

# RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

[Home](#)    [The Papers](#)

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## DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVE IN US?

### INTRODUCTION

Most Christians today believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of each believer. I have questioned that belief for some time. This paper is an attempt to explain why I questioned this view and my conclusions, based, of course, on Scripture.

I must say at the outset that both the NIV and the King James translations are not very helpful in the study of this subject. The reason I say that is because, as I'm sure most students of God's Word are aware, the Greek rarely capitalizes proper nouns. When we read of the Holy Spirit (with upper case letters) in English translations, we are reading an **interpretation** of the text, **not a translation**. That is to say, when the translators put capital H, capital S they are **not translating** the text, they are interpreting it. The same is true when the translators put small h, small s. As students of God's Word we have the privilege and the responsibility of studying the passages that have to do with the Holy Spirit and decide, with His help, when "He" is meant and when it is not.

One reason that I question that the Holy Spirit lives in the heart of man, is that basically, man is sinful and as such can not dwell with God. We read in Psalm 5: 4, "..... with You (God) the wicked **can not dwell**". But in Rom.7:17-18 we read where Paul writes, "As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is **sin living in me**. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is in my **sinful nature** ....." Can God, in His office of Holy Spirit dwell in the heart of Man with a sinful nature?

Another reason for my question centers on Is. 48:16, "And now the sovereign Lord has sent me **and** His Spirit". Isaiah was a prophet of God, it is clear that he was anointed with power from the Holy Spirit. In this passage however, he tells us that he has been sent by God **with** the Holy Spirit to preach God's message. That implies that the Holy Spirit is **accompanying** him, not **in** him. If the Holy Spirit was **in** Isaiah then it would not have been necessary for the Holy Spirit **to accompany** Isaiah.

Another reason for my questioning is found in Eph. 4:24, which reads, "**put on** the new self created to be like God". If the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of believers, why is it necessary for us to "put on the new self"? Surely nothing else is required if the Holy Spirit Himself were indwelling the believer.

Let us also consider I Jn. 3:24, "He abideth in us **by** the spirit He **hath given us**". What this verse says is that the Holy Spirit abides in us **by the new nature**. If, as this verse says, the Holy Spirit abides in us by the new nature, then obviously it is not God in His office of Holy Spirit that abides in us, it is the new nature. And if the Holy Spirit dwells in us "by" the new nature, why would He Himself **also** abide in us?

Yet another reason is found in Rom. 8:16, "The Spirit testifies with our spirit...". Is Paul saying here that the Holy Spirit Who lives in our hearts testifies with the Holy Spirit Who lives in our hearts? That makes no sense. I believe that he is saying that the Holy Spirit testifies with **the new nature, which is given to each believer**.

One more reason is found in II Peter 1:3-4, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may **participate in the divine nature** and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires". This passage tells us that through the new nature, we participate in the divine nature. If the Holy Spirit dwells in us, why would we need a new nature?

But many are confused by I Cor. 3:16 which reads, "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth **in** you?". The Greek word translated "in" is "en" which, when used with a plural can be "among". I believe that this verse is saying that the Holy Spirit dwells **among us**. **Further**, we read in Luke 17:21 of Christ's statement to the Pharisees, ".....the kingdom of God is **within (Gr. "en") you**". We know that the Pharisees were not believers and therefore the kingdom of God was **certainly not "within" them**. The kingdom of God **was among** them in the Person of the King Himself. But again, not within them. If we fail to see the importance of "en" with the plural meaning "among" we have a glaring contradiction in the Word of God, which is not possible.

Further, the “of” in the phrase, “the Spirit **of** God dwelleth” is, in my opinion, the Genitive of Origin. That is to say, it is the spirit **from** God that dwelleth among us.

(For a complete study of the subject please see the paper on [spirit](#) which discusses every occurrence of the Hebrew and Greek words translated “spirit”.)

### **THE GIFT OF THE NEW NATURE GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO EACH BELIEVER**

I have expressed the reasons for my belief that the Holy Spirit does not dwell **in** each believer. But what God does do, in His infinite grace and wisdom, is to give **each believer** a gift **from the Holy Spirit** so that through this gift God communicates with His own and we communicate with Him.

I have used the term “new nature” for this gift that is given by the Holy Spirit to believers even though that term is not used in the Bible. I have done so because that gift is spirit, and to refer to it as “spirit” can make a very complex study even more difficult to understand. Also, I believe that many are at least aware of E. W. Bullinger’s writings on this spirit and they would be comfortable with the term “new nature”.

