

Were Old Covenant Believers Indwelt by the Holy Spirit?

James Hamilton teaches OT and NT at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's Houston Park Place Campus. An ordained Southern Baptist minister, he is a recent graduate of Southern Seminary in Louisville, KY, where he studied under Tom Schreiner.

Introduction¹

The Gospel of John states, 'Unless one is born of water and spirit, he is not able to enter the Kingdom of God' (John 3:5).² Later in John we read that the Spirit will not be received until after Jesus is glorified (7:39). If the Spirit is not received until after the cross, could Nicodemus have experienced the new birth from above prior to the cross? Did the old covenant remnant experience the new birth by the Spirit?³ Were individual members of the old covenant remnant indwelt by the Spirit? This essay seeks to provide an answer to these questions.

The first task in addressing these issues will be to summarise the range of possible solutions to this riddle. Once the scholarly landscape has been surveyed, that landscape will be evaluated against the evidence. Placing the evidence under the lens of biblical theology entails first asking whether or not the OT indicates that its faithful were indwelt. A whole-Bible approach to the question also demands that the NT come under the microscope, so we will place John 7:39 on a slide and scrutinise it for indications of how the old covenant remnant may have experienced the Spirit. Having observed this data, what regeneration and indwelling signify in John's Gospel can be brought to bear on the question of whether or not the old covenant remnant was continually, individually indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Previous answers to the question

At least five positions have been taken on the issue of whether or not ordinary, individual members of the old covenant remnant were continually indwelt by the Spirit.

- ¹ This essay summarises the argument of my dissertation, 'He Is with You and He Will Be in You: The Spirit, the Believer, and the Glorification of Jesus' (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003). A revised version of the dissertation will be published as *Regeneration and Indwelling: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, forthcoming). Earlier versions of this article have been presented at Briarcrest Bible College and Seminary in Canada on May 1, 2003, and at the national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Atlanta on November 21, 2003. I am grateful for the helpful comments and interaction I received on both occasions.
- ² Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.
- ³ For a study of the remnant in the OT, see G.F. Hasel, *The Remnant* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1972), 391. Hasel, however, does not raise the question of whether or not individual members of the old covenant remnant were indwelt.

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Some scholars assume that a sixth position exists, but I am yet to find an affirmation of this sixth position. Here I will list the five real and one alleged positions, giving a brief description and listing major proponents of each.⁴

On the issue of the Spirit's role in the lives of believers, some scholars see basic continuity from the old to the new covenant. These authors argue that the old covenant remnant was both *regenerate* and *indwelt* by the Spirit. Adherents of this position include John Owen, B.B. Warfield, Sinclair Ferguson, Dan Fuller and Leon Wood.⁵

Another set of scholars agrees that old covenant believers experienced both regeneration and indwelling, but seek to incorporate texts like John 7:39 into their understanding by using language that allows for a greater or heightened experience of the Spirit under the new covenant. Nevertheless, these scholars see *no fundamental change* in the way believers experience the Spirit when the new covenant is inaugurated. Interpreters who can be placed here include Augustine, John Calvin, George Ladd, Dan Block and Wayne Grudem.⁶

The third position is the midpoint of the possible views. These scholars indicate that they see OT saints as regenerate by the Spirit but not indwelt by the Spirit. From statements in their writings, it seems best to place here Millard Erickson, J.I. Packer, Willem A. VanGemeren and Bruce Ware.⁷

The next position is for those who see the old covenant remnant as operated upon but not indwelt by the Spirit. Unlike those in the previous category, these scholars stop short of using the word regeneration with reference to the old covenant faithful. Articulators of this view include Martin Luther, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Craig Blaising, D.A.

