

GOD'S DWELLING WITH MAN: PROPHECIES FULFILLED GIVE RICH MEANING TO  
THE FESTIVAL OF PENTECOST

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## ABSTRACT

Is there a simple two sentence explanation that captures the importance of Pentecost? This paper focuses on the question “How do we preach and teach about Pentecost in a way that is meaningful to God’s people?” The methodology employed to answer this question is first exploring reformed and evangelical teachings on the Spirit as well as Lutheran views. The second portion of the paper explores God’s presence with his people from Eden to today, specifically whether ordinary pre-Pentecost believers were indwelt with the Holy Spirit like Christians are today. This study has led the author to believe that pre-Pentecost believers were not indwelt with the Holy Spirit like Christians are today, even as the Holy Spirit was still doing his work of bringing believers to saving faith in the promise of the coming Messiah.

## INTRODUCTION

It is seven o'clock on Christmas Eve. The Christ candle is finally lit in the center of the Advent wreath. Every person walking into church that night knows why they are there and what they are there to celebrate. "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). The pastor knows there is a single point to drive home that night: the Father has sent the gift of a Savior from heaven *for you!*

It is seven o'clock on Easter morning. The bare sanctuary of Good Friday is now filled with Easter lilies and other beautiful flowers. Every person walking into church that morning knows why they are there and what they are there to celebrate. The pastor knows there is single point to drive home that morning. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

It is almost eight o'clock in the morning on Pentecost Sunday and people are filing through the door into church. Is it the same? It is the third vitally important festival in the church year, but do the people know it? Do they know why they are there and what they are there to celebrate? Maybe they notice that the paraments have changed from white to red, but why?

So, undoubtedly, the pastor wants to take advantage of this as an opportunity to teach. What does he say as he introduces the service? Is there a single point that needs to be driven home on the festival of Pentecost? Not to mention this festival ushers in a season the church spends over half of the church year celebrating. Do the Pentecost platitudes "It is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit!" and "It is an undoing of what happened at the tower of Babel!" help our people see the beauty of Pentecost? Does Pentecost have a mission-minded focus, or is

it something more? There is no denying that the festival of Pentecost is centered around the Holy Spirit and his work.

As I spoke to many pastors about this, many did not have a simple answer. Many admitted it was a question they have often thought about. The Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary dogmatics notes do not take up the work of the Holy Spirit separately as its own topic of discussion and study altogether. Rather, the dogmatics notes weave the Spirit's work into every part of dogmatic study – and there is merit in doing that because the Spirit has his hand everywhere the Word is included.

But is there also merit to taking a deep dive into the Spirit's work on its own? Does a thorough study of the Holy Spirit help us to address questions about differences between his work in the Old Testament and New Testament that have seemed to go unaddressed in our dogmatics study? Does it help our preaching and teaching about Pentecost? Or should this paper stop here and go no further? Fred Sanders believes that letting the Holy Spirit become the neglected person of the Godhead is neglecting to study and explore the great mission of the Holy Spirit to bring about the fulfillment of our salvation.<sup>1</sup> Is he correct?

The big question I will answer is this: How do we preach and teach about Pentecost in a way that is meaningful to God's people? My methodology will be studying the Holy Spirit pre-Pentecost and post-Pentecost to see how it enriches the understanding of the day of Pentecost itself. In part one of this paper, I will consider various reformed and evangelical views on the festival of Pentecost and how they teach the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and compare them to various Lutheran dogmaticians. What can we learn and what questions arise in the way they teach the doctrine of the Holy Spirit? In part two of this paper, I will take a deep dive into the

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1. Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 29.

Holy Spirit's work pre-Pentecost and post-Pentecost to answer this question: Does a study of the Holy Spirit's work pre-Pentecost and post-Pentecost give us a clearer picture of what's happening at Pentecost? In part three of this paper, I will take the findings of part one and part two and answer the big question of preaching Pentecost to God's people in a meaningful and impactful way. I will not be taking up the teachings of the Eastern Orthodox and Pentecostal churches. I will also not be taking up the discussion about spiritual gifts.

## PART 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this portion of the paper, I will explore different views on the work of the Holy Spirit and his presence among God's people from an Old Testament perspective. I will begin considering the Holy Spirit's role in salvation and his other-centered nature. Then I will set the dimly lit stage of the Old Testament to prepare us for the reformed and evangelical positions on the Holy Spirit's work in the Old Testament versus the New Testament. Then I will take up some confessional Lutheran positions of the Holy Spirit's work in the Old Testament versus the New Testament. Finally, I will lay out the questions that come out of the literature review that I wish to answer in the next portion of the paper.

### **The Other-Centered Member of the Trinity**

In his book titled *The Triune God*, Fred Sanders states "when God gives himself to be the salvation of all people, he does not do so in a haphazard or random way. He has a plan, and he follows a procedure that is both premeditated and perfectly proportioned."<sup>2</sup> The key part of that plan of salvation is the Savior Jesus. "These are the Scriptures that testify about me," Jesus says in John 5:39. So, one might ask the question: why study the Holy Spirit at all?

Frederick Dale Bruner and William Hordern argue that "we are not necessarily in the presence of the Holy Spirit when we are in the presence of a great deal of talk about the Holy Spirit. But wherever a church or a person centers thoughtfully on honoring the person, teaching,

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2. Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 107.

and work of Jesus Christ, there, we may be quite sure, we are in the presence of the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit's work is the thoughtful honoring of Christ. The Holy Spirit does not center on the Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup>

Here is an illustration: The Holy Spirit is the cameraman of the Scriptures. You do not see the cameraman. In fact, the cameraman does not want to be seen. I find this fascinating when watching any sort of entertainment show. All of the people in front of the camera are dressed in fine clothes and looking their best for the camera. Whenever one camera pans to another cameraman, though, the cameraman is wearing jeans and a t-shirt. The cameraman does not expect to be seen by others, but rather to show others the show. The title of Bruner and Hordern's book describes it well: *The Holy Spirit, Shy Member of the Trinity*. This shyness is not a shyness from being self-centered, rather it is a shyness that focuses on being other-centered.<sup>4</sup> The work of the Holy Spirit is not to show himself but rather to make sure the camera is capturing and relaying the show, which is Christ.<sup>5</sup> Millard Erickson also acknowledges the difficulty of studying such a doctrine. He says the Holy Spirit and his work is difficult to study because the Holy Spirit's work is not to draw attention to himself but to shine the spotlight on Christ.<sup>6</sup>

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3. Frederick Dale Bruner and William Hordern, *The Holy Spirit, Shy Member of the Trinity*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 2001), 15.

4. In Michael Horton's *The Christian Faith* page 558, he speaks differently about the Spirit. He says, "The Spirit is an extrovert, always going forth on missions with his Word, creating an extroverted community who can at last look up to God in faith and out to the world in love, witness, and service." I don't find it too difficult to harmonize the two statements between Horton and Bruner/Hordern. The Spirit has an other-centeredness but is extroverted in the way he goes about the work of shining the spotlight on Christ.

5. Bruner and Hordern, *Shy Member*, 14-15.

6. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd Ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 773.

From this, Bruner and Hordern draw the conclusion that rediscovering the person and work of the Holy Spirit with the goal of rediscovering the power of Pentecost and the earliest Christians is not a worthwhile solution. “I do not honestly believe that a new Spirit-centeredness is what our churches need.... The Holy Spirit does not mind being the Cinderella outside the ballroom if the Prince is honored inside his Kingdom. For the Holy Spirit is really the shy member of the Trinity.”<sup>7</sup> The point is the Holy Spirit does not want attention, so why not just give attention to Christ and let the Holy Spirit do his job behind the scenes?<sup>8</sup>

What happens if we just leave the Holy Spirit to be the Cinderella outside the ballroom and pay little attention to her? Millard Erickson says “Because the Holy Spirit is not systematically described in Scripture ... This has led to difficulties in understanding him and his work.”<sup>9</sup> Erickson demonstrates that throughout history, some talked correctly but maybe not extensively enough about the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup> Justo Gonzalez contends that the Holy Spirit is a point of doctrine that is likely to dominate much of the theological discussion during our lifetime because of the emerging shape of Christianity in today’s world.<sup>11</sup> In summary, if we leave the Holy Spirit to be Cinderella outside the ballroom, there is risk of missing out on a whole different perspective of salvation. There is risk of misunderstanding and misapplying the critical work the Holy Spirit does. Simply put, the Holy Spirit may not wish to be seen, but he ought to be studied.

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7. Bruner and Hordern, *Shy Member*, 16.

8. This practice is often drawn from Jesus’ words in John 16:14. Jesus says of the Holy Spirit, “He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you” (NIV84).

9. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 771.

10. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 774-81.

11. Justo L. González, *A Concise History of Christian Doctrine*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 209.

### **The Dimly Lit Stage of the Old Testament**

The Holy Spirit has not always been known in the way he is known today by Christians.

Professor Bradley Wordell writes, “The main protagonist in the Old Testament is the Lord God (with hints of three-ness). The main protagonists in the New Testament are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (with clear indications of perfect unity).”<sup>12</sup> Sanders also stresses this point as he quotes Geerhardus Vos: “Under the Old Testament’s dispensation the concept of the oneness of God had to be deeply impressed upon Israel’s consciousness in the face of all polytheistic inclinations.”<sup>13</sup> The Ancient Near Eastern culture in which Israel lived was filled with polytheism. In the Old Testament, therefore, we see more stress on the oneness of God to show Israel that their God is not like the gods of other nations that surrounded them.

To put it one way, the Old Testament was like a dimly lit stage. Reading its pages is like sitting in the theater and watching the show on a dimly lit stage. You can see figures up on the stage, but you cannot always definitively say who it is. Some instances are clearer than others. As the play goes on it gets brighter ever so slightly. Using a different illustration, Wordell unfolds it this way:

“The revelation of the gospel can be compared to a cherry blossom. The tip of the bud first became visible when God promised a Savior in the hearing of the first sinners. Throughout the Old Testament, with each new revelation from God, the bud grew larger. The prophet will come! The priest will come! The king will come! The Spirit will come! The Lord himself will come! And then it happened: that gospel bud, packed so full, burst into bloom. And how beautiful and glorious it was!”<sup>14</sup>

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12. Bradley D. Wordell, *The Trinity: Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit!*, (Paper presented to the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference Tenth Triennial Convention, May/June, 2021), 14.

13. Sanders, *Triune God*, 213.

14. Wordell, *The Trinity*, 8.

Sanders makes the helpful assertion, “Having met Christ and the Spirit, we can look for them in the Old Testament in a way we could not have without having met them in person.”<sup>1516</sup>

We live in the age of fulfillment where we have the benefit of shining New Testament light on the Old Testament. But that does not mean that every figure on the once dimly lit stage is now in bright light and indisputably recognized and labeled. As Sanders states, “In the Old Testament, the range of possible allusions to him, and the relevant semantic domains, are considerably more extensive and indefinite than is the case with the Son.”<sup>17</sup> Undoubtedly, as Wordell states, “the sun of righteousness rose above the horizon. The shadows gave way to realities... The Son came. The Spirit came. The light of God’s grace was more brilliant than anyone could have imagined! It was divine light, the light of God himself!”<sup>18</sup> We now see the Holy Spirit and the Son in the New Testament in a way we never saw them before in the Old Testament and thanks be to God for that! As we look back into the Old Testament Scriptures, we then see more clearly that the Spirit stood not idly by, waiting to do his work until Pentecost rolled around. He was active and doing his work.

