

THE FATHER'S DOUBLE ASSURANCE

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Honest Bible scholars can be wrong! Some good gospel preachers, determined never to add nor to subtract one word of Holy Scripture, cheat themselves and their listeners by failing to thrill them with the knowledge that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the physical "body" (1 Corinthians 6:19) of each Christian is the Father's double assurance: (1) proof of his new status as a child of God (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6) and (2) a guarantee of his future "inheritance" in "heaven" if he behaves himself (Ephesians 1:14; 4:30; 1 Peter 1:4).

Essential to salvation are the "words" of the Spirit (cf. John 6:63; 11:14), but John wrote that believers were to receive more than words, namely "the Spirit" (John 7:39). As a result of that inspired promise, about 3000 penitent believers, after they had "gladly" received "the word" of the Spirit, and, after their baptism, received both remission of sins and "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38-41).

One could say that the penitent believers had received the Spirit "representatively when they received "the word" from Peter's mouth, but if they received the Spirit representatively when they heard "the word," what was "the gift of the Holy Spirit" which came later? The subsequent "gift of the Holy Spirit" could not have been a gift from the Holy Spirit, but the gift was "the Holy Spirit whom God" gives "to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32).

The Spirit's word is in Christians (Colossians 3:16), and also the Spirit is in Christians (1 Corinthians 6:19). It is impossible for the Spirit's word to dwell in a physical body, but the Spirit dwells in a Christian's physical "body," "the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:18-19).

Christians have "tasted the good word of God," and also they are "partakers of the Holy Spirit" (Hebrew 6:4). Being filled with the Spirit's words (Colossians 3:16), and also being filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) go along together, but they are not identical activities. It is possible for non-Christians to be filled with the Spirit's words, but only Christians can be filled with the Spirit (John 14:17). (The divine imperative in Ephesians 5:18 is more personal and vivid in the Greek middle voice, "Keep yourselves filled with the Spirit.")

God dwells in Christians "through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22), but how the Spirit dwells in Christians is not revealed, only the fact of it (Romans 8:11). Some have objected that if the Spirit dwells in Christians, they would become deity incarnate. But the Bible still says that the Spirit dwells in Christians (Romans 8:9).

Also, some object that if the Spirit dwells in Christians, they could not stand such a presence within them. But the Bible still says that the Spirit dwells in Christians (1 Corinthians 3:16). Further, it is objected that if the Spirit dwells in Christians, He would be greatly fragmented. But the Bible still says that God gives His Spirit to them that obey him (Acts 5:32), and that if a person does not have the Spirit he does not belong to God

(Romans 8:9).

THE INDWELLING DOES NOT

Give a Feeling. Since good Christians make the objections cited above, it is apparent that the Spirit's indwelling is not sensory, not physically perceptible. Though all dedicated Christians keep themselves filled with the Spirit, they would not know that fact if the Bible had not told them. One can feel the effects of wine or coffee in one's body, but the Spirit's presence cannot be felt. As far as feelings are concerned, one would not even know there is a Holy Spirit. The feeling of joy in a Christian's heart is not because of the Spirit's presence, but because he has obeyed the Spirit's words about Jesus, and he goes "on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39).

Instruct. If a Christian waits for the Spirit in his body to instruct him he will remain ignorant. Instruction only comes from the Spirit's words (Ephesians 3:4; Revelation 2:7). From the day he was baptized, young Timothy had the indwelling of the Spirit (2 Timothy 1:14), but instruction came through two Pauline letters (1 Timothy 4:1, 13).

Lead. If a person is not led by the Spirit of God, he is led by the devil (Romans 8:14; 1 John 3:8). But the Spirit does his leading, not by His indwelling, but by His words (Ephesians 3:4; Psalm 73:24; 119:105). If the Spirit's indwelling leads a Christian, then if he makes a mistake it is the Spirit's fault.