- ⁴ For documentation and further discussion of these positions, see James M. Hamilton Jr, 'Old Covenant Believers and the Indwelling Spirit: A Survey of the Spectrum of Opinion', *TJ* 24 (2003), 37–54. I recognise that this categorisation is not perfectly symmetrical, but it matches the shape of the discussion. The value of position five has been questioned by a dispensationalist on the basis of there being no representatives of this position, but whether dispensationalists recognise it or not, they are often assumed to hold position five (see note 9 below). The value of position six, too, has been questioned, but commentators on John so commonly overlook the question this article addresses that position six is virtually standard among NT scholars. I remain convinced that these six positions accurately represent the ways scholars approach the dilemma.
- ⁵ John Owen, *The Doctrine of the Saints Perseverance Explained and Confirmed* [1654], vol. 11 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. W.G. Gould (London: Johnstone & Hunter, 1850–53; reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 331; B.B. Warfield, 'The Spirit of God in the OT', in *Biblical Doctrines* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1929; reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988), esp. 121–28; Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 68; Daniel P. Fuller, *The Unity of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 229–30; Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 70, 85–86.
- ⁶ Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* [ca. 416], 74.2 (trans. J. Gibb and J. Innes, in *Augustine*), NPNF, 7:334; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics, vols. 20–21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 429 [2.10.2], 458–59 [2.11.9]; G.E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 325–26; D.I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 2 vols, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, 1998), 2:360–61; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 637.
- ⁷ M. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 992–95. J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1984); Packer, 'The Holy Spirit and His Work', *Crux* 23.2 (1987), 2–17; W.A. VanGemeren, *The Progress of Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 81–82; B.A. Ware, 'Rationale for the Distinctiveness of the New Covenant Work of the Holy Spirit', paper presented at National ETS meeting, November 1988.

Carson and Michael Green.⁸

At the opposite end of the spectrum from those who affirm full continuity between the old and new covenant ministries of the Spirit would be those who affirm that the Spirit had nothing to do with the faithfulness of the old covenant remnant. Those who argue that OT saints were indwelt sometimes assume that this is the only alternative to their view, but I have not found anyone who takes this position.⁹

There are, however, a number of interpreters who stress the new nature of the Spirit's ministry after the Christ event but offer no explanation of how old covenant believers became and remained faithful. Here we find prominent dispensationalists such as Charles Ryrie and John Walvoord.¹⁰ Most scholars who have written on the Spirit from the perspective of NT theology fit here, as do several authors who have written both commentaries on John and studies specifically on the Spirit in John – C.K. Barrett, Raymond Brown and Gary Burge.¹¹

Before we continue, we should observe some interesting points regarding these positions. First, there are dispensationalists on both sides of this question. Leon Wood argues that old covenant believers were indwelt; Craig Blaising argues that they were not. Also, there are people who are soteriologically Calvinistic who argue that old covenant believers were not indwelt (Carson, Packer, Ware). This is noteworthy because those who argue that the old covenant remnant must have been indwelt usually do not agree with the Arminian understanding of prevenient grace and thus view sinners as dead and unable to respond. In their view, if OT saints were believers, they must have been indwelt. Finally, the position that the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with the faithfulness of the old covenant remnant is, at best, very rare. This point is significant because some scholars assume that this view is held, and it seems to be associated with dispensationalists.¹² I have found no one who either affirms or argues for that position.

We now turn to the OT, seeking to ascertain whether or not it indicates that its faithful were indwelt.

- ⁸ Martin Luther, *Sermons on the Gospel of John*, trans. M.H. Bertram, ed. J. Pelikan, vols 22 and 23 of *Luther's Works* (St Louis: Concordia, 1957), 22:248, see also 22:249, 23:278; L.S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 4 vols [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993; originally published in 8 vols by Dallas Seminary Press, 1947–48], 6:72–74, 123, 7:265; C.A. Blaising and D.L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton: Bridgepoint, 1993), 156 (Blaising wrote this section, and Block communicated to me that he is comfortable with the term regeneration being applied to OT saints); D.A. Carson, *The Farewell Discourse* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 46–47; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 195, 329; M. Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 25–26.
- ⁹ 'There are two traditional views regarding the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the OT believer ... The first is that Old Testament believers experienced the indwelling ministry of the Spirit and the second is that they did not' (G. Fredricks, 'Rethinking the Role of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of Old Testament Believers', *TJ* [1988]: 81). Cf. also Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 637: 'We should note that it sometimes is said that there was no work of the Holy Spirit *within* people in the Old Testament' (italics his).
- ¹⁰ C.C. Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 41–42, 64–66; J.F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen, 1954), 71–73.
- ¹¹ C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978); idem, 'The Holy Spirit in the Fourth Gospel', *JTS* 1 (1950), 1–15; R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1966, 1970); Brown, 'The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel', *NTS* 13 (1967), 113–32; and G.M. Burge, *John*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000); Burge, *The Anointed Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).
- ¹² See D.I. Block, 'The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of RWH in the Book of Ezekiel', *JETS* 32 (1989), 40 n. 38, where he cites John F. Walvoord.