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15. Sanders, *Triune God*, 226-27.

16. Sanders speaks of a “Retrospective Prosoponic Identification.” He means that as we take our stand on the ground of the New Testament and look back through its witness to the events of the incarnation and Pentecost, we can ask relevant questions of the Old Testament witness. This practice names a strategy for reading the Old Testament initiated in the New Testament and carried forward by the postapostolic church. He stresses the need to apply this to the third person of the Trinity, and claims it has been overlooked for a long time and is set to make a comeback in exegesis.

17. Sanders, *Triune God*, 230.

18. Wordell, *The Trinity*, 9.

## **Reformed and Evangelical Positions on the Holy Spirit's Work in the Old Testament Versus The New Testament**

In his book, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, Leon Wood argues that the Old Testament has definite things to say about the Holy Spirit and his activity.<sup>19</sup> The Holy Spirit's work after Pentecost has been described as regeneration, indwelling, sealing, filling, empowering, and baptism. Therefore, the question must be asked: which of these functions were already carried out in the Old Testament era by the Holy Spirit and which began only at Pentecost?<sup>20</sup>

In Hebrews chapter eleven, the writer walks the reader down the Old Testament "Hall of Faith," so to speak. If people in the Old Testament were being saved, that means the Holy Spirit was doing his work because it is the Holy Spirit's work to create saving faith in an individual. Therefore, Old Testament saints were experiencing spiritual renewal. Wood walks through the question logically. When speaking of Hebrews chapter eleven, he says, "Their lives were outstanding in faithfulness and dedication, and they are set forth in the Old Testament as examples to follow.... They must have experienced an impartation of new life, just as the saints in the New Testament, and this means regeneration."<sup>21</sup>

Wood argues that since believers were regenerated, they had to be indwelt by the Spirit, too, because a believer must be kept regenerated by something outside themselves and that is the work of the Holy Spirit. And if they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, they were then sealed with

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19. Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 11.

20. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 40.

21. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 65-66.

the Holy Spirit.<sup>22</sup> And if they were sealed by the Holy Spirit, they had to be filled by the Holy Spirit. And if they were filled by the Holy Spirit, they must be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Wood would argue, the only difference between the Holy Spirit's work pre-Pentecost and post-Pentecost is baptism.<sup>23</sup>

Wood defends his position by asking, "If an Old Testament saint was not permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit, how could he remain a child of God?"<sup>24</sup> Based on Hebrews chapter eleven alone one must say that Old Testament believers had faith. Scripture teaches that faith comes from nowhere else but the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we must say that the Holy Spirit was doing his work before Pentecost came, as stated above. The question, then, is this: Does possession of saving faith have to mean that the Holy Spirit was indwelling the Old Testament saints the same way he was dwelling in New Testament saints post-Pentecost? Wood would argue that logically, you must answer that question with a resounding "yes," based on his arguments in the above paragraph.

Millard Erickson disagrees. He points to places in the Old Testament to show that the instances where the Holy Spirit "indwelt" an individual in the Old Testament was not to make their heart his home, but rather to convey certain necessary skills for various tasks. How would he speak about Psalm 51 where David pleads with the LORD, "Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me" (Ps 51:11)? Erickson states that in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit endowed people with gifts for a particular task such as Bezalel in Exod 31:1-5,

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22. Wood explains what he means by "sealing" on page 70: "Sealing means the assurance of the sinner's continued salvation, so it will not, nor cannot, be lost." We would stay away from expressing salvation as something that "cannot" be lost. 1 Corinthians 10:12 serves as a warning for such an attitude.

23. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 70-71.

24. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 39-40.

for administration such as Gideon in Judg 6:34, and special capabilities such as Saul and his servant in 1 Sam 10:10. Based on this, he argues that being a regenerated Christian does not have to mean that the Old Testament believer must be indwelt by the Spirit. Erickson further defends his position,

But what of the cases in Acts where there clearly was a separation between conversion/regeneration and the baptism of the Spirit?... It is my interpretation that these cases did indeed involve people who were regenerated before they received the Holy Spirit. They were the last of the Old Testament believers. They were regenerate because they believed the revelation they had received and feared God. They had not received the Spirit, however, for the promise of his coming could not be fulfilled until Jesus had ascended. (Keep in mind that even the disciples of Jesus, who were certainly regenerate under the New Testament system, were not filled with the Spirit until Pentecost.) But when on Pentecost those who were already regenerate under the Old Testament system received Christ, they were filled with the Spirit. As soon as that happened, there were no longer any regenerate Old Testament believers.<sup>25</sup>

Gregg Allison and Andreas Köstenberger also takes this approach. They describe the Old Testament cycle this way: “The cycle is repeated over and over again: Israel sins; she is oppressed by a foreign power; she cries out to God for deliverance; and God sends his Spirit to empower a deliverer.”<sup>26</sup> Similarly to Erickson, they demonstrate there is a distinction between God sending the Spirit to indwell the believer and God sending his Spirit to empower. Allison and Köstenberger point to Ps 139:7 to prove that the Spirit’s presence is inescapable. They do not conclude, however, that the omnipresence of the Spirit has to mean that the Spirit makes his home in the hearts of ordinary Old Testament saints. His dwelling in them was always to accomplish an activity, and there was no proof that he remained there.<sup>27</sup>

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25. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 801.

26. Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 18-19.

27. Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 31.

Allison and Köstenberger explain their rationale behind this conclusion at length:

“In terms of God’s Old Testament background, God’s design for created human beings is emplacement, a physical space in which he might dwell with his image bearers. After forming the first man, Adam, from the dust of the ground and creating him in the divine image... thus God dwells with his image bearers in the garden, and the three enjoy a full and transparent relationship.... Tragedy strikes, resulting in expulsion from the place of God’s presence.... They are banished to a wasteland of their own making.... Graciously, a note of expectation is sounded: God will dwell once again with his people. He himself accomplishes this feat through the liberation of his people from enslavement in Egypt. Then, after giving instructions to Moses about the consecration of the tabernacle and the priesthood, God promises: ‘I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. And they will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, so that I might dwell among them. I am the Lord their God.’ If his people will obey the old covenant, God pledges, ‘I will place my residence among you,<sup>28</sup> and I will not reject you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.’... In the New Testament’s realization of this promise... the Son of God fulfills the Old Testament expectation through the incarnation and emplacement. Referring to the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son (perichoresis), Jesus prays.... Thus, the divine perichoresis is the ground of the unity of Christians, in whom the triune God dwells.... Paul confirms that the church, as the temple of the Holy Spirit, is the dwelling place of God.<sup>29</sup>

Michael Horton echoes both Allison and Köstenberger and Erickson in his work *The Christian Faith*. He says, “The Spirit evacuated the earthly temple, exiling Judah to Babylon, and now the Spirit returns to fill his temple. However, this time, it is the eschatological end-time temple: Christ and his ‘living stones.’ Throughout the history of revelation, it is the Spirit who turns a house into a home.”<sup>30</sup> Horton implies that the difference is not in the substance of the Spirit’s work, but in the scope and nature of the church in which he works as compared from pre-Pentecost to post-Pentecost. He quotes John 20:22 to demonstrate that now at Pentecost the

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28. On page 292 in their work, Allison and Köstenberger explain that a work of the Holy Spirit is the filling of believers in the church with the presence of the Trinity. Therefore, the abiding of Father and Son in believers is connected to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in them. Those Christians then form the temple of the Holy Spirit, meaning that the Trinity dwells in the church through his Spirit.

29. Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 292-93.

30. Michael Scott Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims On the Way*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 2011), 554.

Spirit takes up residence in his end-time sanctuary: the people of God. Even after three whole years at Jesus' side, the disciples depended on the witness of the Holy Spirit. That's why he told them to stay in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit clothed them with power from on high. They must wait for the Spirit who brings about the "Amen!" of faith to all that Christ had accomplished.<sup>31</sup>

According to Allison and Köstenberger, Horton, and Erickson, there is something new going on at Pentecost, and that view is supported by the study of the Spirit's work before and after Pentecost. Earlier in their book, Allison and Köstenberger unpack the result of Pentecost for the Church:

"The [New Testament] epistles reinforce the notion that every believer now enjoys the Spirit's indwelling presence. Believers have 'received' the Spirit given to them. The Spirit is 'in' believers and 'lives' in them. They possess the Spirit as 'firstfruits' and a 'down payment.' In terms of his activity...the Spirit is shown to mediate God's presence, to impart life, to reveal truth, to foster holiness, to supply power, and to effect unity."<sup>32</sup>

This is why Allison and Köstenberger state "What in the [Old Testament] are occasional references to the Holy Spirit – and in the Gospels become more frequent references to the Holy Spirit's work in and through Jesus in the present and his followers in the future – have now in the book of Acts burst into full daylight and turned into a mighty crescendo of references to the Holy Spirit and his powerful work among the Jewish people and among the nations."<sup>33</sup> The Spirit's fingerprints are all over the book of Acts. It's no wonder many refer to the book of Acts as the Holy Spirit's book.<sup>34</sup>

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31. Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 554.

32. Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 54.

33. Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 88.

34. John F. Vogt, *Holy Spirit: The Giver of Life*, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Pub. House, 1997), 47.

Wayne Grudem is hesitant to say that there was no work of the Holy Spirit within people in the Old Testament. Because of the various references to the Holy Spirit coming on individuals and filling them in Old Testament times, some of which have already been quoted, he claims there can be no absolute clarity on whether the Holy Spirit worked within a believer in pre-Pentecost times outside of creating faith and special empowerment for a specific task. He quotes John 14:17 to support his point. John says, “You know him,” referring to the Holy Spirit, “for he lives with you and will be in you.” He then turns to John 7:39 which speaks about how the Spirit had not yet been sent. He concludes John’s words to mean that the Holy Spirit was active in believers’ lives before Pentecost, but there was still something special, even better, that was still to come.<sup>35</sup>

Grudem seems close to the conclusions of Horton, Erickson, and Allison and Köstenberger. He appears to say the same thing a different way. However, he walks the line a bit more carefully than the others. Grudem is careful to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit was doing the work of bringing people to saving faith and sustaining that faith, but Pentecost was just something so much more special, which the others would also agree with. Grudem explains it this way,

The Day of Pentecost was certainly a remarkable time of transition in the whole history of redemption as recorded in Scripture...because on that day the Holy Spirit began to function among God’s people with a new covenantal power. But this fact helps us understand what happened to the disciples at Pentecost. They received this remarkable new empowering from the Holy Spirit *because they were living at the time of the transition between the old covenant work of the Holy Spirit and the new covenant work of the Holy Spirit*. Though it was a “second experience” of the Holy Spirit, coming as it did

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35. Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, (Nottingham: IVP, 2020), 637-38.

long after their conversion, it is not to be taken as a pattern for us, for we are not living at a time of transition in the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>36</sup>

Grudem is saying that the disciples lived in both eras of the Spirit, pre-Pentecost and post-Pentecost. Therefore, they experienced regeneration when they were called to faith in the promise of the Savior. Regeneration is the work of the Spirit, therefore the Spirit was doing his work before Pentecost. However, they did not experience this indwelling of the Spirit until Pentecost because the Spirit had not yet been sent, as John states in John 7:39.