In John 3:6 we read, “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit”. Let us examine the scriptures that have to do with the spirit living in the believer and then see what we can learn about this wonderful and gracious gift **from** the Holy Spirit, i.e. the **spirit** to which the **Spirit** gives birth.

I will first quote the verses that concern this gift and where needed offer a different translation and my reasons for it. Then, in the following section, I will try to pull all these verses together so that we can have an idea based on Scripture of the Holy Spirit’s gift to each believer.

Rom. 5:5, “...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” . This verse can, and, in my opinion should, read “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the holy spirit ( i.e. the new nature) which He has given us”.

Rom. 8:3-6, “ .... And so He condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what the nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit (can also read spirit) have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.” The contrast here is between the “sinful nature” and the spirit. I believe that this spirit is the new nature. That is to say, **the old nature is put in contrast to the new nature.**

Rom. 8:9-14, "You however, are controlled **not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit**, if the Spirit (can also be spirit) of God lives in you. And if any one does not have the Spirit (can also be 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 (can also be spirit) of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give you life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit (can also be spirit) who (KJV has "that") lives in you. Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to **the sinful nature**, you will die; but **if by the Spirit** (can also be spirit) you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit (can also be spirit) of God are sons of God". May I remind the reader that the Greek language rarely uses capital letters for proper nouns, not even for God, so the upper case letters and the lower case letters are interpretations, not translations. Here again **the spirit is put in contrast with the old nature**. Is it God Who is being contrasted with our old nature? I cannot believe that it is. I believe it is the new nature that is being put in contrast to the old nature. Again, as we put all these passages together, we will, I hope, have a clearer understanding of the spirit given to the believer and therefore be better able to determine when Scripture refers to the gift and when to the Giver.

Rom. 8:23, "... we ourselves, who have the **firstfruits** of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies". The "firstfruits of the Spirit" is not God in His office of Holy Spirit. How can God be a firstfruits? In my opinion, that concept is demeaning to God. The "of" is the Genitive of origin, which the Companion Bible Ap. 17 defines as, "This marks the **source** from which anything has its origin". So Paul is saying that we have the firstfruits **from the Spirit**". I believe the **new nature is that firstfruits**.

I Cor. 2:9-12 reads, 9) "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. 10) But God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit: for **the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God**. 11) For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, **but the spirit of God**. 12) Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

Note that verse 11 contrasts the spirit of man with the spirit of God. Obviously this is not a contrast between the sinful spirit of man and God in His office of Holy Spirit. The "of" in this case is in the Genitive of origin and means "the source", i.e. the spirit coming **from** God. It is a contrast between the old nature of man and the new nature which **comes from God**.

Also, note in verse 12 that there is once again a contrast, this time between “the spirit of the world” and “the spirit which is of (should be “from”, Genitive of origin) God”. Again, I believe that the contrast is between the old nature and the new nature. And note what that new nature is said to do for those who have it, “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” Given that the context is about knowing the deep things of God, I think we may conclude that the things freely given are those deep things of God. In short, the new nature, i.e. the spirit given to believers from God, helps us to search out the deep things of God.

I Cor. 2:14, “The man without the Spirit (can also be spirit) does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned”. The phrase, “things that come from the Spirit of God” refers to God in His office of Holy Spirit. What is it then that man needs in order to accept the things that come from the Holy Spirit? Consider that as we read in I Cor. 2:11, “the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of (Genitive of Origin, “from”) God”. In other words, verse 11 of this passage tells us that man can know the things of God through the spirit (i.e. the new nature), and verse 14 tells us the same thing only in the negative, i.e. the man without the new nature cannot accept the things from God.

**Gal. 5:16–17, “So I say, live by the Spirit, (can also be spirit) and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, (can also be spirit) and the Spirit (can also be spirit) what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want”. Are we to believe that Paul is contrasting the old sinful nature with God? I don’t believe he is. I believe that the contrast is between the old sinful nature and the new nature which is a gift from God. .**

**Gal. 6:8 and 25, “The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit (can also be spirit), from the Spirit will reap eternal life”. Again, I do not believe that Paul is contrasting the old nature with God. I believe the contrast is between the old and new natures.**

**Eph. 3:16–19, “I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit (can also be spirit) in your inner being,**

so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God”. Is Paul saying that God in His office of Holy Spirit is in our inner being so that Christ may dwell in our hearts? That makes no sense. I believe Paul is saying that the new nature is in our inner being so that the spirit of Christ may dwell in our hearts.