Indwelling in the Old Testament?

God does not dwell in his people in the OT, but he does dwell *among* them. This thesis is firmly supported by the usage of *ruach* (spirit) in the OT.¹³ Building on this conclusion, in this section I seek to establish three things: first, that the OT describes God dwelling in particular locations (e.g., Bethel, Mount Sinai, the tabernacle, the temple in Jerusalem); second, that in the OT the presence of the Spirit upon certain people marks those people out as extraordinary; and third, that the promises of a future outpouring of the Spirit indicate that the believing remnant does not possess the Spirit when the prophecies are made.

God's dwelling in the Old Testament

The OT does not describe God as dwelling *in* his chosen people, but it does describe him dwelling *with* them, in their midst.¹⁴ Throughout the OT Yahweh affirms to his people, 'I will be (or, am/have been) with you'. This statement is made regarding both prominent individuals¹⁵ and the nation as a whole.¹⁶ Not only does Yahweh declare that he is with his people, but at many points the people either express a desire for this, as in the statement, 'may Yahweh be with you', or they make an outright affirmation that, 'Yahweh is with you'.¹⁷ In some accounts the narrator inserts into his comments the statement that Yahweh was with someone.¹⁸ I have found some 108 affirmations of this nature peppered throughout the Torah (Law), the Neviim (Prophets), and the Ketuvim (Writings).¹⁹

Once the chosen people have become a nation, after the exodus from Egypt has taken place, God's presence with the people is realised as he dwells in the tabernacle. He commands that the tabernacle be built 'so that he may dwell among the people' (Exod. 25:8). Later in Israel's history the temple will be built, and subsequent OT texts assume that Yahweh is to be found at the temple in Jerusalem.

- ¹³ For a semantic classification of all 389 uses of *ruach* in BHS, see the appendix, 'The Semantic Range of *RUACH*', in James M. Hamilton Jr, 'God with Men in the Torah', *WTJ* 65 (2003), 131–33.
- ¹⁴ See my article, 'God with Men in the Torah', *WTJ* 65 (2003), 113–33; and another study that is in preparation, 'God with Men in the Prophets and the Writings'.
- ¹⁵ Cf. e.g., Gen. 26:3, 24; 28:15; 31:3; 46:4; Exod. 3:12; 4:12, 15; Josh. 1:5; 3:7; Judg. 6:16; 2 Sam. 7:9; 1 Kgs 11:38; 1 Chr. 17:8; Is. 41:10; 57:15; Jer. 1:8, 19; 15:20.
- ¹⁶ See Exod. 33:15–16; 2 Sam. 7:7; 1 Chr. 17:6 (2 Sam. 7:6–7 and 1 Chr. 17:5–6 place God's tent-dwelling in parallel with his presence with the nation); Is. 43:2, 5; Jer. 30:11; 42:11; 46:28; Ezek. 34:30; Hag. 1:13; 2:4.
- ¹⁷ See, e.g., Gen. 21:22; 26:28; 31:5; 35:3; 48:21; Exod. 18:19; Num. 14:9; 23:21; Deut. 2:7; 20:1, 4; 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:9, 17; 14:12; Judg. 6:12; Ruth 2:4; 1 Sam. 10:7; 16:18; 17:37; 20:13; 2 Sam. 7:3; 14:17; 1 Kgs 1:37; 8:57–58; 1 Chr. 17:2; 22:11, 16, 18; 28:20; 2 Chr. 15:2, 9; 19:6, 11; 20:17; 32:7–8; (35:21); 36:23; Ezra 1:3; Job 29:5; Pss 14:5; 16:8; 23:4; 42:8; 46:7, 11; 73:23; 94:14; 108:11; 139:18; Is. 7:14; 8:8, 10; 45:14; Jer. 20:11; Amos 5:14; Zech. 8:23; 10:5.
- ¹⁸ E.g. Gen. 39:2, 3, 21, 23; Josh. 6:27; Judg. 1:19, 22; 2:18; 1 Sam. 3:19; 18:12, 14, 28; 2 Sam. 5:10; 2 Kgs 18:7; 1 Chr. 9:20; 11:9; 2 Chr. 1:1; 17:3.
- ¹⁹ For discussion of these direct 'I am with you' statements, as well as the many other ways that God's presence with his people is communicated in the OT, see the two studies referenced in note 9 above, 'God with Men in the Torah'; and 'God with Men in the Prophets and the Writings'.