Abraham Kuyper asks an important question in his work *The Work of the Holy Spirit*: “How could the apostles – having already confessed the good confession, forsaking all, following Jesus, and upon whom He had breathed, saying, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost’ – receive the Holy Spirit only on the tenth day after the ascension?”<sup>37</sup> To answer his question, Kuyper points out that the disciples did not attempt to preach or teach in the ten days they waited for the Spirit, and when the Spirit came, they explained the miracle as a fulfillment of not only the prophet Joel, but of Jesus himself. It was something completely new and extraordinary, and whoever stood outside the Pentecost miracle knew nothing of the Holy Spirit. He cites Acts 19:2 in support. Paul is speaking in Ephesus and asks them, “‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’”<sup>38</sup>

Kuyper concludes then, that “it cannot be doubted that the Holy Scripture means to teach and convince us that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was His first and real coming

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36. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 772.

37. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 123.

38. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 124.

into the Church.”<sup>39</sup> But how can that be reconciled with passages like “My Spirit remains among you” (Hag 2:5); “But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might” (Mic 3:8); or “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22)? Kuyper suggests “in order to understand the change inaugurated on Pentecost we must distinguish between the various ways in which the Holy Ghost enters into relationship to the creature.”<sup>40</sup>

First, Kuyper quotes David’s words in Ps 139:7 as Allison and Köstenberger did above, showing that omnipresence belongs to the Holy Spirit. Nowhere on earth or heaven or hell is excluded from the Holy Spirit’s presence.<sup>41</sup> But Kuyper makes the distinction that David’s description of omnipresence applied to local presence in space, but not to the world of spirits.<sup>42</sup> He explains,

This we know, however, that which applies to matter does not therefore apply to spirit. God’s omnipresence has reference to all space, but not to every spirit. Since God is omnipresent, it does not follow that He also dwells in the spirit of Satan. Hence, it is clear that the Holy Spirit can be omnipresent without dwelling in every human soul; and that He can descend without changing place, and yet enter a soul hitherto unoccupied by Him; and that He was present among Israel and among the Gentiles, and yet manifested Himself among the former and not among the latter. From this it follows that in the spiritual world He can come where He was not; that He came among Israel, not having been among them before; and that then He manifested Himself among them less powerfully and in another way than on and before the day of Pentecost.”<sup>43</sup>

Kuyper is certain to make it clear that the Holy Spirit was doing his work in the lives of believers in the Old Testament. His caution, however, is to distinguish between the two

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39. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 124.

40. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 126.

41. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 126.

42. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 126.

44. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 127.

operations of the Spirit: “A person outwardly wrought upon may become enriched with outward gifts, while spiritually he remains poor as ever. Or, having received the inward gift of regeneration, he may be devoid of every talent that adorns man outwardly.”<sup>44</sup> He continues further,

First, there is the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit in space, the same in heaven and hell, among Israel and among the nations. Second, there is a spiritual operation of the Holy Spirit according to choice, which is not omnipresent; active in heaven, but not in hell; among Israel, but not among the nations. Third, this spiritual operation works either from without, imparting losable gifts, or from within, imparting the unlosable gift of salvation.<sup>45</sup>

Kuyper’s words explain the Spirit to be present everywhere, but he chooses to be present in different places for different purposes according to the salvation of God’s people. However, Kuyper goes too far in stating that the gift of salvation is “unlosable.” The Bible does not teach “once saved, always saved.” Paul writes to the Corinthians, “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall” (1 Cor 10:12).

For Kuyper, this point about the Spirit’s being present in different ways for different reasons helps explain Jesus’s words in John 16:7, “But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” Christ was the perfect man, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and now believers were being built into his body, so it is only natural that the Holy Spirit was imparted to the whole body, the elect, the Church. This also makes it clear for Kuyper why this outpouring of the Spirit

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45. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 128.

46. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 128.

into the body of Christ is never repeated. It was clear now that Isaiah's words of prophecy had been fulfilled and the Spirit was standing in the midst of Israel (Isa 63:11b-12).<sup>46</sup>

The consensus view of the reformed and evangelicals that have been considered is this: the Spirit's work has not necessarily changed, but his presence among God's people has changed. They are certain to take Jesus's words "I will send the Advocate to you" (John 16:7) as literally as possible and at face value. They believe this fits well with the God's desire to dwell with his people. First in the Garden, then in the Tabernacle, then in the Temple, then in Christians as the church. Next, we will consider the Lutheran view.

### **The Lutheran Dogmaticians on the Holy Spirit's Work in the Old Testament Versus The New Testament**

What do the Lutheran dogmaticians have to say about this work of the Holy Spirit? They do not speak about the difference between the Old Testament and New Testament work of the Holy Spirit, but they do leave the question *somewhat* open in their discussion of the mystic union. Francis Pieper states, "The *unio mystica* is distinct from the general presence of God with all creatures. It is the privilege of Christians, in contradistinction to the world, since it is accorded only to faith. All who refuse to believe the Gospel are the dwelling place and workshop of the devil."<sup>47</sup> Pieper would agree, then, on a general level, with Kuyper's point above regarding the distinction to God's omnipresence and his presence in the hearts of believers.

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47. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 129.

48. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Volume 2, (Saint Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1953), 409.

However, the question must be asked of Pieper: If ordinary believers in the Old Testament were not indwelt by the Spirit of God, then would that mean that they were the dwelling place of the devil even if they were regenerate? There are two ways to take Pieper's words: One option is to take them in regard to believers of all time. Either you are a dwelling place of the devil or you are a dwelling place of the Spirit of God, whether Old Testament believer or New Testament believer. That rendering would suggest that Pieper believed ordinary Old Testament believers had to be indwelt by the Spirit in the same way we are today. The second option is that Pieper meant these words only in regard to post-Pentecost believers, thus aligning well with the belief of others noted above that an Old Testament believer could be regenerate but not indwelt by the Spirit.

Before we settle on one, we consider Adolf Hoenecke. Hoenecke also leaves the door open to this discussion. He states, "Rebirth is the act of the Holy Spirit in which he makes a spiritually dead person spiritually alive, since he gives the person saving faith through the Sacrament of Baptism or through the Word of the gospel."<sup>48</sup> The Old Testament believers did not have baptism, but they did have circumcision, God's Old Testament sacrament, as well as the gospel in bud form, as was stated above. The word of the gospel for Old Testament believers was the promise of the Savior to come. Putting their faith in that Savior, Hoenecke contends, constitutes saving faith. As others have noted above, that does not have to mean that they were

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49. Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, volume 3, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Pub. House, 2003), 245.

indwelt by the Spirit. But Hoenecke goes on to speak about the mystical union<sup>49</sup> believers enjoy with God,

The dogmaticians cite the proof for the mystical union in the following way. (1) From Christ's promise in John 14:23,26. The 'coming' stated here establishes the substantial closeness. (2) From the indwelling in the believers (Romans 8:9). Dwelling does not mean effecting but also establishes the substantial presence. The sun and the moon have an effect on the earth, but no one calls that dwelling. (3) From the unity of the believers with God (John 17:21,23). Here the Savior distinguishes the moral unity which they have among themselves from the unity in which he is one with them. (4) From the participation in the divine nature which is promised to the believers (2 Peter 1:4).<sup>50</sup>

Based on his illustration of the sun and moon, it appears Hoenecke makes the distinction between omnipresence and indwelling. But on the very next page he states, "Wherever faith is present, the mystical union occurs."<sup>51</sup> What is helpful and maybe even necessary is to ask Hoenecke the same question as Pieper. Did he apply these words only in reference to New Testament believers post-Pentecost? Or did he mean this as a general truth that spans from Genesis chapter three until the present moment? Unfortunately, such a question cannot be answered. But based on what he says, two options are possible, similar to those of Pieper's words above: One is that Abraham had faith, so then Abraham must have enjoyed the mystic union, that the Holy Spirit dwelt in his heart the way that the Holy Spirit dwells in believers' hearts today. In other words, there is no difference between the Spirit's operation both on and in

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50. Hoenecke defines the mystical union this way on page 386 of Volume III of his *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*: "God according to his substance in a miraculous way is close to the substance of humans and permeates their substance with his essence, and dwelling in the believers, he so works in them that they are filled with knowledge and all the fullness of God. When we describe the mystical union as the presence of the divine substance with the substance of humans, we express its intimacy. Two intimate friends cannot be so closely united. With the substance of their souls they are near each other; but God and the believers are in each other. The substance of both touches each other most closely; indeed the divine permeates the human. But self-evidently, every thought of an essential partaking of the believers is the substance of God, every mixing of God and man, every pantheistic notion of deification is far from this."

51. Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 390.

52. Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 391.

Abraham than believers today. The second option is that Hoenecke only meant for these words to be applied to post-Pentecost believers. That would align with the thoughts of the others above. I would lean in the direction that this operation of the Spirit applies only to post-Pentecost believers, and pre-Pentecost believers enjoyed regeneration, but not indwelling in the rich sense that Christians enjoy as God's people today.

In his book *Holy Spirit The Giver of Life*, John Vogt gives an overview of the Holy Spirit's work. He speaks specifically about the indwelling of the Spirit and mentions instances in the Old Testament where the Spirit is seen indwelling believers. He points to Exod 31:1-5 saying, "God gave Bezalel the skills needed to execute the plans."<sup>52</sup> He points to Num 11:25 saying "Moses was equipped for his task by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But Moses was not alone."<sup>53</sup> Vogt walks through many of the same passages as Allison and Köstenberger to demonstrate the Holy Spirit's presence and power that were displayed in the Old Testament.

While Vogt, like most Lutheran writers, never takes up the difference between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit pre-Pentecost and post-Pentecost, he does make this comment:

The events of Pentecost are well known to Christians. Until then, the disciples had been limited in their understanding, frail in their faith, and timid in their testimony. Then as they gathered in one place in Jerusalem, there was a sound like the blowing of a violent wind. When they looked around, they saw tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. The real wonder is what took place inside each believer. 'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them' (Acts 2:4). The most amazing change became evident when Peter stood up and preached to the crowd. Gone was their cowardice; gone was their fuzzy understanding of Jesus' message. Boldly Peter and the others proclaimed the truth: 'God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has

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53. Vogt, *Giver of Life*, 32.