Strengthen. Spiritual strength comes from the Spirit (Ephesians 3:16), but not by His indwelling. Though all the Ephesian Christians had received the seal and the earnest of the Spirit (Ephesians 2:13-14), six chapters were written to them that they might be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10). In their case, however, they failed to avail themselves of the Spirit's strengthening medium. Instead, they grieved the Spirit who had sealed them (Ephesians 4:30), and, unless they repented, Jesus rejected them (Revelation 2:1-7).

Over at Corinth many Christians were "weak and sickly" (1 Corinthians 11:30), though they had the indwelling of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). Over at Ephesus, some young Christians were "strong," not because the Spirit dwelt in them (though He did, 1 John 3:24; 4:13), but because the Spirit's "word" dwelt in them, by which "word" they had "conquered the Evil One" (1 John 2:14). Christians today, if they wait for the indwelling of the Spirit to strengthen them, will shrivel and atrophy.

Bear Fruit. The Spirit wants nine luscious spiritual qualities combined into one fruit in every Christian: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22). Every Christian at his baptism receives the indwelling of the Spirit, but some do not cultivate all the excellent fruitage that the Spirit's words are capable of producing.

How does the Spirit effect those nine noble characteristics in a Christian's life? Not by His indwelling, else all would have them in abundance. In fact, some non-Christians, with no Spirit-indwelling, do a better job than some Christians in making themselves loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, with self-control.

On a practical basis, fruit-bearing Christians have found that those admirable qualities adorn a person as a direct result of their applying the Spirit's teachings on

love (1 John 4:19); joy (Philippians 4:4); peace (Philippians 4:9); patience (Ephesians 4:1-3); kindness (Ephesians 4:32); goodness (Titus 3:1); faith (Revelation 2:10); gentleness (Titus 3:2); and self-control (Philippians 4:5).

It is sad that some sincere preachers think that the indwelling of the Spirit helps in a Christian's producing the fruit of the Spirit. Some use the word "urge" or "an inner nudge" to describe what they think the Spirit is doing inside of them. One preacher writes that there is a "supernatural, spiritual, divine influence of the Holy Spirit today" in Christians (J. D. Thomas, *Gospel Advocate*, July [1996] 15).

Another preacher writes: "It takes more than the written Word of God and the strong will of a man to live a life of holiness. True holiness is only possible because of the help that God gives through the Holy Spirit" (Jimmy Jividen, *Alive In the Spirit* 140, apud. *Vigil*, June 1996. 43).

All such statements say that God was unable or did not care enough to write a book that would supply "us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3), and all such statements are a denial that "all scripture" furnishes "the man of God" completely "for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16).

THE INDWELLING DOES

Certify the Christian's Acceptance by God. Abraham had an outward, physical certification or seal that he was accepted by Lord (Romans 4:11). A Christian has an inward, spiritual certification or seal, a *sphragis*, namely, the indwelling Spirit, that he has been adopted into God's spiritual family, and may exclaim, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:13). The indwelling Spirit "himself testifies" (not audibly, but by His presence) along "with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:16).

The indwelling Spirit does nothing! He is mute and motionless, but He is the Christian's most precious possession, like "one pearl of great price" (Matthew 13:46) kept in a bank lockbox. The pearl and the Spirit do nothing, but both are of great value.

Guarantees the Christian's Inheritance. The presence of the Spirit "in our hearts," said Paul, is not only a certification of our being God's children, but His presence is a guaranty, God's down-payment if you please, a pledge, an *arrobion*, a divine promissory note, of "an imperishable and unstained and never-fading inheritance, reserved in heaven" (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Peter 1:4). A promissory note in a bank lockbox, like a certificate of adoption, does nothing, but it is of inestimable value!

But God's promissory note is conditional on a Christian's being "faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10). Christians are still free, moral agents, and they can so vex and aggravate the indwelling Spirit that He is forced to leave (Jude 19). He had left the lukewarm Laodicean Christians, but he still loved them, and stood "at the door" of their hearts, wanting them to repent, that he might "come in to" them again (Revelation 3:20).