This reality gives Israel's religion a localised quality. Indeed, they are to worship in Jerusalem and in Jerusalem alone (Deut. 12:5). After Solomon, Israel's kings are evaluated by how they regard the temple in Jerusalem.²⁰ The statement in 2 Kings 16:18 that Ahaz removed the house of Yahweh serves to condemn him. By contrast, Josiah's piety is demonstrated by his commitment to the upkeep of the temple (2 Kgs 22:3–6).²¹

Solomon was aware that God was not contained by the temple (1 Kgs 8:27); nevertheless, he fully expects Yahweh to be present in the temple (8:13). Further, he expects the righteous to pray 'toward the temple' because that is where Yahweh is (e.g., 8:44). Thus, when Hezekiah is in distress he goes to the temple to spread the threats of the Rabshakeh out before Yahweh (2 Kgs 19:14). Similarly, it is righteous of Daniel in exile to have windows 'opened toward Jerusalem' when he prays (Dan. 6:10; cf. 1 Kgs 8:48–49).

Solomon even seems to expect that God's presence with the people as he dwells in the temple, will have a sanctifying affect upon Israel. He prays at the dedication of the temple:

May Yahweh our God be with us (*immanu*) as he was with our fathers! May he neither forsake us nor abandon us, that he may incline our hearts to himself, to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments and statutes and judgments just as he commanded our fathers (1 Kgs 8:57–58).²²

The OT does not indicate that God dwelt in his people by his Spirit, but it does indicate that God remained with his people by dwelling in the temple. Just as Solomon prayed that God would do by his presence in the temple (1 Kgs 8:57–58), his dwelling in the temple appears to incline the hearts of God's people to him. This explains such utterances as, 'Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere!' (Ps. 84:10).²³ Similarly, wrestling with the apparent happiness of the wicked, the psalmist notes, 'This was troubling in my eyes, until I entered the sanctuary of God, then I

²⁰ Cf. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols, OTL, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1962, 1965), 1:336: 'The Deuteronomistic theology of history ... measures the kings of Israel and Judah according to whether they recognised the Temple in Jerusalem as the one legitimate place of worship, or sacrificed on the "high places".'

²¹ W. Eichrodt writes, 'Loyalty to the holy place was thus to be equated with loyalty to the expression of the will of God in history' (*Theology of the Old Testament*, 2 vols, trans. J.A. Baker, OTL [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961, 1967], 1:107).

²² Pace Leon Wood, who wrongly claims, 'But nowhere does either the Old or New Testament ever speak of the Spirit ministering to Old Testament saints by simply being near them, rather than within them' (*The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976], 86). If Wood were to object that in 1 Kgs 8:57–58 Yahweh, and not the Spirit, is ministering to the people by being with them, Hag. 2:5, where the prophet encourages the people with Yahweh's promise that 'my Spirit is standing in your midst', should settle the matter.

²³ Psalm 84 is righteously obsessed with the temple, calling it lovely (84:1), longing, even fainting, to be there (84:2), blessing those who are always there (84:4). The point, however, is not the building, but the one who dwells in the building. Thus the temple is lovely *because* it is the dwelling place of Yahweh (84:1), the psalmist longs for the courts of Yahweh that he might sing for joy to the living God (84:2), and those who dwell in the temple are blessed because they are constantly singing God's praise (84:4). A day in his courts is better than a thousand elsewhere (84:10) *because* God is a favour-bestowing sun and shield who withholds no good thing (84:11). The psalmist's trust is in Yahweh not the temple (84:11), but as a member of the old covenant remnant, he must nevertheless access Yahweh *through* the temple and its cult.

perceived their end' (Ps. 73:16–17). Once the psalmist enters the temple, he realises the imminent destruction of Yahweh's enemies (73:17–20), the inappropriateness of his envy of the wicked (73:21–22), and the blessings of knowing God and being near to him (73:23–28). The turning point in the Psalm is the psalmist's entry into the sanctuary (73:17).