54. Vogt, *Giver of Life*, 33.

received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear' (Acts 2:32-33).<sup>54</sup>

The Holy Spirit made the disciples bold spokesmen of the gospel of Jesus. It appears here that you could take Vogt's words to mean that the disciples were finally indwelt by the Spirit for the first time, but it is not as easy to harmonize that thought with his comments later. He says, "The Holy Spirit entering our hearts causes us to be born again as children of God. This giving of spiritual life to spiritually dead people is called conversion. It happens the instant we are brought to faith in the Savior, Jesus Christ."<sup>55</sup>

Vogt suggests that conversion is one and the same with the Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart of an individual. Could it be possible that Vogt's comment is meant to apply only to post-Pentecost believers? After all, the Old Testament believers did not put their faith in the man called Jesus Christ, they put their faith instead in the promise that a Savior would come from the line of David to take away their sins and restore their relationship with God. Is it possible that Vogt would say that, for Old Testament believers, faith was equal to the Holy Spirit working regeneration and spiritual renewal instead of the Holy Spirit dwelling?

It is possible to read Pieper, Hoenecke, and Vogt and understand them to mean the same as Horton, Erickson, Kuyper, Grudem, and Allison and Köstenberger. It is also possible to read them and understand their position to be that regenerated believers are also indwelt by the Holy Spirit, no matter when they lived, whether that be pre-Pentecost or post-Pentecost. But the reality is this: the Lutheran dogmaticians and Vogt's volume of the Holy Spirit's work do not address the topic of the Holy Spirit's work pre-Pentecost and post-Pentecost. At best, all we can do is

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55. Vogt, *Giver of Life*, 48.

56. Vogt, *Giver of Life*, 58.

take their words at face value and draw conclusions based on what we have. Erickson, Horton, Grudem, and Allison and Köstenberger seem to take their stance that there is a clear difference between the Holy Spirit's work pre-Pentecost and post-Pentecost. Wood seems to think there is no difference apart from baptism. Bruner and Hordern seem to prefer to leave the question unaddressed.

I don't intend to leave the question unaddressed. I believe it has been left alone for too long among Lutherans. In the next chapter I will discuss the tabernacling of God among his people pre-Pentecost and post-Pentecost and discover whether God indwelt his people in the same way he does today. We will look at prophecies from Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Haggai, Zechariah, and others that speak about the Spirit of the LORD. We will examine Jesus' words to his disciples in the upper room the night he was betrayed as he spoke about the promised Holy Spirit. After considering these passages, I will offer a summary of what the Scriptures tell us about Pentecost and what happened in Jerusalem that day. How does this study help us preach and teach about Pentecost in a meaningful and impactful way to God's people? "Oh God the Holy Spirit, open up our hearts so that we may understand and love everything that we read in your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."<sup>56</sup>

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56. This was the prayer my bishop used to begin every Bible Information Class and is a fitting prayer as we continue this study of the Holy Spirit in the next chapter.

## PART 2: A STUDY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PRESENCE PRE-PENTECOST AND POST-PENTECOST

This chapter will begin in the Garden of Eden and walk through the Old Testament history of God's presence. First, we will explore God's presence with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before and after the fall into sin. Then we will walk into the Old Testament tabernacle and temple and see the place where God himself promised to dwell with his people. After that, we will visit various Old Testament prophets and discuss how their prophecies speak of the dwelling of God with his people and how it speaks to whether God indwelt ordinary pre-Pentecost believers in the same way that he indwells Christians today. We will then hear Jesus himself, in agreement with the prophets, speak about the Holy Spirit in the upper room as a gift that had not yet been sent. We will consider Jesus' words at his ascension and see that on Pentecost the Spirit made a new home for itself in the hearts of believers and consider passages that speak of the Christian's reality as he is indwelt by the Spirit. Finally, we will take a step into John's Revelation and see that the temple of living stones in which the Spirit now dwells is not the final dwelling place of God.

### **The Wall of Hostility in the Tabernacle and Temple**

In his book, *The Christ Key*, Chad Bird takes the reader on a tour of the Old Testament tabernacle and temple. Starting in the outer court, he moves closer toward not only the holiest place in all of Israel, but the holiest place in all the world. Bird writes,

We now reach our goal. We step inside the cube-shaped, gold covered room that is highly unorthodox – unorthodox, at least, when viewed from the perspective of every other religion in the ancient Near East. In the inner sanctum of the divine king, we would expect to see a throne. And a throne we do see. We would also expect to see a footstool. And a footstool we do see. So far, so good. But there is one major, glaring absence in this room, an absence that would have shocked and baffled any non-Israelite of the ancient world. They all would likely have asked the same question: “Where is your God?”<sup>57</sup>

This question about God’s presence is at the heart of this discussion about whether God indwelt ordinary pre-Pentecost believers in the same way he indwells post-Pentecost believers today. To understand this cube-shaped, gold covered room, let us take a trip back to another place God dwelt with his people. Back in the Garden of Eden, God created a perfect world in which human beings were the crown of his creation. Those human beings, Adam and Eve, were able to dwell in the presence of God. They walked with him and talked with him; their will was completely in line with God’s will because they were perfect beings. That perfection meant they could also dwell in his presence. Fast-forward now to Isaiah chapter six. Isaiah writes, “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty” (Isa 6:5).

What changed? Adam and Eve fell into sin. In the perfect Garden of Eden, God and his people were on one side of the wall of hostility, and Satan was on the other. By successfully tempting Adam and Eve to sin, Satan moved that wall of hostility from between him and God’s people, to between God’s people and God. That’s why Isaiah reacts to the presence of God the way he does. As a result of sin, ruin happens when sinful human beings come face to face with the presence of God. It leaves humans ruined because they realize how unclean they are. How can sinful beings be near a perfect God whose presence ruins them? They cannot stand in his

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57. Chad Bird, *The Christ Key: Unlocking the Centrality of Christ in the Old Testament*, (1517 Publishing, 2021), 144-145.

presence. That is also shown in the way Adam and Eve immediately reacted following their fall into sin, hiding from God and blaming each other for the fall. But God promised to put that wall back where it belonged: between God's people and Satan. God spoke the first gospel promise, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen 3:15). Until that promise came to fruition, though, things were not the same. It could not be the same because the wall of hostility still stood between God and his people.

That is where the Tabernacle comes in. After leading his people out of Egypt through his servant Moses, God gave clear instructions to his people to build a tabernacle where God could dwell with his people. Bird writes, "Think about it: the sheer fact that he wanted a sanctuary within Israel tells us that he is the kind of God who wants to stick close to his people. He has zero interest in being an aloof deity on some unscalable mountain peak. No, he desires to be a 'boots on the ground' LORD. In the wilderness, his tent was pitched in the very heart of the camp. Every Israelite knew God's address."<sup>58</sup>

Here's the catch, however: If God is going to make his dwelling somewhere, that place had to be holy and set apart for him. Everything sinful and impure had to be done away with and/or cleansed so that God could dwell in the midst of his people in a holy place. Bird describes the tabernacle this way, "The tabernacle was a microcosm of the world, where God daily was at work to restore and recreate his people. In the midst of a world gone wrong, when sin, like a malignant tumor, had spread into every organ and lymph node of creation, the tabernacle was the location that was still healthy, good, and holy."<sup>59</sup>

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58. Bird, *Christ Key*, 109.

59. Bird, *Christ Key*, 113.

In the Old Testament, God had very specific directions for Israel about how they were to build the tabernacle and the temple. There was a Holy Place where the priests would offer up prayers on behalf of the people of Israel. The altar of incense was there and that incense pictured prayers going up to God. “In the [Old Testament], there was no democracy of holiness. Some places and things were holier than other places and things. How holy something was depended upon its spatial proximity to the Holy of Holies, where the tri-Holy Lord of hosts dwelt between the cherubim.”<sup>60</sup> Ps 99:1 says, “The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake.” Outside of the Holy of Holies was the Holy Place, and what was placed in the Holy Place helps us to understand something of vital importance to the presence of God. Bird writes,

When [Old Testament] priests entered the outer sanctum, the Holy Place, to their right was “the table of the bread of the Presence” (Num. 4:7), also called “the table of pure gold before the LORD” (Lev. 24:6)... On this table, perpetually, were twelve loaves of unleavened bread, along with “plates and dishes for incense, and its flagons and bowls with which to pour drink offerings” (Exod. 25:29)... In Hebrew, these loaves are called *lechem panim*, literally “bread of the face.” Why? Because this bread, God says, is to be “before me,” literally, “to my face” (Exod. 25:30). In Hebrew to be in someone’s presence is to be “in their face,” but without the negative connotations that expression has in English. Because the table was set up directly outside the Holy of Holies, it was in the face of God, in the immediate proximity of the most sacrosanct place on earth, mere feet away from Yahweh’s earthly throne.<sup>61</sup>

The “bread of the presence” was named particularly because it sat in front of the Most Holy Place, the presence of Yahweh’s earthly throne, in the tabernacle and later the temple. However, God’s people could not come directly face to face with their God’s presence because of their sin. That’s where the veil comes in. “As we stand, in our mind’s eye, before the altar of

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60. Bird, *Christ Key*, 142.

61. Bird, *Christ Key*, 135-36.

incense, one more boundary marker is before us: the veil (Exod 26:31-33). It is the last border to cross. Inside was God, outside the priest. The inner veil marked the place where God and humanity came daily, and most closely, together.”<sup>62</sup>

There was a thick curtain that divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Hebrews 9:3-5 tell us about the Most Holy Place: “Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover.” There, in the Most Holy Place, God said “That is where I am going to dwell with my people.” For that reason, no one could come into the Most Holy Place.<sup>63</sup> Why? It would ruin the sinner; in fact, they would die. The wall of hostility, represented and enforced by the veil, made that incredibly clear. One must then ask, “If God fills all things in his omnipresence, yet dwelt in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle and temple in a special way, did he also dwell in the hearts of his people?” In other words, is there a difference between God’s omnipresence and God’s indwelling?

### **The Difference Between Omnipresence and Indwelling**

David writes in Ps 139, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there” (Ps 139:7-

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62. Bird, *Christ Key*, 143.

63. Of course, once per year the High Priest did enter the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement. It is interesting to note, however, that tradition has it that the priest would put bells on the bottom of his robes and would tie a rope around his waist and then go in and sprinkle the blood of the goat on the Ark to cover up the sins of the people. If the bells stopped ringing, it meant that the High Priest died, and the rope was used to pull him out.

8). David recognizes that the Spirit is everywhere; there is nowhere anyone can go that escapes the presence of the Spirit. Likewise, the prophet Jeremiah writes, “‘Am I only a God nearby,’ declares the LORD, ‘and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?’ declares the LORD. ‘Do not I fill heaven and earth?’ declares the LORD” (Jer 23:23-24). God’s presence fills everything. Therefore, God must be present everywhere, no exclusions. This is true! But is God present everywhere in the same way?

#### 1 Kings 19:11-13a

1 Kings 19:11-13a says, “The Lord said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.’ Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.” Since God is omnipresent, it is a true statement to say that God was certainly in the wind, the earthquake, and the fire. The LORD fills heaven and earth! Not to mention it was God himself who sent those powerful phenomena. Yet God is sure to tell us that he was not in the wind, earthquake, or fire, but rather in the gentle whisper. In other words, the LORD is present in different ways to interact with his creation in different ways in order to accomplish his intended purpose. Therefore, omnipresence does not equal indwelling.<sup>64</sup>

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64. It would be helpful to have in mind the Greek and Hebrew terms that speak about “indwelling” in the passages that will be considered. In Greek, the term *μονή* is often used. It is the word that Jesus uses in John 14:23 when he speaks about making his abode in the believer. Elsewhere, such as in Romans 8:11 and 2 Corinthians 6:16, the term *ἐνοικέω* is used. In Hebrew, such as in Ezekiel 37:27, the noun *יָשַׁבְתִּי* is used.

