

Session 10: The Indwelling of the Spirit

Series: Is It So?

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I. Introduction

- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit: a widely assumed but rarely examined doctrine.
- Evangelical teaching: The Spirit lives in every believer, permanently and universally.
- **Purpose Statement:** Reassess this doctrine through a literal, dispensational framework.
- **Thesis:** The indwelling was a specific provision for the apostolic age, not a universal promise for all believers.

II. The Evangelical View of the Spirit's Indwelling

A. Definition

- **Indwelling:** The Spirit's permanent residence in the believer, beginning at salvation.
- A doctrine that promises salvation assurance, sanctification, and empowerment.
- **Critique:** Built more on inference than direct biblical support.

B. Conflation of Spirit's Ministry in the Believer

- Evangelicals often blur distinct ministries: indwelling, baptism, sealing, and filling.
- This lack of precision creates confusion and inflates claims about the Spirit's work.

C. Key Supporting Scriptures

- **John 14:16–17:** “He shall be in you.”
 - Evangelical view: A universal promise of permanent indwelling.
- **1 Corinthians 6:19:** “Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.”
 - Evangelical view: The Spirit dwells in every individual believer.
- **Romans 8:9–11:** “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”
 - Evangelical view: Indwelling as the defining mark of a believer's identity.

D. Implications

- **Assurance of Salvation:** The Spirit's presence guarantees salvation security.
- **Continuous Sanctification:** The Spirit transforms believers from within.
- **Empowerment for Godly Living:** Believers rely on the Spirit for strength, guidance, and obedience.

III. Critical Analysis of Scriptural Evidence

A. John 14:16–17

- **Context:** Jesus' promise to the apostles during the upper room discourse.

- **Audience Specificity:** Directed to the apostles, not all future believers.
- **Fulfillment:** Seen in the apostolic age, particularly at Pentecost.
- **Critique:** Universalizing this promise leads to unnecessary mysticism and subjective experiences.

B. 1 Corinthians 6:19

- **The “Ye + Rule”:** “Ye” (plural) + “body” (singular) refers to the collective local church, not individual believers.
- **Context:** Paul addresses the Corinthian assembly, emphasizing the sanctity of the corporate body.
- **Implication:** This verse does not support the individual indwelling doctrine.

C. Romans 8:11

- **Key Focus:** Paul’s use of “you” (plural) addresses the Roman Jewish believers.
- **Context:** A promise tied to the apostolic age, fulfilling Israel’s covenant expectations.
- **Critique:** Not a universal statement about all believers in all times but specific to the early Church.

IV. Indwelling as an Apostolic-Age Doctrine

A. Dispensational Context

- The Spirit’s work in the early Church: signs, wonders, and validation of apostolic authority (Acts 2; Acts 10:44–46).
- Transition from Israel to the Church Age: The Spirit’s role in a unique dispensational shift.

B. Temporary Nature of Indwelling

- Romans 8:11 revisited: A provision for the Jewish believers during the apostolic age.
- Correlation with miraculous gifts: Both ceased with the close of the apostolic era.

C. Post-Apostolic Spirit Ministry

- **Indirect Guidance:** The Spirit now works through the completed Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16–17).
- **Sufficiency of the Word:** Believers are empowered and sanctified through God’s Word, not mystical experiences (Romans 12:2).

V. Conclusion

- Objections to viewing indwelling as apostolic are based on flawed exegesis or emotional appeal.
- The evangelical attachment to universal indwelling stems from a desire for mystical, feel-good theology:
 - Elevating oneself spiritually.
 - Imagining divine intimacy and superiority.
- The insistence on individual indwelling prioritizes emotion over Scripture, twisting passages to fit preconceived narratives.
- The truth: The Spirit’s indwelling was a specific provision for the apostolic age.
- For believers today, the Spirit works through Scripture to guide, convict, and empower.
- Call to action: Reject mystical crutches and embrace the objective truth of God’s Word as sufficient for spiritual growth and sanctification.