Extraordinary Spirit-anointings

The OT gives no explicit warrant for the claim that the believing remnant that lived prior to the cross was indwelt by the Holy Spirit.²⁴ When the OT describes an individual's experience of the Spirit, it is precisely the presence of the Spirit which marks that person out as exceptional. In other words, the Spirit comes on certain persons in the OT with the result that those persons are extraordinary. The corollary to this is that the Spirit does not come in power on ordinary members of the old covenant remnant.

The Spirit mainly comes upon prophets and national leaders in the OT. Joseph is described as having a 'divine spirit', and this explains his unique ability to interpret Pharaoh's dreams (Gen. 41:38). The craftsman, Bezalel, who was called to work on the tabernacle was filled with the Spirit of God (Exod. 31:3; 35:31; cf. also 28:3; 1 Kgs 7:14). Here too the pattern holds: this unique filling of the Spirit enables Bezalel to do what no one else in Israel can.

Moses is unique as Israel's leader, and the Spirit is upon him (Num. 11:17). The seventy elders who are appointed to help Moses lead Israel receive the Spirit, but again, the Spirit marks them out from the rest of the people (Num. 11:25–26). When Moses exclaims his desire that Yahweh would put his Spirit upon all of the people just as he has done for the seventy (11:29), it seems clear that the rest of the people do not have the Spirit.

We need not rehearse each instance of the Spirit coming on a person in the OT to establish the point that in the OT those who have the Spirit are distinguished from the rest of the nation by their possession of the Spirit. Those on whom the Spirit comes serve either as leaders of the people or as prophets.²⁵

There is no direct evidence in the OT, then, that the believing remnant in the nation of Israel was individually, continually indwelt by the Spirit. Leon Wood, who argues that old covenant believers were indwelt, acknowledges this point. He writes:

The prior two chapters have investigated every instance where one or more OT persons are said to have experienced the Spirit either come on or leave them. The conclusion has been definite: every instance concerned an aspect of empowerment for a task, with no instances seeming to involve spiritual renewal.²⁶

²⁴ See 'The Semantic Range of *RUACH* in Hamilton, 'God with Men in the Torah', 131–33, where every occurrence of *ruach* (spirit) in the OT is catalogued.

²⁵ Cf. Caleb (Num. 14:24); Balaam (Num. 24:2); Joshua (Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9); Othniel (Judg. 3:10); Gideon (Judg. 6:34); Jephthah (Judg. 11:29); Samson (Judg. 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14); Saul (1 Sam. 10:6, 10; 11:6; 19:23); Saul's men who prophesy (1 Sam. 19:20); David (1 Sam. 16:13); Amasai (1 Chr. 12:18); Azariah (2 Chr. 15:1); Jahaziel (2 Chr. 20:14); Zechariah (2 Chr. 24:20); the future Messiah (Is. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1); Isaiah (Is. 59:21); Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2; 3:24; 11:5); Daniel (Dan. 4:8, 9, 18; 5:11, 14); Micah (Mic. 3:8).

²⁶ Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 64.

Wilf Hildebrandt, author of another study of the Spirit in the OT, arrives at a similar conclusion.²⁷

The eschatological outpouring of the Spirit

Just as Moses' exclamation of his wish that Yahweh would put his Spirit upon all the people assumes that all the people do not have the Spirit (Num. 11:29), so also the prophetic proclamations of an eschatological outpouring of the Holy Spirit indicate that the people do not have the Spirit when the proclamation is made. This is not the place for an examination of the relevant passages.²⁸ Here it suffices to note that these prophecies would hardly inspire hope if they merely promised what was already being experienced. These passages do not indicate that the old covenant remnant was indwelt by the Spirit, though they certainly point to a day when God's people will experience the Spirit in a new way.

Leon Wood states plainly that his view that old covenant believers were indwelt is not based on exegetical evidence but is a theological inference. He writes, 'Since [God] keeps the New Testament saint by indwelling ... it seems reasonable to believe that he kept the Old Testament saint in the same way'.²⁹

The question that this raises, of course, is whether or not John 7:39 forbids this inference.

