11).

prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works within [energises] the children of disobedience’.

In Ecclesiastes 3:11 the Preacher says, ‘he has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man’s mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end’. The writer of Proverbs says, ‘The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all his innermost parts’ (20:27). This can also be translated, ‘The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit of a man; it searches out his inmost being’ (NIV). But the former translation seems to be the heart of the matter, especially as the NIV has as a footnote, ‘The spirit of man is the Lord’s lamp’. God has such affinity with Man, even fallen Man, that he uses the spirituality of a man-however deficient-to search his heart. Some would see this as the conscience, for the conscience, used by God, is a powerful faculty.

The Dimensions Man as a Spirit Can Know

The point we are trying to make above is that Man, though fallen, has the configuration of eternity in his heart and he can be sensitised to the fact of genuine spirituality, though not apart from the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. The other side-the tragic side--of this good picture is the wisdom of the serpent which grasps and deceives Man when Man desires to be more than a creature of the five senses and the three dimensions, ie: to be more than a limited person. What Man forgets -see the paragraph below-is that to be a person, which is a so-called limited creature, is to have the vast experience of all that God is, and the whole Creation. Art and spiritual being are certainly indicators of this.

In relation to Man’s supposed limitations as a created being theologians and philosophers often say Man’s problem is his finitude. They say he cannot be free unless, and until, he is infinite and feels he is being confined to being less than what he could be, and, perhaps, should be. This was really the message the serpent communicated in the Garden of Eden. He brought Man to where he was wanting to be ‘as God’, i.e. know good and evil on the infinite plane of being and living. Man is a creature and not a creator, but his finitude is no problem at all whilst he recognises he is a creature. If he explores his creature-hood and utilises his dependency upon God then he is a free creature. But because he is jealous of God and wants to be as Him and not just like Him-for he is like Him by creation-he reaches out to the occult to ‘spiritualise’ himself. Hence the ‘new age’ aspirations which have been present in every age since Eden. He reaches out to the gods he devises who are ‘other’ than him. If he were not a spirit he would not care, but all the arts which are gifts given by God he uses to get something ‘spiritual’ to satisfy his high longings, but without making true moral demands of him. The arts are media for the ‘spirit’ to use, to work, and to be creative,⁶ and to receive something which is not dull or empty, and which can thus be a substitute motivation for the spiritual drive which is in obedient Man when he is aided and driven by the Holy Spirit. This also explains Man’s use of drugs-stimulants and sedatives which are the producers of joy’ and ‘peace’, two elements which are known only truly in union with God.

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⁶ We use the word creative, in a secondary sense. God alone is Creator, and Man His image will reflect this creational action by himself being creative. God creates ex nihilo--‘out of nothing’-but man uses what God has created to fulfil his creativity, i.e. materials, substances, instruments, and so on.

fulfil his being as 'spirit'. But yet satisfying the 'spirit apart from God, an obviously impossible task. It remains for us to comprehend what Man could be were the Spirit and the Word to come to him in full force.

The Indwelling of the Spirit

In one of the coming Chapters we will speak of the event of Pentecost and the Spirit being poured out on His people. But we need to keep in mind what is the nature of the Spirit's indwelling, especially as we see Man as a spirit. We have already seen that the Spirit who indwells us helps us in having our eyes fixed on Christ, so that we are changed into His image, and not merely into 'the likeness of his image'. We participate in the very image of God that Christ is: we are one with Him in His image. This is one of the effects of the Spirit's indwelling, but what does the indwelling of the Spirit mean?

There is much that is mystery when the Persons of the Godhead indwell Man. But if we believe that the true image of God is where Man is one with God from the beginning, then the relationship of Man and God has ever been in His Covenant. As the Three Persons indwell One Another without losing their identity as Persons, so Man in his innocency was one with God. And, in the regeneration which grace brings, he is again one with God. In John 14:17 we saw that the Holy Spirit was among the disciples when Jesus was present. But, as Jesus promised the Spirit would come to dwell in them. So He did at Pentecost and has done so ever since.

