The Holy Spirit

The Indwelling of the Spirit – Part 2 Lesson 10

I. The Scriptures plainly teach that the Holy Spirit indwells or "lives in" the Christian

A. Jn 7:37-39; Acts 2:38-39; Rom 8:9-11; I Cor 6:19; II Cor 1:21-22, 5:5; Gal 4:6; Eph 2:22, 5:18; II Tim 1:13-14; Tit 3:5-6; Jas 4:5; Jude 19, etc.

B. The meaning of "dwell"

1. Rom 8:9,11 - *oikeo*, from *oikos*, a house, meaning to live in something as one's abode; also used in I Cor 7:12-13 of the cohabitation of husband and wife in marriage

2. Rom 8:11 - *enoikeo*, intensification of *oikeo* meaning to live in (see NIV)

3. Jas 4:5 - *kataoikeo*, a fixed dwelling, to settle down, to cause to dwell in (see NIV)

II. Explanations that evade (or explain away) the direct and personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit

A. The "impossibility" evasion

1. God, who fills heaven and earth, cannot dwell within a person's body.

2. Answer: God (the Holy Spirit) dwelt within the body of Christ, which was a person's body (Luke 4:1, 14-21, 10:12; Matt 12:18-21).

B. The "group" evasion

1. God dwells in a Christian only as part of the corporate church (I Cor 3:16-17).

2. Answer: I Cor 6:18-20 cannot refer to a corporate relationship.

C. The "metaphorical" evasion

1. The Spirit "indwelling" the Christian is a metaphor which refers to Sprit-produced salvation.

2. Answer: Scripture does indeed use metaphor, but we always insist on the direct meaning unless there is a reason not to do so; c.f. I Cor 7:12-13; a metaphoric usage does not explain all passages that teach the indwelling of the Spirit, or its effects.

D. The "fragmentation" evasion

1. For the Spirit to indwell each Christian personally would require fragmentation of the Spirit in a manner inconsistent with personality.

2. Answer: The Spirit dwelt in the apostles (Jn 14:7) and prophets (I Pet 1:11) without apparent problem, so this argument achieves nothing; furthermore, it is based on presumptuous, unscriptural guesswork about the nature of how the Spirit works.

III. Why can't we just agree that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian through the Word?

A. Because the Scriptures do not say the Spirit indwells by the Word (or by any other agency).

B. Because the Word does not intercede in prayer, nor is it given as a guarantee of what is to come, nor are we sealed by it, nor does it call "Abba, Father" from our hearts.

C. Because the Scriptures themselves testify that the word alone is not sufficient to accomplish God's intended work (II Cor 3; Rom 7:7-8:8).

IV. Effects of the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

A. II Cor 4:16; Rom 8:9-11; Tit 3:5-6 - renewal and revival

B. Rom 8:26; Eph 2:18; Jude 20 - intercession in prayer

C. II Pet 1:4-11 - cultivation of the "Christian graces"

D. Rom 8:12-17; Gal 4:6 - witness of our adoption as children

E. II Cor 1:21-22, 5:5; Eph 1:13-14 - seal and guarantee of eternal life

F. II Cor 3; Eph 1:15-23; Col 1:27 - bringing Christ to life in the Christian

G. Eph 3:14-19 - strengthening

H. Phil 2:12-13 - will and working

I. II Thess 2:13; I Pet 1:2 - sanctification

J. Gal 5:22-23 - fruitbearing

K. Rom 7:7-8:8 - victory over indwelling sin

L. II Cor 3:1-18; Eph 2:19-22 - growth

Study assignment:

A. Those who assert that the Spirit indwells through the agency of the Word, do so by explaining away or interpreting the plain statements of Scripture. They take these Scriptures to mean something other than their direct, clear, intended statements. Take the passages just sited and remove the word "Spirit" or "God" and replace it with "the word." Do the passages make sense?

B. If God had intended us to take the work of the Spirit as synonymous with the work of the Word, would He have said things the same way?

C. For sake of argument, let's assume that the Scriptures do teach a direct and personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. How would you change the wording of the above passages to state more clearly that the Spirit does "dwell" in or "live" in the Christian?