The Spirit was not yet given

The text of John 7:39 reads, 'Now he said this concerning the Spirit, whom those who had believed in him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified'. For our purposes, the first thing to note is that this text indicates that those who have *believed* in Jesus are about to receive the Spirit. Since John 1:12–13 indicates that those who believe in Jesus have been born of God, this would seem to indicate that we should distinguish between new birth *by* and the reception *of* the Spirit. Those who have believed in Jesus are about to receive the Spirit, but this will not take place until after Jesus has been glorified. The gospel of John speaks of the reception of the Spirit in two other places (where the verb *lambanō* 'receive,' is used), 14:17 and 20:22. John 14:17 is instructive for determining what is meant by the statement that the Spirit will be received. In this passage Jesus says to his disciples:

And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Comforter, that he might be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world is not able to receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he is with you, and he will be in you (John 14:16–17).³⁰

²⁷ W. Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 61.

²⁸ The passages include: Is. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 36:27; 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28–29 (cf. also Jer. 31:31–34, though the Spirit is not mentioned there). For discussion, see ch. 2 of my dissertation, 'He Is with You and He Will Be in You', 51–66.

²⁹ Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 70.

³⁰ For a discussion of the text critical issues in John 14:17, see Appendix 2 of my dissertation, 'He Is with You and He Will Be in You', 213–20. It appears that the 'C' reading given to the future tense by the UBS committee results from cautious respect for Codex Vaticanus. The external and internal evidence for the future is otherwise overwhelming.

The Spirit will be in the disciples, whereas the world will not receive him. Since the indwelling of the disciples is parallel here to the reception of the Spirit, this would seem to indicate that the reception of the Spirit referred to elsewhere in John describes the commencement of indwelling. John 7:39 does not say that the Spirit was not yet active in the world, nor does it say that the Spirit was not yet making people alive (cf. John 6:63, 'The Spirit is the one who makes alive'). John 7:39 says that the Spirit was not yet received, and in view of John 14:17 this seems to mean that believers were not yet indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

John gives several indications that once Jesus began his ministry a salvation-historical shift began to take place. For instance, on two occasions John records that Jesus said, 'A time is coming and now is' (John 4:23; 5:25). These statements indicate that during the ministry of Jesus the *eschaton* was beginning to dawn. If as the *eschaton* dawns, those who have believed in the Messiah have not received the indwelling Spirit, and if they must wait until after Jesus is glorified at the cross to receive this, can it be legitimately maintained that those who lived prior to the inauguration of the eschatological age had already received the eschatological blessing of the indwelling Spirit?

Regeneration and indwelling in John

Thus far I have argued that there is no exegetical evidence in the OT that old covenant believers were indwelt, and that John 7:39 presents firm exegetical evidence from the NT that old covenant believers were not indwelt. If I am correct that old covenant believers were not indwelt, it is fair to pose the following question: how, then, did the old covenant remnant become and remain faithful to Yahweh? In this section I will argue that old covenant believers experienced new birth by the Spirit though they did not experience the indwelling of the Spirit.³¹ Here we will first consider what regeneration is in John, and then we will take up the question of what indwelling is in John.

Regeneration in John

In this discussion of regeneration in John we are mainly concerned with what these texts indicate regeneration does and does not entail. Here I will seek to show that in John regeneration is the creation of a new ability to perceive, understand, and believe. On the other hand, these texts do not indicate that the experience of new birth involves the Holy Spirit taking up residence in those who are made alive. In plain language, I am arguing that regeneration is not to be equated with indwelling.

We have already mentioned John 1:12–13. Verse 13 speaks of those who have been 'born of God'. This concept seems to be elaborated upon in John 3:1–12, but before we look to that passage we should observe that there is no indication in John 1:12–13 that to be 'born of God' is also to be indwelt by the Spirit.

In the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus recounted in John 3:1–12 ability is emphasised. The word *dunamai* (I am able) occurs five times in some form in John 3:2–5, and it appears again in 3:9. Jesus tells Nicodemus that new birth from above

³¹ Thus, in my view, it is wrong to equate regeneration with indwelling, as Dan Fuller (among others) does (*The Unity of the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 229–30).

results in the ability to see and enter the Kingdom of God (3:3, 5). When Nicodemus expresses amazement (3:9), Jesus responds with the words, 'If I have spoken earthly things to you and you have not believed, how will you believe if I speak heavenly things to you?' (3:12). The implication here in verse 12 is that Nicodemus is not able to believe.