We saw in Romans 5:5 that he came into the heart bringing the fullness of God's Love with Him. So the Spirit dwells with and by this love. Romans 8:26-27 tells us of the love and intimacy of the Spirit in our hearts.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Here the Spirit is one with our hearts. His total identification with us means he is not a sleeping guest or a detached inhabitant, but has an immense love for us, in that he takes up the anguish which all Creation knows in general and the Spirit-possessed person knows in particular. This knowledge of God's indwelling love in the Person of the Spirit is enormously important. Truly the strong Spirit has come and we are different. We are not 'orphan spirits', deficient and deserted, but we are one with the Spirit.

Another side to this indwelling is that all which the Spirit initiates in God's people such as love, unity, fellowship, prayer, worship and spiritual warfare results from the Spirit's indwelling. This is too vast a subject to deal with here and we will leave it until later.

The Spirit brings energy for living true life-eternal life-and also gives the gift of power so that our witness to Christ and the truth can be authentic, and the communication of the gospel can be effectual.

What we are saying in all this is that the Spirit who came at Pentecost goes on 'pentecostalising' the people of God. What we have said about Man being a spirit, but, as fallen, being a lone spirit without the resources we have mentioned in the few paragraphs above, now, by the indwelling of the Spirit, becomes an extraordinary person. Yes: the believer is a person who is a spirit indwelled by the Spirit.⁷ This is, then, the great

⁷ John 14:23 shows that the Father and the Son also dwell with the believer. 'Jesus answered him, 'if a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.''. That is, the Triune God dwells in the believing person.

experience of the Spirit as the Lover, to say nothing of Christ and the Father loving us through the Spirit.

In the later Chapters on the gifts and ministry of the Spirit in the Church, and especially on those who speak of Him as 'the Eschatological Spirit', we will see in more detail what Paul states in Romans 8:11, 'If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you'. This is also linked with Romans 8:18-30 where the hope of glorification is the holy Spirit, for he is the one who encourages us in the present convulsive pain of spiritual anticipation. The Spirit who dwells in us is the Spirit who raises us from the dead, in glory.

The Indwelling Spirit and His Outflowing

This is the key to the transformation the Spirit brings to Man. Fallen Man of himself is always concerned only with himself. All relationships are concerned with him. We can say that his seeming outflowing to others is never better than eros and always short of agape. When the Holy Spirit comes to the heart, bringing love and indwelling as the Spirit of love (cf. Romans 15:30), he also comes as the outflowing Spirit.

That this is His nature we have seen in His being the river of God. Now He transforms Man as a spirit by causing His own, rivers of living water' to flow from the heart of this regenerated Man. In fact, this is our whole being, and our whole cause for being. The outcome of this outflowing is beyond our dreams, but not beyond our new aspirations as spirit fulfilled and spirit in action.

The Application: 'Go on Being Filled with the Spirit'

The indwelling of the Spirit is strong not because we foster the Spirit but because we are the people of the Spirit. He, with Christ, is Lord (cf. 11 Corinthians 3:17-18). Thus the believer is strong when the believer 'goes on being filled with the Spirit' as Ephesians 5:18ff. exhorts us. The believer goes on being fervent in spirit by the Spirit as Romans 12:11 commands us, and goes on walking in the Spirit as Galatians 5:16, 18, 22-26 (cf. Romans 8:14-15) enjoins us.⁸

The whole life of a believer is one in which he is led by the Spirit, walks by the Spirit and lives by the Spirit. As a spirit he is filled in spirit by the Holy Spirit. In this way the intention of God for him is fulfilled. This is his high destiny.

⁸ Ephesians 5:18 literally says, 'Go on being filled in [your] spirit' and of course this filling is by the Spirit. Romans 12:11 says, 'Be fervent in [your] spirit. Being led by the Spirit and walking in the Spirit is the outcome of that personal intimacy that the spirit of Man knows in relation to the Spirit of God.'