

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Indwelling

(Jerry Fite)

In the spiritual realm, what comes to your mind when you think of “indwelling”? I would guess the frequent answer would be, The Holy Spirit. Choosing the Holy Spirit is a correct answer for Paul exhorts Timothy with these words: “*That good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Spirit which dwelling in us*” (2 Timothy 1:14). The “Holy Spirit answer” would probably be the most frequent because of the emphasis of popular Calvinistic teaching upon the Holy Spirit dwelling in us directly to produce “enabling powers” such as understanding and overcoming sin.

The Greek word, “enoikeo” has its roots in a dwelling or a “house” (oikeo) where we abide. The prefix “en” denotes what we do with a house, we go “in”, and abide.

This Greek word translated “indwell” occurs in the New Testament revealing other matters of spiritual significance which dwell in us. Not only does the Holy Spirit dwell in us, but “God” dwells in the obedient believer (2 Corinthians 6:16); “God’s spirit” dwells in us (Romans 8:11b); “the word of

Christ” dwells in us (Colossians 3:16); “faith” dwells in us (2 Timothy 1:5); and “sin” dwells in us (Romans 7:17).

Calvinistic teaching equates indwelling with “*personal indwelling*”. However, we know that Deity, such as Jesus Christ, “dwells in our hearts through faith” (Ephesians 3:17). If Christ dwells in our hearts through faith, instead of in a direct personal way, should we not be on the same tract of understanding that The Father and the Holy Spirit would dwell in us similarly? Just because we see indwelling, we should not assume “personal indwelling” taking over our own spirit with “enabling powers” to “directly” produce the will of God in our life. Such a concept negates free moral agency and personal accountability, which God emphasizes in His Word (Joshua 24:15, Revelation 22:17, Acts 17:30-31, 2 Corinthians 5:10).

The question leading us to a deeper and proper understanding of indwelling should be, “How do these spiritual beings and things dwell in us?”

Sin dwells or abides in us when we give in to satisfy fleshly

appetites, allowing them to prevail (Romans 7:17-23). Faith, because it comes through one everlasting word, abides genuinely in generation after generation (2 Timothy 1:5). God and His spirit dwells in us as we partake of the divine image of love, and confess His truth in life (1 John 4:12-16). The word of Christ dwells in us, and is written on our hearts through teaching (Hebrews 8:10, 2 Corinthians 3:3, 6), enabling us to teach others through singing (Colossians 3:16).

In 2 Timothy 1:14, the “good thing” that is committed to him is probably the “inspired word”. Notice Timothy is responsible to “guard” it, yet he was to do so through the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. It should not be assumed that it was through the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but by Timothy remaining within the boundaries of the Holy Spirit’s revealed truth which was in Timothy. By turning away from profane babblings and false knowledge, and staying true to the guidance of the revealed word, He would be guarding the good thing committed to him (1 Timothy 6:20).

May we always allow God, and not sin to dwell in us!