This new ability is provided by the new birth from above by the Spirit (John 3:3, 5). In John 3:6 we read, 'What has been born of flesh is flesh, and what has been born of the Spirit is spirit'. To be 'born of the Spirit' (3:6) seems to be parallel with being 'born of God' (1:13). We should not take the words, 'what has been born of the Spirit *is spirit*' (3:6, emphasis added), to indicate that the one who experiences the second birth is indwelt by the Spirit, but rather that the one who is 'born of the Spirit' is now able to operate in the spiritual sphere.³²

John 6:63 also points to the Spirit's regenerating ministry. There John records Jesus saying, 'The Spirit is the one who makes alive; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life'. This text indicates that Jesus' words belong to the spiritual sphere, and that the flesh is of no use when trying to interpret and understand such a message. If one is to understand Jesus' words, which belong to the spiritual sphere and promise life, one must be made alive by the Spirit.³³

It seems, then, that these texts in John show that regeneration happens when the Spirit makes a person alive. When a person is made alive by the Spirit, it is as though a second birth has taken place, and the one who has experienced this new birth by the Spirit has a new ability to understand and believe. These texts do not indicate that when this happens the Spirit takes up residence in those who are thus enabled. In fact, John 7:39 speaks of those who have believed but not yet received the Spirit. Nothing in John or the rest of the NT stands in the way of the conclusion that the Spirit also enabled people to understand and believe under the old covenant. Therefore, in my view, the answer to the question, 'how did the old covenant remnant become faithful?' is, 'the Spirit regenerated them and thereby enabled them to believe'.

Indwelling in John

If indwelling is not equivalent to regeneration in the Gospel of John, what is it? In this section I will argue that indwelling is God's covenant presence. Paul is explicit that indwelling constitutes believers as God's temple: 'Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that God's Spirit dwells in you?' (1 Cor. 3:16). While John does not state this reality as explicitly as Paul, the fourth Gospel does indicate that the indwelling of the Spirit enables believers in Jesus to mediate blessings formerly mediated by the temple.

³² Cf. J.H. Bernard, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 106: 'Flesh and Spirit are distinct, and must not be confused ... They represent the two different orders of being, the lower and the higher ... Flesh can only beget flesh, while spirit can only beget spirit'. Similarly E. Schweizer, '*pneuma*', in *TDNT*, 6:438. For discussion of the 'sphere of the Spirit' in John, see my dissertation, 'He Is with You and He Will Be in You', 71–75.

³³ For further discussion of John 6:63 as it relates to this point, see my dissertation, 'He Is with You and He Will Be in You', 178–81.

It is something of a commonplace that Jesus replaces the temple in John.³⁴ Another commonplace is the notion that John indicates that the Spirit will continue the ministry of Jesus when Jesus goes away.³⁵ This is a good foundation for understanding the Spirit's ministry in John, but it stops short of recognising significant contours of the Spirit's ministry. What I have in mind here are the indications in John that the replacement of the temple by Jesus entails him becoming the new locus of God's presence and the place where sin is dealt with.³⁶ John then shows Jesus sending his disciples as he himself was sent (20:21), telling them that they will be the locus of God's presence when he departs (14:15–23), and granting them authority over the retention and forgiveness of sins (20:23). These considerations would seem to point towards John presenting the disciples not only as continuing of Jesus' ministry by the Spirit but also as replacing Jesus as the replacement of the temple. Thus, the Spirit in the disciples continues Jesus' ministry as the replacement of the temple.

It was noted above that under the old covenant God was to be sought and found at the temple. The Gospel of John shows Jesus declaring to the Samaritan woman that the time for worship at particular locations has come to an end: 'A time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem' (John 4:21). Worship at the place of God's choosing, which was mandated by the OT (Deut. 12:5), is replaced by worship 'in spirit and in truth' (John 4:23). This new, unlocalised worship will take place in the sphere of spiritual reality.

Rather than dwelling in a particular temple in a particular city, Jesus proclaims to his disciples that he and the Father are going to make their dwelling with those who keep Jesus' words (John 14:23). In John 14:15–23 Jesus states that the Father, the Spirit and the Son will dwell in those who believe and obey.