Eph. 4:22-24, “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness”. If the Holy Spirit lived in us, there would surely be no need to “put on the new self”. I believe that the “new self” is the new nature, the gift from the Holy Spirit.

Eph. 4:30, And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption”. The Greek word translated “with” is “en” and can also be translated “by”. “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit by Whom you were sealed”.

Eph. 5:18, “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit”. Again, could be translated “be filled by the Spirit”. Is the contrast here between being drunk and being filled with God in His office of Holy Spirit? I can not believe it is. I believe the contrast is between being drunk and being filled by the Spirit.

II Tim.1:14, “Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit Who lives in us”. This should read “Who lives among us” as it is addressed to “us” plural. The note on I Cor. 3:16 in the previous section of this paper proves this point.

II Peter 1:3-4, “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires”. It is through the new nature that believers “participate in the divine nature”.

## CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE GIFT GIVEN TO EACH BELIEVER BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Now that we have listed, and in some cases offered alternative translations, let us study these verses in order to learn what we may about the gift from the Holy Spirit that He gives to each believer.

Rom 8:11, “He Who has raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit which lives in you”. This verse has to do with resurrection, therefore let us look at a few verses that also have to do with resurrection and the spirit (i.e. the gift from the Holy Spirit) in order to determine whether Rom. 8:11 is speaking of the gift (the new nature) or the Giver (the Holy Spirit).

Rom. 8:23, “...we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies”. What is the “firstfruits of the Spirit”? Surely it is not a portion of God in His office of the Holy Spirit, as the firstfruits of a harvest are. As mentioned in the section above, the firstfruits is from the Holy Spirit and it guarantees our resurrection. This earnest or firstfruits or seal etc. is not the Holy Spirit Himself, how can God be spoken of as the firstfruits, etc.? It is the gift sent by the Holy Spirit to each believer.

What else can we learn of this gift from the Holy Spirit? If Rom. 8:11 refers to the gift, not the Giver, so then does Rom. 5:5, “God has poured out His love through the holy spirit which He has given us”. This verse answers the dilemma presented in Psalms 5:4, “With You the wicked can

not dwell“. The wicked can not dwell with God, so He gave those who believe in His Son a gift, i.e. a spirit which is holy, sent by the Holy Spirit, through which He may pour out His love to us.

We learn more of this gracious gift from Rom. 8:3-6. “Those who live in accordance with the spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires”. That is to say, by nature we are sinful and can, in the flesh, do nothing to please God. But through this gift of the spirit, i.e. the new nature, we are able to live according to what the Spirit (God) desires. “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the spirit, and the spirit is contrary to the sinful nature” (Gal. 5:16-17). Note the contrast between natures, i.e. the spirit (referred to by Paul in Eph. 4:24 as the “new self”) and the sinful nature.

Consider also Eph. 4:22-24, “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness”. If the Holy Spirit, Himself were living in each believer, Paul would not have needed to tell us to “put on the new self”. That which enables us to live in accordance with the spirit is not the Holy Spirit Himself living in us, but the spirit He has given us as His gift. We also read of the “new self” in Col. 3:9-10, “Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator“. The new self is, obviously, the spirit, which is the gift from the Holy Spirit. The new self can not be the Holy Spirit, He is its Creator, it is His gift to us.

II Peter 1:3-4 also sheds light on this subject. “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these (i.e. “His own glory and goodness) he has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires”. But we have already read where we still have sinful desires. This shows us that



we may participate in the divine nature, we are not divine, that is to say, the Divine Holy Spirit does not live in us.

Eph. 3:16-19 tells each of us, i.e. believers in Christ, that it is through the spirit in the inner being that allows us to have Christ dwell in our hearts. “I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God”. This passage also tells us that through this spirit in our inner being we can know the love of Christ. Note also the last phrase, “that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God”. If we were filled with God, the Holy Spirit, we would already be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. But Paul’s prayer is that we be filled, obviously Paul would not pray for something that has already been accomplished.