## Ezekiel 36:26-27

The prophet Ezekiel writes, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws” (Ezek 36:26-27). The sinfulness that human beings inherit is incompatible with God’s redemptive purposes. A heart of stone is hard and obdurate.<sup>65</sup> But God promises that will change, and it will change when he sends his own Spirit into the hearts of his people. Horace Hummel states that the believer who is a sinner at the same time as he is regenerated, is a saint through forensic justification, “but God’s ‘Spirit’ in the [Old Testament] is so often hypostatic that his occupation in the [Old Testament] ‘temple’ of man’s body is but an extension of his ‘incarnational’ dwelling in the [Old Testament] temple and its [New Testament] antitypes.”<sup>66</sup>

This view from Hummel hits a few roadblocks. He is correct to say that believers are at the same time saint and sinner, but Hummel reads a passage like Exod 31:3 where Bezalel is filled with the Spirit and gifts for a specific purpose and concludes that the Spirit indwelt all ordinary pre-Pentecost believers. He draws the conclusion that the Old Testament temple and the temple of man’s body are just an extension of each other. If that is true, then these words of Ezekiel mean nothing, and they promise nothing. If God was already doing this, then what is being promised? Hummel is operating on the assumption that ordinary believers pre-Pentecost are indwelt with the Spirit in the same way post-Pentecost believers are, and it has led him to make a future promise a current reality that was not a reality for the people to whom Ezekiel wrote. He applies this same logic to Ezek 37:14, which says, “I will put my Spirit in you and you

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65. Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, (Saint Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 2007), 1055.

66. Hummel, *Ezekiel*, 1057.

will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.”

#### Ezekiel 39:29

Ezekiel 39:29 says, “I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD.” Of all of the references to the Spirit in Ezekiel, this is the only reference to an “outpouring” of the Spirit. Hummel identifies this as referring to Yahweh’s salvific activity on behalf of God’s chosen people.<sup>67</sup> This seems most natural especially when considered alongside Jeremiah’s prophecy that God was promising something new, all about the great things of the LORD, which would be engraved on the heart instead of on stone (Jer 31:31-34). Allison and Köstenberger state,

What is at best implicit in Jeremiah bursts forth into broad daylight in Ezekiel. In the dark days of the exile, God’s promises of future restoration and renewal shine the brightest. The answer to the exiles’ question, “How then can we live?” is abundantly supplied by the prophet Ezekiel, the prototypical new Adam and “son of man,” who three times speaks of Yahweh’s giving or even pouring out his Spirit on his people, restoring their fortunes after the traumatic event of the exile. In this way, the Spirit of Yahweh becomes the embodiment of the hope of a new creation, a new exodus, and a renewed covenant between God and his people.<sup>68</sup>

Hummel says,

Since the Christian church is “the Israel of God” (Gal 6:16), we confess ourselves, by God’s grace, to be among the beneficiaries of this and similar promises. The end-time event prophesied by Joel and Ezekiel took place already at Pentecost and recurs every time a person is baptized into the triune name of God and so receives the promised gift of

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67. Hummel, *Ezekiel*, 1145.

68. Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 45-46.

the Holy Spirit, along with the forgiveness of sins and everlasting salvation in Jesus Christ, becoming an heir of all God's [Old Testament] promises.<sup>69</sup>

Both Hummel and Allison and Köstenberger are correct here. The beauty of Ezekiel's words is that the fulfillment lies in the future. God *will* pour out his Spirit on the house of Israel. Therefore, just as the Spirit was not in the wind, earthquake, or fire of 1 Kgs 19 but was certainly present in terms of his omnipresence, so Ezekiel makes it clear to these exiles that a time is coming when the Spirit, who is surely dwelling with his people, will dwell with his people in an entirely new and beautiful way. The way this promised gift of the Spirit was given was at Pentecost, and now comes through the sacrament of initiation, which is baptism.

#### Zechariah 12:10

Zechariah 12:10 says, "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son." The NIV84 which is quoted does not capitalize the "s" in "spirit," however it seems most natural to capitalize it. The work that is happening here is producing contrition and, in some cases, faith. There is no issue taking this to be the Holy Spirit and it fits well with how Isaiah speaks about the Spirit in Isa 61. There the Spirit convicted sin and brought about repentance within the people of Israel. The Spirit came in the person of the Messiah to "bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners" (Isa 61:1b). It also fits well with Ezekiel's prophecies in Ezek 36, 37, and 39

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69. Hummel, *Ezekiel*, 1145.

which have been explored above. Not to mention Jesus' own words in the upper room where he states, "When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8).

Robert Lessing offers commentary,

In the [Old Testament], Yahweh often pours out his Spirit upon one person – for instance, Othniel (Judg 3:10), David (1 Sam 16:13), Azariah (2 Chr 15:1), Jahaziel (2 Chr 20:14), Micah (Micah 3:8), and Ezekiel (Ezek 11:5). On one occasion, when Moses cried out that the burden of the people was too heavy for him to bear, Yahweh endowed seventy elders with the same Spirit who rested on him (Num 11:16-29). Yet in Is 44:3 as well as in Zech 12:10, Yahweh democratizes that promise of the Spirit to include the entire community (cf. Ezek 36:26-27; 39:29; Joel 3:1 [ET 2:28]; Acts 2:17; Rom 5:5).<sup>70</sup>

Lessing asserts that the Old Testament Scriptures are filled with occurrences where the Holy Spirit is indwelling believers for a special purpose. That does not mean, however, that every believer in the Old Testament was indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Zechariah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Joel agree that the day was coming when the Spirit would indwell the entire believing community. There is no passage in the Old Testament that states in clear definitive terms that the Spirit made its home in the hearts of believers. The place where God said he would dwell was in the tabernacle and temple, as discussed above. If an Israelite sought the presence of God, he went to the tabernacle or temple. Even then, the priest, who had gone through ritual cleansings, interceded between the Israelite and the presence of God because sinners cannot stand in the presence of the Holy God.

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70. R. Reed Lessing, *Zechariah*, (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 2021), 472.

## Haggai 2:4b-5

This point is emphasized even further in Hag 2:4b-5. The prophet writes, “‘For I am with you,’ declares the LORD Almighty. ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’” As Haggai speaks to exiled Israel, he reminds them of a vital truth: God is with them, and his Spirit remains among them. He proves it by referencing back to the exodus from Egypt. Haggai was the first prophet to Israel after the Babylonian captivity. In captivity, they had no temple. Israel knew that the temple is where God said he would dwell, and now coming back from Babylon there was no temple either. Could they be sure of the presence of the LORD with them? Haggai heaps words of comfort and promise on the troubled hearts of God’s people. He points them back to the exodus from Egypt and reminded them of God’s presence there before there ever was a temple. God’s message was this: “I am with you now just as much as I was with your ancestors coming out of Egypt!”

Mignon Jacobs puts the tabernacle and temple into perspective: “Does Yahweh require a temple to be present with the people? The fact they existed in exile land without a temple for over fifty years may have called into question their belief about the localized presence of the Deity. The tension between their experience and their belief on this issue was heightened since they were also assured of Yahweh’s presence with them while living in Babylon.”<sup>71</sup>

There can be a slight difference between the Hebrew prepositions used in the formulation “I am with you.” It can also mean “I am near you.”<sup>72</sup> This passage, at its heart, is the assurance that Yahweh is going to be at the side of his people at all times. That does not necessitate

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71. Mignon R. Jacobs, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 80-81.

72. The Hebrew phrase reads: וְרוּחִי עִמָּדְתָּ בְּתוֹכְכֶם אֶל־תִּירְאוּ

indwelling. Haggai is pointing them back to the time when there was no temple and no tabernacle. Exod 13 says he was present with his people in a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud as he led his people in the wilderness. He manifested himself in the dense cloud over Mount Sinai in Exod 19. This does not mean, however, that one can downplay the importance of the tabernacle and the temple. Jacobs gets very close to doing this when she says,

Thus by mentioning the exodus and Sinai traditions, the prophet Haggai is linking the exodus generation with the postexilic community as well as connecting the God of the exodus and the Sinai covenant with the God who now assures the people of the divine presence. Neither communities had a temple, but they were assured of the presence. It is clear that, while the building of the temple is important to Yahweh, it does not dictate Yahweh's presence or the manifestation of that presence.<sup>73</sup>

Psalm 99:1 says explicitly that the throne between the cherubim in the Most Holy Place is where God has decided to dwell. That does not mean that God is limited and cannot dwell in any other manner. God could shepherd his people and be with them in the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire and the dense cloud over Mount Sinai. He is God! God can do what he wants to do. "Even after Yahweh's displeasure with the people at Sinai and after God commanded them to leave Sinai to go to the land, God promised to go with them. God said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' And Moses said, 'If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here' (Exod 33:14-15)."<sup>74</sup> This is a key point. It is true that an Israelite could not stand in the direct presence of God because it would ruin them. Yet, they also knew that without the presence of God with them, they stood no chance at surviving physically or spiritually in the world. God's people needed his presence! Every Israelite knew God's address and it was in the Most Holy Place. In his quote above, Jacobs gets close to diminishing the importance of the temple. God

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73. Jacobs, *Haggai*, 82-83.

74. Jacobs, *Haggai*, 82.

*chose* to dwell among his people that way at that point in history. Even if Jacobs words above were true, it does not change the fact that the people of God were not indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The presence of God was among them extraordinarily in different ways and ultimately in the temple, which was very important to God. Jacobs summarizes Haggai's point,

Just as Yahweh could be in the midst of the people, evil could be also (Deut 13:5; 17:7); and when Yahweh was not in their midst, victory was not guaranteed (Deut 1:42).... Haggai 2:5 thus depicts the Spirit of Yahweh standing in the midst of the people, much as Yahweh in the pillar of cloud stood at the entrance of the tent of meeting. The presence is therefore manifested; its effect is discernible to the people.

What Yahweh therefore covenanted is his presence and, more specifically, the manifestation of the presence, leaving no doubt about that presence. The people of postexilic community are guaranteed that Yahweh will be present with them without question. On the basis of that covenantal promise, they are exhorted to be strong and work.<sup>75</sup>

This was a current reality for the people of Israel as Haggai spoke. God was with them, dwelling near them by his Spirit without a doubt. But the beauty of the future is found in the verses that follow. Haggai points forward to the Messiah who will come and fill the house of God with glory. "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty" (Hag 2:6-7).

The Old Testament is filled with language that speaks about a future outpouring or giving of the Holy Spirit. In the passages that have been considered, there is no definitive argument to say that the Holy Spirit was indwelling believers in pre-Pentecost times. In fact, to say that the Spirit did indwell the ordinary believer pre-Pentecost seems to overlook clear passages that

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75. Jacobs, *Haggai*, 83-84.

speak about it being a future reality. Now we will consider the words of Jesus in the gospels about the sending of the Spirit.

