

The Spirit, The Temple, And Sin

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One of the more difficult ideas to understand in the bible is the relationship of the Holy Spirit and the Believer. For example, in Acts 2:38 Peter says "*Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" The gift of the Holy Spirit itself causes some confusion; from the context we can determine that (1) it comes to every believer at baptism (so it is not the miraculous gifts) and (2) it comes because our sins are removed. We can conclude then that it is the Gift of Eternal Life, as stated in Romans 6:23.

Why is it called the Gift of the Holy Spirit? Because the Spirit is Life (John 6:63), and when you become a Christian you receive life by the Spirit. Since that life is associated with you by God, that life is IN YOU; thus the Bible says the Spirit is IN you (Romans 8:9-11, 2 Timothy 1:14, etc.). When we become Christians the Spirit of God begins dwelling in us. This indwelling is by Faith (Ephesians 3:17), and is exclusively manifested in Faith (1 John 5:13, 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

We understand that this is the case, but why does He dwell in us by faith? Multiple passages with identify His indwelling as a seal or a pledge (2 Corinthians 1:21-22, Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 4:30). From these passages we can discern that He dwells in us by faith to certify salvation. This seal certifies sanctification and justification, and this all happens at baptism (1 Corinthians 6:11). This situation causes us to become temples (1 Corinthians 6:19).

What is the significance of the Believer's Body being a Temple? Consider the Old Testament foreshadow of a temple. There we are told that a temple is a place God hears prayers (2 Chronicles 6:20). We are told that our confidence in prayer is in part because of the presence of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26). We are the place where prayers can be offered to God and sacrifices to God are accepted. This is also why the one who is not saved is not heard by God (John 9:31).

All of this leads to another important idea: the desecration of a temple. The three temples of the Jews (Solomon's, Zerubbabel's and Herod's) all were desecrated multiple times and ultimately destroyed. The Believer's Body Temple is a Temple that can be desecrated (1 Corinthians 3:17). Consider it like this: God cannot dwell in a place of sin (1 John 1:5). If we sin with our bodies, the Holy Spirit cannot abide, and our prayers and sacrifices are no longer acceptable.

The danger of desecrating the Body Temple by driving out the Spirit of God is one mentioned several times. Consider Ephesians 5:18 : *and do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.* There we are told that alcohol causes a dissipation of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 6:18-19 we are told that sexual immorality desecrated the body temple. In 1 Peter 3:7 husbands are warned not to behave inappropriately to their wives, hindering their prayers. This too is a reference to the departure of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, all sin desecrates our Body Temple. All sin drives away the Spirit of Life; all sin causes our prayers to be lost. All sin leaves us a broken shell without hope.

One of the great dangers Christians face is failing to understand how serious sin is, and how the result of sin in the flesh defiles our temple and renders our prayers and gifts to God empty.

If we defile this temple, all is not lost. Another example from the Old Testament tis that the Temple was always needing repairs. We see this during the times of Joash (2 Kings 12), Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29), Josiah (2 Chronicles 34) and Zerubbabel (Ezra 4). These men (and others) restored the temple from

damages caused by age, war and sin. Our Temple is always needing repairs. For us it is damages caused by sin and worldliness. All of us lose integrity without repair. Our sanctification is restored and repaired by worship, brotherly affection, prayer (1 John 1:9) and dwelling in the Word, which is the Spirit within us. These things both maintain and restore the damage to our temple body.

Obedience to the word creates a body temple; the Spirit dwells in us for salvation and for prayer confidence. Sin desecrates the body temple; it drives out the Spirit of Life and causes our prayers and sacrifices to be in vain. You restore and maintain the body temple by returning to God for forgiveness and by constantly walking in spiritual life.