I Cor. 2:11 tells us of yet another very important function of the spirit living in us. “For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the spirit of God”. I Cor. 2:14 also speaks of the fact that our new self, the gift from the Holy Spirit to each believer, enables us to understand spiritual things. “The man without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned”. Because the believer has this spirit, God is able to communicate to each of us the things concerning Him, even the deep things of God.

Each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has been given a gift from the Holy Spirit Who is the creator of this gift. This gift is called several things, but it is a spirit which enables us to lead lives pleasing to God, one that allows us to participate in the divine nature. It allows us to understand spiritual things. It allows us, as sinful creatures to be in communion with God, the

creator of the universe. It allows us to have the love of Christ shed in our hearts and also to know the love of Christ.

This is a miraculous and gracious gift from a loving Holy Spirit. Speaking personally, I can not be disappointed that the Holy Spirit Himself does not live in me, His gift, as is His love, is more than sufficient.

## APPENDIX

### A CONSIDERATION OF VERSES OTHER THAN THE ONES ALREADY DISCUSSED THAT SEEM TO SAY THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVES IN US

Jn. 14:17, “for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you”. The Companion Bible note on the Greek word translated “with” takes us to the Ap. 104 xii 2 which reads, “with the dative it denotes beside and at a person....”.

The Greek word translated “in” is “en” which once again, when used with a plural can be “among”. In point of fact, why would the Holy Spirit dwell in us and “beside” us at the same time? I believe that this verse is saying that the Holy Spirit dwells with us and shall be among us. Further, we read in Luke 17:21 of Christ’s statement to the Pharisees, “....the kingdom of God is within you”. We know that the Pharisees were not believers and therefore the kingdom of God was certainly not “within” them. The kingdom of God was among them in the Person of the King Himself. But again, not within them. If we fail to see the importance of “en” with the plural meaning “among” we have a glaring contradiction in the Word of God, which is not possible.

Gal. 4:6, “....God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father”. The Greek word that is translated “into” is “eis” which is defined, in part, in the Companion Bible as giving the “idea of

the object toward which a motion is directed”. So the spirit of His Son is directed unto our hearts, not into them.

Phil. 2:13, “it is God Which worketh in you”. Does God work in us by dwelling in us or does He work in us through the new nature? Rom. 8:16 says, “The Spirit testifies with our spirit...”. The “Spirit” that testifies with our spirit is obviously God in His office of Holy Spirit. Now let’s ask, what is the spirit with which He testifies? Does the Holy Spirit testify with the Holy Spirit living in us? Of course not. The Spirit testifies with the new nature that He gave us so that a holy God does not have to dwell with, shed His love upon, teach etc. a purely sinful nature, i.e. the old nature. So too, it is the new nature through which God works in us.

II Tim. 1:13-14, “the Holy Ghost which dwelleth among (en”) us”.

I Jn. 3:24, “And he that keepeth His (God’s, see vs. 23) commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit (can also be spirit) which he hath given us”. What does the phrase “and He (God) in him (the one who keeps His commandments)” mean? To answer that question I believe it will be helpful to determine what the phrase “he that keepeth His commandments (believers) dwelleth in Him (Christ)” means. Obviously, the believer or in the words of this phrase “he that keepeth His commandments” does not literally live inside God. Therefore, logic dictates that this verse does not tell us that God literally lives inside the believer.

Let us continue with the phrase, “He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us”. Again, the Greek preposition “en” is used and with a plural is often translated “among”. But how are we to know if this might be an exception and should be translated “in” rather than “among”? I believe that we must consider the Word as a whole as to its teaching concerning the Holy Spirit. Because I do not see how the immediate context helps us, and because we have not read one passage that tells us clearly that the Holy Spirit lives in the believer’s heart, and many passages that tell us that

God does not dwell in sinful man, I believe we must conclude that “He abideth among us”.

I Jn. 4:13, “Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His spirit”. The Greek word translated “of” in the phrase, “hath given us of His spirit” is “ek”. The Companion Bible defines “ek” as, “It means out from....”. So God hath given us out from His Spirit”. The fact that God gave us “out from His Spirit”, ( i.e. God in His office of Holy Spirit) leads to the conclusion that it was not God who was given, but the gift of the new nature from God.

I Jn. 4:15, “God dwelleth in him, and he in God”. Please see the comments on I Jn. 4:13 above.

This paper was written by Joyce Pollard. If you would like to respond to the thoughts expressed in this paper please e-mail me at: [janjoyce@aol.com](mailto:janjoyce@aol.com)

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