### **Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit**

John writes in chapter seven of his gospel, “On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified” (John 7:37-39). The first thing to deal with is what it means that Jesus had not yet been glorified. Jesus is referring to the time in the future when his perfect life will have been lived, his innocent death offered for the sins of the world, his body raised to life from the grave, and his ascension into heaven completed. Until that takes place, John says, the Spirit would not be sent. John is obviously writing this gospel many years after these events took place and the gift of the Spirit was a reality known to the people to whom he wrote. Given that Jesus is speaking here about the Spirit in the sense that it was a future reality, and John himself was now living in that future reality, John felt it necessary to make the qualification. J. Ramsey Michaels explains it this way:

To a degree, the Gospel writer is adding a small caution or qualification to what he has just represented Jesus as saying. He is telling the reader two things: first, that the “living water” Jesus promises is the Spirit; but, second, that his promise of the Spirit was *not* for his immediate hearers at the Tent festival but for Christian believers at a later time – above all, for the readers of the Gospel themselves.... More surprising is the notice that the gift of the Spirit was something that believers were “later to receive.” Like certain other narrative asides in his Gospel, its perspective is postresurrection. That “later” implies “*only* later,” and not then and there at the Tent Festival, can be seen from the

Gospel writer's further comment, "For the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified."<sup>76</sup>

Jesus' words, plainly taken in the simplest sense, suggest that the gift of the Spirit had not yet been sent. The plain words fit well with the prophecies of Ezekiel, Zechariah, Haggai, Isaiah, and others that have been mentioned above.

John's record of the discourse in the upper room the night that Jesus was betrayed by Judas is critical in understanding the sending of the Spirit. The first time Jesus refers to sending the Spirit in the upper room comes in chapter fourteen. Jesus says, "If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:15-18). Jesus' words sound very similar to those of Haggai. God had kept his promise over the course of history that his people would have his presence with them. The Spirit was there in the temple enthroned between the cherubim in the Most Holy Place, just as God promised he would dwell among them. There in the upper room Jesus reiterated those prophecies of old in a beautifully comforting way. The very promises that the prophets made in the Old Testament concerning the outpouring of the Spirit were still true and were still awaiting fulfillment. Jesus now makes it clear that he is the one that will keep this promise to send the Holy Spirit to not only be *with* them, but also will now be *in* them.

In his commentary on John's Gospel, Andreas Köstenberger says "The entire section of 14:15-24 envisions the giving of the Spirit subsequent to Jesus' exaltation, at which time Jesus and the Father will make their dwelling in believers through the Spirit. Jesus' identification with

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76. J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 468.

the Spirit...is so strong that he can say that *he himself* will return to his followers in the person of the Spirit (14:18).<sup>77</sup> Now that Jesus' glorification is imminent, which, according to John, is a prerequisite for the sending of the Spirit, Jesus wishes to make it clear to his disciples before his departing what life will be like in the age of fulfillment.<sup>78</sup> Without that Counselor, the disciples would be orphaned and destitute in the world, but Jesus plainly states that will not be the case for the disciples.<sup>79</sup>

There are a few differences to note between Jesus and this "Counselor." Michaels says, "This other 'advocate,' he promises, will be 'with you forever,' in contrast to Jesus himself, who said he would be 'with you' only 'a short time' (13:33). He then further identifies the advocate as 'the Spirit of truth which the world cannot receive, because it neither sees nor knows it,' adding 'You know it, because it dwells beside you, and is in you' (14:17)."<sup>80</sup> Michaels also explains the verb tenses:

It is important to understand that even though all the verbs are in the present tenses, they all have a future meaning. Jesus' point is that the world *will* not recognize the advocate when it comes, *will* not see or know it, but that the disciples *will* know it, and that it *will* "dwell beside you" and *will* "be in you." This is quite clearly the case because of what has preceded. Jesus has said, "I *will* ask the Father, and he *will* give you another advocate, that he might be with you forever." The "other advocate" will not come until the first "advocate" has gone to the Father.<sup>81</sup>

A few verses later Jesus continues, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. All this I have

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77. Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 434.

78. Köstenberger, *John*, 435.

79. Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 785.

80. Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 784.

81. Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 784-85.

spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:23,25-26). Köstenberger astutely observes,

This is the only place in the [New Testament] where the Father and the Son are both said to indwell believers. In [Old Testament] times, God dwelt among his people, first in the tabernacle (Exod. 25:8; 29:5; Lev. 26:11-12), then in the temple (Acts 7:46-47). In the [New Testament] era, believers themselves are the temple of the living God (1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; cf. 1 Pet. 2:5). This, in turn, anticipates the final state, when “the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them” (Rev. 21:3; cf. Ezek. 37:27).<sup>82</sup>

God first dwelt among, alongside, with, and near his people, but not *within* them. The dwelling within his people on a regular basis permanently, according to Jesus, is not happening at that moment, but will be once the Messiah is glorified. When this Advocate comes, he will not teach them something new but rather he will teach what Jesus taught, reminding the disciples of what Jesus himself taught them. In other words, the Spirit’s mission is Jesus’ mission. Jesus repeats this truth again in chapter fifteen, “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me” (John 15:26). And perhaps most beautiful, this Advocate would be under no time constraint. This Advocate would never leave them, and that would give his followers poise and resolve in the midst of discomfiting circumstances.<sup>83</sup>

In chapter sixteen, Jesus emphasizes the necessity of his leaving, saying “But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” Köstenberger explains,

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82. Köstenberger, *John*, 441.

83. Köstenberger, *John*, 444.

Contrary to what the announcement of Jesus' departure may signal for his followers, his work on earth has not come to an end; it will be continued by the Spirit. Rather than hold up God's purposes, the crucifixion actually will expedite it. For, by eschatological necessity, the Spirit cannot come unless Jesus has first been exalted. Since the work of atonement must first be accomplished for Jesus to be "glorified," and since the *παράκλητος* represents the presence of Jesus, Jesus by definition must depart before the Spirit can be given. Only through internal presence of the Spirit will the disciples truly understand Jesus.<sup>84</sup>

Michaels adds that his departure should be a case of rejoicing and not grief. Jesus is not resigning so another can take his place. He and the Spirit are one!<sup>85</sup> Köstenberger points to all the Old Testament prophetic literature that was pointing forward to this very thing that Jesus is speaking about: the inauguration of the kingdom of God by the outpouring of the Spirit.<sup>86</sup>

What more will the Spirit do when he is sent? Jesus continues, "When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned" (John 16:8-11). This work that Jesus spoke about and Zechariah prophesied about is most naturally seen fulfilled in Acts chapter two. Luke tells us that when the people heard Peter's Pentecost sermon, "they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'" (Acts 2:37). The world acts as if it is righteous because the things of God are foreign to sinful beings. This work of the Spirit to convict the world of sin and righteousness is necessary to expose the world's sinfulness and guilt.<sup>87</sup>

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84. Köstenberger, *John*, 470-71.

85. Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 832.

86. Köstenberger, *John*, 471. The prophecies include Isa 11:1-10; 32:14-18; 42:1-4; 44:1-5; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 11:17-20; 36:24-27; 37:1-14; Joel 2:28-32; John 3:5; 7:37-39.

87. Köstenberger, *John*, 471.

The world's lack of righteousness is seen in Isaiah's words, "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away" (Isa 64:6). The world's self-proclaimed "righteousness" is actually unrighteousness. The Spirit prosecutes on the basis of Jesus' righteousness who is truly just and vindicated.<sup>88</sup>

### Was Abraham Indwelt With the Holy Spirit?

Let us consider again the dilemma concerning Abraham. Abraham had faith. We know that without a fraction of a doubt. Therefore, the Holy Spirit worked on and in Abraham. That fact cannot be argued against. Does that have to mean, then, that Abraham enjoyed the mystic union that Christians enjoy today with God? Jesus said, "It is for your good," *it is better*, one could say, "that I am going away." It is not wrong to say that the disciples had it "better" than Abraham. The disciples walked and talked with the Savior in whom Abraham's faith was placed! Now Jesus is saying that his departure is "better" for his disciples than his remaining with them. It sounds absurd, but it is true! It is true because Jesus' departure would bring about the coming of the Holy Spirit. The faith of Abraham, saving faith in the promised Savior from sin, was sufficient. In fact, we, too, have the faith of Abraham, the father of all believers. But Jesus is showing that there is something that is coming in the gift of the Spirit that is greater than what Abraham had and even greater than what the disciples currently possessed. The Spirit was going to come and make its home in the hearts of those who believed in Christ for their salvation. This is what believers in Christ enjoy today!

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88. Köstenberger, *John*, 472.

Jesus' words on the night he was betrayed were carefully chosen to bring the ultimate comfort and peace to his disciples who were about to be thrown into a world hostile to them because of whose name they bore. Jesus speaks about sending the Spirit, who had not yet been sent, and will be sent upon the glorification of himself. That brings us to a discussion regarding Jesus' life and passion.

### **The Wall of Hostility Destroyed**

We noted above that upon the fall into sin, the wall of hostility moved from between God's people and the devil to between God's people and God. Bird described it as "the last border to cross. Inside was God, outside the priest. The inner veil marked the place where God and humanity came daily, and most closely, together."<sup>89</sup> God and humanity had been ripped apart and separated by this wall of hostility and until God and man were reconciled, the Spirit could not dwell in the heart of man. Gerhard observes, "our reconciliation with God through faith in Christ must precede the giving of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us."<sup>90</sup> This is why the Spirit could not dwell in the hearts of believers pre-Pentecost! This is why in Gen 3:15 God made a promise both to human beings and to Satan himself that he was going to put the wall back to where it belonged. In other words, the tabernacle and the temple were never intended to remain forever. Bird notes, "They were good but not perfect. On the best day the tabernacle ever had, when choirs sang, incense rose, and sacrifices burnt atop the altar, no priest could lift up his voice and proclaim, '*Tetelestai!* It is finished!' For that day and that cry of completion to take place,

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89. Bird, *Christ Key*, 143.

90. Johann Gerhard, *On Justification Through Faith*, (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 2019), 51.

another tabernacle, another temple, another priest and sacrifice were needed, toward which the [Old Testament] sanctuary pointed.”<sup>91</sup>

Hebrews 10:19-22 clearly states the fulfillment. “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.” The veil is the place where God and humanity met. In the tabernacle and temple, only one could enter in: the one who interceded between the people and God, the high priest. Jesus, as the book of Hebrews clearly states, is the great High Priest of whom every high priest from the tribe of Levi was a shadow. “When the Lord Jesus became flesh, he united both sides of the curtain, the God side and the human side, in his own person.”<sup>92</sup> This is beautifully pictured by John in his gospel, chapter one, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

As Jesus took on flesh and blood and became our brother, he represented the veil itself. This “tabernacling” of God that John speaks about is the central act of the Bible.<sup>93</sup> God desires to dwell with his people, and his people cannot survive without his presence. This fact is also the very thing to which the tabernacle always pointed forward. “The flesh of Jesus, as the veil, is the

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91. Bird, *Christ Key*, 114.

92. Bird, *Christ Key*, 144.

93. Bird, *Christ Key*, 149.

place for God and humanity to come together. It is the means by which we have a new and living way to the Father.”<sup>94</sup>

As Jesus left that upper room with his disciples that night, as he was betrayed by one of his closest friends, as he was wrongly accused and convicted, as he was punished with gruesome beatings that culminated on the horrific Roman torture device, it was all to put that wall of hostility back to where it belonged: between God’s people and Satan. As Jesus hung on that cross, he gave a loud shout and gave up his spirit (Matt 27:50). Then what happened? The veil tore in two. Bird describes the event,

The Lord has ripped the curtain, kicked down the door, and brought the Holy of Holies out to us. He is expanding the temple, sanctifying as he goes. In his wake, this building became an ex-sanctuary, the former address of deity. The torn veil was the dead temple’s shroud. Though the early church would continue to meet there for a time, the temple was a “dead man walking.” In AD 70, the Roman hammer would fall upon it and never would it be rebuilt. For Christians, there was truly only one temple now: Jesus the Messiah, whose resurrected body is our living sanctuary (John 2:19-21).<sup>95</sup>

What God was saying as the temple’s veil tore in two was this: there is now nothing that separates God from his people. All sin is atoned for. That which made sinful human beings unfit to stand in the presence of God was gone. God’s people, priest or not, Levite or not, had access to God and nothing stood in the way. Paul writes, “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them” (1 Cor 5:19a). The thing that made sinners unfit to enter God’s presence was no longer seen by God. The certainty of this truth is found in his resurrection from the grave three days later. The Apostle Paul says that Jesus was “raised to life for our justification” (Rom 4:25). In other words, God now sees his people just as if they had not

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94. Bird, *Christ Key*, 144.

95. Bird, *Christ Key*, 144.

sinned. As Isaiah stood ruined before the LORD in Isaiah chapter six, one of the seraphs flew to him with a live coal in his hand that was taken with tongs from the altar. The seraph touched his lips with it and said, “Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” Then Isaiah heard the voice of the LORD saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” Isaiah, now with a pure and contrite heart that came as a result of his guilt being taken away and his sin atoned for boldly answered the LORD’s call and said, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isa 6:7-8). A God who no longer sees sin but instead sees the perfect life, death, and resurrection of Christ in our place now also sees Christians who are a fitting home for God’s Spirit and fit to do the work of the Lord.

### **The Coming of the Spirit**

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he spoke with his disciples. He said to them, “I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). The “Father’s promise” can mean nothing else than the Holy Spirit. In fact, that’s exactly who Luke identifies the gift to be in Acts 1:8 where Jesus says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” A few verses prior, Luke repeats what he stated in Luke 24:49, adding “For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5). Darrell Bock states, “Luke repeats things that are extremely important to him, and this teaching of the coming of the Spirit as the sign of the Messiah’s presence and the arrival of new-era blessing is one of his most important themes. In the [New Testament] view, this coming of the Spirit is something new and previously

unavailable, or else the Twelve and those with them would not have had to wait for the event."<sup>96</sup>

Bock goes on to state,

The introduction of Acts not only highlights key themes of the book; it also proclaims with assurance that God's program is on track. This is the major application of the unit: Jesus's resurrection and the coming of the Spirit assure us that God is at work and the plan of salvation is intact. The Spirit's coming and indwelling guarantee this conclusion. It is a central goal of the Spirit operating in the church that God's community be committed to mission.<sup>97</sup>

That's exactly what happens on Pentecost. Luke writes, "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them" (Acts 2:1-4). This is a fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies that have been considered thus far. Isaiah spoke about a time when "the Spirit is poured out on us from on high" (Isa 32:15). Recall Ezekiel's words, "I will put my Spirit in you" (Ezek 36:27; 37:14), and "I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel" (Ezek 39:29). Recall Zechariah's words, "I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit<sup>98</sup> of grace and supplication" (Zech 12:10).

As Peter stood up to address the skeptical crowd, he could have picked any of the prophecies mentioned above to explain what was happening before their eyes. Instead, he chose a different prophecy. This prophecy has been saved for discussion until now because Peter uses it as his Pentecost sermon text. The prophet Joel wrote, "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit

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96. Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 57-58.

97. Bock, *Acts*, 58.

98. Recall the discussion above on the decision to capitalize the "s" in "spirit." Because I am quoting from the NIV84, I have kept their translation of a small "s."

on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28-29). In the Old Testament, it was only the prophets of Israel who were distinguished as having had the special gift of the Spirit. But now Joel is prophesying that a day is coming where everyone will prophesy. As Peter clearly states, these words of Joel were fulfilled on that Pentecost day. Consider Acts 2:4 again, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, parts of Libya near Cyrene, visitors from Rome, Cretans, and Arabs all heard the wonders of God proclaimed in their own language (Acts 2:9-11). Peter made it crystal clear what was happening: “This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16) and is being fulfilled before your very eyes. God wanted to leave no doubt that this was the fulfillment of Joel’s words.

Jesus sent the abundant gift of the Spirit that manifested itself in the disciples’ ability to preach the good news of the Gospel to the Jews who were gathered there. This was similar to the times the Spirit came on believers in the Old Testament to accomplish a specific task, but there was something far deeper happening at Pentecost. Luke tells us that when the people heard Peter’s message, “they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:38-39).

It had all been accomplished. Jesus had come and completed the mission for which he had been sent. Now that he sat exalted at the right hand of God, he kept his promise to send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit seals the promise of the gospel in the hearts of his people. The Holy

Spirit could not be sent until the gospel message was fully formed in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Now, Christ was victorious and exalted to the right hand of the throne of God, and the spoils all belonged to him. The enemies that plagued humanity—sin, death, and the devil—lay defeated in the tomb Christ left behind. The God of pure grace and love now takes the salvation he acquired for his people and distributes it to them through his Spirit who works through the means of grace. As Peter preached the law that cut and the gospel that healed, the Spirit convinced the people that the message was true. What more could Peter offer to them than the very Spirit through whom Christ chooses to distribute the spoils of salvation? Christ desires to dwell through the Spirit in the hearts of his people who are no longer separated from him, to convince them that the message was true about himself, their Savior. That is just what Peter offers: the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). Through that water connected with the Word, sins are forgiven, the individual belongs to Christ, and the Holy Spirit makes his home in his heart.

Luke tells us that three thousand were added to the number of Christians that day (Acts 2:41). That day three thousand reborn individuals were sealed with the gospel promises that they heard from Peter's mouth through the Spirit who dwelt in their heart. Here at Pentecost, something far greater than just speaking in tongues took place. Here at Pentecost, the prophecies of Isaiah (44:3), Ezekiel (36:25-27), Zechariah (12:10), and Joel (2:28-29) were fulfilled in all their splendor. Here at Pentecost, most importantly, the Spirit moved into a brand-new home: the hearts of believers.

### **The Spirit's New Dwelling Place**

There is a reason that the Holy Spirit could not dwell in the hearts of believers before Pentecost. As already noted, sins separated humanity from God and humanity had to be reconciled to God before the Spirit could dwell in their hearts. Chad Bird wrote “The Lord has ripped the curtain, kicked down the door, and brought the Holy of Holies out to us. He is expanding the temple, sanctifying as he goes. In his wake, this building became an ex-sanctuary, the former address of deity.... For Christians, there was truly only one temple now: Jesus the Messiah, whose resurrected body is our living sanctuary.”<sup>99</sup> If you send a package to someone’s address who has moved, it will either be forwarded on to the person’s new address or will be returned to you because that person no longer lives there. Upon the veil tearing in two, God reconciled the world to himself in Christ (2 Cor 5:19), and the Holy Spirit was on the move. He no longer “lived” in the Most Holy Place. Jesus said to the woman at the well in John 4, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem” (John 4:21). God has a desire to dwell with his people. Jesus’ body is the living sanctuary, the living temple. When Jesus speaks of sending the Spirit, he says, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:18). “Jesus’ identification with the Spirit...is so strong that he can say that *he himself* will return to his followers in the person of the Spirit (14:18).”<sup>100</sup>

The living temple, Jesus himself, comes to us in the Spirit to make his home in our hearts. What does that mean for Christians? The living temple himself has made their body a part of the living temple! Paul writes to the Corinthians, “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” (1 Cor 6:19) This is where

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99. Bird, *Christ Key*, 144.

100. Köstenberger, *John*, 434.

the Old Testament always pointed. God desired to dwell with his people, so he did in the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle. God wanted a better dwelling place, a more glorious dwelling place, which was found in the Most Holy Place in the temple. But the temple was never the final solution. No, God wanted the place in which he always intended to dwell. The prophets prophesied of the time when God's address would be found in their own hearts. Jesus prophesied of this in John chapter four. Speaking to the woman at the well, Jesus said, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.... Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:21,23-24).

Peter writes, "As you come to him, the living Stone—chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:4-5). God has made his people, through the dwelling of the Spirit, into living stones that are palpitating with the life of Jesus himself. He then cements each living stone by the Spirit into this spiritual house, this spiritual temple that is Christ.<sup>101</sup> The beauty of this is the word Peter uses to describe Christians. Christians are described as stones that are palpitating with Jesus. Stones are unique. They are not man-made. They are not mass-produced. It would have been easy for God to make each individual look the same and place us side by side cemented into a building that looks wonderful as the bricks that all look the same and stack to form a uniform building. Instead, God takes the stones that people are, all unique in their own ways, and makes them living stones and cements

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101. Chad Bird, *Unveiling Mercy: 365 Daily Devotionals Based on Insights from Old Testament Hebrew*, (Irvine, CA: 1517 Publishing, 2020), 309.

them into his own body to use the gifts they are given by the Spirit for the benefit of those within the body of Christ and for the purpose of the gospel to reach more souls.<sup>102</sup>

Peter describes the result, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness and into his wonderful light” (1 Pet 2:9). In other words, Christians are now to be for the world what priests were for Israel. This takes us back to the design of the temple and tabernacle. God was at the center in the Most Holy Place. Then the priests served in the Holy Place. Then the Levites, then Israel as a nation, then the nations of the world. The priests represented God to the people and the people to God. The office that priests carried out to the people of Israel is now what Christians are to carry out to the world, just as Christ accomplished that office and mission in his life, death, and resurrection. The mission of the Son is the mission of the Spirit, therefore since the Spirit dwells inside of Christians it is the Christian’s privilege to take part in that mission, too. “Blessed are you, Jesus, the rock of our redemption, in whom we are found to be the church of the living God!”<sup>103</sup>

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102. This would naturally lead to a discussion of spiritual gifts as Paul speaks about them in 1 Corinthians 12. The topic of spiritual gifts will not be addressed specifically in this paper, but is a worthwhile topic to explore within this topic.

103. Bird, *Unveiling Mercy*, 309.

## Romans 8

“It is hard to exaggerate the significance of the outburst of references to the Spirit in chapter 8 of Paul’s letter to the Romans. Like a fireworks grand finale, the Spirit is named eighteen times.”<sup>104</sup>

In Romans chapter eight we find the richness of a life that is permeated with the Spirit.

“Possession of the Spirit is the fundamental prerequisite for being a Christian.”<sup>105</sup> Paul writes to the Romans, “You, however, are not controlled by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you” (Rom 8:9-11). God has sent the Spirit to live in our hearts through the means of grace. That Spirit of Christ who lives in us connects us to Christ’s righteousness through baptism. “The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to believers’ mortal bodies.”<sup>106</sup> This means that the Spirit dwells in the hearts of God’s people and gives them resurrection life.

Paul continues, “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:16-17a). Moo states, “On the one hand, being sons of God explains further why those who are placed under the dominion of the Spirit experience eschatological life. On the other hand, being children of God also places believers squarely in the ‘already-not yet’ tension created by their belonging to the new realm of righteousness at the same time as they continue to live in the midst

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104. Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 140-41.

105. Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 143.

106. Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 144.

of the old realm of sin and death.”<sup>107</sup> In other words, Moo is highlighting the reality that this “already-not yet” tension communicates that being part of the church of the living God on earth is not the final step.

### **The New Jerusalem**

Paul writes in 2 Cor 1, “He anointed us, set his seal of ownership upon us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Cor 1:21b-22). The blessings that Christians have enjoyed since the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit made their hearts his home include being marked as belonging to God himself, sins completely washed away, and being found to be a part of the church of the living God. But even as wonderful and glorious it is to be found as the church of the living God here on earth with the Spirit dwelling in our hearts, Paul says that is not the goal. Rather it is only a deposit. There is still something greater to come, something which Christians today eagerly await and expect. Chad Bird describes it this way,

Like the [Old Testament] prophet, John views a new creation (Rev. 21:1), then he sees “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God’” (21:2-3). The “holy city,” “new Jerusalem,” and “dwelling place of God” are expressions of the same reality. *The geographically specific, spatially limited sanctuary in the [Old Testament] is replaced in the new creation by a city that fills the entire new world....* What’s more, since the city is shaped like a cube (Rev. 21:16) and covered in pure gold (21:18), it is the replacement Holy of Holies, which was also cubic and pure gold (1 Kings 6:20). As this [Old Testament’s] inner sanctum was the place where God dwelt in Israel, in the new creation, “the dwelling place of God is with man” in this vast temple-like city (Rev. 21:3). And just as the high priest, who alone could enter the Holy of Holies, had the name of God on

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107. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 496.

headband (Exod. 39:30), so in the new world, everyone will be of high priestly status, for they “will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads” (Rev. 22:4)

What will finally be revealed on the last day is already at work in this ancient, dying world. In John 2:19-22, Jesus identified his body as the new temple, which would be torn down (=crucified) and in three days erected again (=resurrection). John likewise confesses that the incarnate Logos is the new tabernacle where we behold the glory of God (1:14). As we are baptized into his temple body, we co-die and are co-raised with him (Rom. 6:3-10), thus we become “living stones...built up as a spiritual house” (1 Pet. 2:5). “Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:20-21). The church, as the body of Jesus, is therefore the presence of the Christ-temple in this old creation, the place of God’s recreative work.<sup>108</sup>

Even as Christians are bearers of God’s name and are living stones built into the living temple body of Christ, Christ is still our high priest who intercedes for us before the Father here on earth. Sinful human beings still cannot see God face to face, even though the Holy Spirit lives inside of us. But in this New Jerusalem God’s people certainly will see God face to face. Those saints who have passed on before us now gaze upon the very face of the living God. You, dear Christian, will too. Being a child of God and an heir of heaven gives beautiful meaning to the end of Romans chapter eight. “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom 8:31). Nothing can separate God’s people from him. The wall of hostility is gone, and now nothing can, and nothing will ever sever God from his people again. That is the hope that God’s people have. Paul states, “And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (Rom 5:5). God has declared his people not guilty in Christ’s atoning work. How does he prove it? First, he says it is so. Paul says, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1). Then, as if that declaration were not enough, he also gives his people his Spirit to dwell in their hearts as a deposit. God guarantees, because the Spirit has been given as a deposit, that his people will enjoy

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108. Bird, *Christ Key*, 126-27.

the end goal one day in the New Jerusalem. This is a reality that no person or thing, not even Satan himself, can take away from God's people. It belongs to them because Christ has given it to them as a gift. In this truth is found the highest point in the New Testament's teaching on the Holy Spirit and his vital function in believers' lives.<sup>109</sup>

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109. Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 145.

### PART 3: PENTECOST: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

#### **Meaningful Preaching and Teaching About Pentecost**

So, how can we preach and teach Pentecost in a way that is meaningful to God's people?

Consider Bird's exhortation:

As the priests of God, new Adams and new Eves, we seek to Edenize the world in preparation for the new creation to come by "making disciples of all nations," all around the world, by "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that" Jesus has commanded us (Matt. 28:19-20). In this way, we worship the Father, neither on the mountain of Samaria nor in Jerusalem, but "in spirit and truth" wherever the gospel is proclaimed, baptisms are given, and the Lord's meal is eaten (John 4:22-24). Wherever the people of God gather with Christ as living stones in his temple—be it in Texas, China, or Brazil—we "have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (Heb. 12:22-24).<sup>110</sup>

The God of the Scriptures so badly wants to dwell with his people. He has proven that repeatedly throughout the course of history. He was gracious to lead his people in a pillar of cloud and pillar of fire out of slavery in Egypt. He was gracious to dwell in their midst in the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle and then in the glory of the temple. He has been so gracious to send his one and only Son Jesus, in whose flesh God and humanity meet and in whose death the wall of hostility has been destroyed and done away with forever. He has been so gracious to then send the promised Holy Spirit into the hearts of God's people to make us living stones, worthy of being cemented into the temple of Jesus' own body. The Lord promised through Joel that "I will

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110. Bird, *Christ Key*, 127.

pour out my Spirit on all people” (Joel 2:28), and that is exactly what he did. “We can be confident, therefore, that the Holy Spirit wants to come and work in us. He wants to give us his guidance and strength.”<sup>111</sup> This gives rich meaning to everything in the life of a believer. On Pentecost God’s people celebrate the truth that God has chosen to make believers’ hearts his own home. On Pentecost God’s people celebrate the deposit they have received from God himself that guarantees heaven. On Pentecost God’s people celebrate the joy this gives in every aspect of the Christian life that they study and hear about through the rest of the season of Pentecost. Pentecost, like Christmas and Easter, is central to the Christian’s life. For that reason, each Sunday can, in a very real way, be seen and celebrated as a “mini-Pentecost.” For God’s people stand no chance of producing the righteous fruit of a believer if it is not the Spirit who lives inside of them to will and to act according to the good purposes of Christ our Savior. God be praised for his presence not only among his people, but *inside* his people!

#### Matthew 28:18-20

As God’s representatives on earth, that is the message we get to share with the world. We get to point people not only back through the history of God’s dwelling with his people, but we get to show them the special nature of how God dwells with his people today. He dwells *in* his people. He dwells in his people to accomplish the goal of taking this gospel that was proclaimed on the day of Pentecost to the ends of the globe. Jesus says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have

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111. Vogt, *Giver of Life*, 41.

commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:18-20). The plan has always been bigger than just the nation God dwelt with through salvation history. The gospel message is so great, so perfect, that the mission of God’s church must be worldwide in its scope. That is the type of Savior that we have, a global Savior, a great Savior. That great Savior has given us a Great Commission to take part in. But the most beautiful part of it all is that the same Savior who gives us the Great Commission gives his church a great promise to accompany it: “Surely I am with you always” (Matt 28:20). Through the Spirit who now dwells within the hearts of his people, the Most Holy Place now goes out into the world with God’s people. The Most Holy God makes the very bodies of believers a most holy place because of the Spirit that lives inside of them. That same Spirit makes God’s people fit to do this work of partaking in the mission of the Son and Spirit.

The thrust behind Pentecost is showing our people the worldwide Savior who has a worldwide mission and wants them to be a part of it, because not a single person that they will lay eyes on is outside the mission of our Savior. God wants to send his Spirit into the hearts of his people and the way he promises to do that is through the gospel in Word and Sacrament. Those are the tools with which we are equipped each day. Those are the tools with which we equip God’s people to do this work, too. Francis Pieper encourages us,

The Holy Spirit is not impressed by the often boisterous meetings of the revival preachers. Shouting and uproar are not His vehicle. Drums and flags, too. But He immediately responds when Christ, crucified for the sins of the world, and faith in Him as the way to salvation, is proclaimed in these meetings. In short, the Holy Ghost insists upon His vehiculum. When this vehicle is pushed aside, the Holy Ghost is absent, and men mistake the produce of another spirit and of man’s own spirit for the work of the Holy Ghost and for the Holy Spirit Himself.<sup>112</sup>

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112. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. 3, (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1953), 160.

## Conclusion

While the Holy Spirit may not always be the focus of our preaching and our teaching, he is certainly there. He is there in the most mundane moments of life working to shine the gospel spotlight on Christ in our hearts so that we can see the one who changes our life through his dwelling with us, that he may dwell permanently in our hearts. And as he shines the spotlight on Christ, he empowers us for that mission of the church that was began at Pentecost. Vogt reminds us,

This remains our encouragement and confidence today. The Holy Spirit will not abandon the church in our age either. Even when the odds seem stacked against Christians, even when our efforts seem futile, the Holy Spirit will continue to extend the kingdom of God. The Spirit will make sure the gospel is preached throughout the world and many are called to faith. Even more wonderful, he will use you and me—with our sinful limitations—to be witnesses and build the kingdom.<sup>113</sup>

As we get our people excited about the work that goes along with the Spirit dwelling in our hearts, we take part in even greater and more important work. We usher God's people forward to the greater reality that is yet to come: the end-time temple where "the dwelling place of God is with man" (Rev 21:2), the New Jerusalem, with the comfort that as they strive towards that goal, nothing, by the power of the Spirit, will separate them from their God. What a privilege it is, dear friends, to take up the mission of the Son and Spirit as our own and take the Holy of Holies out into the world where God desires to dwell with his own!

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113. Vogt, *Giver of Life*, 52.

### **For Further Study**

Some avenues for further study with this topic of the Holy Spirit is considering more church bodies' teachings. The Pentecostal church and Eastern Orthodox would be fascinating to consider. Another avenue for further study could be addressing the topic of spiritual gifts as the Holy Spirit distributes them to his church in the post-Pentecost era. For what purpose are they given and how does that speak to an even deeper understanding of the festival of Pentecost? Another avenue could be studying Pentecost from an Old Testament perspective. In the three-year lectionary there is no reading on the Old Testament festival of Pentecost for Pentecost Sunday. How does a study of the Old Testament Feast of Weeks aid our understanding of the festival of Pentecost? Another avenue could be exploring how the temple and tabernacle speak to God's relationship with Israel and with humanity as a whole. Another avenue for further study is what this study means for our own Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary dogmatics notes. Would it be beneficial for our future pastors and our synod dogmatically to study the Holy Spirit's work and presence as its own category within the dogmatics notes? I believe there would be great benefit to such a study.

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