This passage clearly shows us that indwelling is not to be equated with regeneration. Regeneration results in a new ability to see and believe. Indwelling is God's covenant presence. In verses 15–16 we read of Jesus saying, 'If you love me, you will obey my commands; and I will ask the Father, and he will give to you another Comforter.' If it is the indwelling of the Spirit that empowers obedience and love for Jesus, who can fulfil this condition that Jesus sets? But if those who have believed have been made alive by the Spirit and thereby are enabled, the demand that they love Jesus and keep his words in John 14:15 is within their reach. In my view, the Spirit has already regenerated them and given them the ability to obey. They are now responsible to fulfil necessary conditions so that God's dwelling place will be holy.

This corresponds to God's demand that Israel fulfil certain requirements to keep themselves holy so that he could dwell among them. We read in 1 Kings 6:11–13:

And the word of Yahweh came to Solomon saying, 'This house which you are about to build, if you will walk in my statutes and do my judgements and keep all my commandments to walk in them, then I will establish my word with you

³⁴ See the commentaries on John 2:21 and A.R. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John*, JSNTSup 220 (New York: Sheffield, 2002); P. Hoskins, 'Jesus as the Replacement of the Temple in the Gospel of John' (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2002); B.D. Johnson, 'The Temple in the Gospel of John', in *Christ's Victorious Church*, ed. J.A. Weatherly (Eugene, OR: WIPF and Stock, 2001), 110–32.

³⁵ The classic expression of this is found in R.E. Brown, 'The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel', *NTS* 13 (1967), 113–32; Brown, *John*, 1135–44. His followers are legion.

³⁶ Cf. John 1:14, 51; 2:13–21; 4:21–24; 10:30, 38; 19:30. For discussion of these texts, see my dissertation, 'He Is with You and He Will Be in You', 181–96.

which I spoke to David your Father, and I will dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel; and I will not forsake my people Israel'.

Jesus' words in John 14:23, 'If anyone loves me he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him', are strikingly reminiscent of God's word to Solomon regarding the necessary conditions under which God would dwell in the temple. Just as the people of Israel had to obey God's word to keep the place of God's dwelling holy, the disciples must love Jesus (John 14:15) and keep his word (14:23) to keep the place of God's dwelling holy. Whereas formerly the presence of God was mediated by the temple, in John 14:15–23 the mediation of the presence of God is promised to believers.

Another hint at what the indwelling of the Spirit means for believers is seen in John 20:22–23. Having breathed on the disciples and commanded them to receive the Spirit (20:22),³⁷ Jesus says, 'If you forgive the sins of any, they have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained' (20:23). Under the old covenant, people were required to go to the temple to offer sacrifice for sin and receive forgiveness. Now that sacrifice for sin has been completed by Jesus' death on the cross (cf. John 19:30) God can take up residence in a temple where no sacrifices are made, but where forgiveness can be found. This may shed light on Jesus' statement that the Spirit cannot be given to the disciples until Jesus goes to the cross (John 16:7) – believers cannot replace the temple as the place of God's dwelling until Jesus puts an end to sacrifice.

The indwelling of the Spirit in the Gospel of John seems to carry the ability to mediate blessings formerly found at the temple. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit, as well as by the Father and Jesus, the believing community mediates the presence of God and the forgiveness of sins, blessings formerly found at the temple. Thus it seems plausible that what we read in John concerning the indwelling of the Spirit serves as the historical foundation for the early church's understanding of itself as God's temple.³⁸

Conclusion: He is with you and he will be in you

Were old covenant believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit? No. They did not need to be. God dwelt in the temple. He was thereby with them. How did old covenant believers become and remain faithful? They became faithful by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, which in the OT is described more as 'circumcision of the heart' (cf. Jer. 9:25) than as 'new birth from above' (cf. John 3:3). They remained faithful not by the Spirit dwelling in them, but by the Spirit dwelling in the temple (Ps. 73:17), where they longed to be (Ps. 116:18–19). Further, the Spirit was active through Israel's prophets (1 Pet. 1:11). As the prophets proclaimed God's word, the Spirit instructed and admonished God's people (Neh. 9:20, 30). Under the old covenant, the Spirit gave life and was with the people as he dwelt in the temple. Under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life and dwells in God's people; they are his temple.³⁹

³⁷ For discussion of the interpretive options, and for an argument that Jesus' glorification is the crucifixion, which allows the Spirit to be given before the ascension, see my dissertation, 'He Is with You and He Will Be in You', 111–19.

³⁸ For discussion of the early church in the temple in the New Testament, see R.J. McKelvey, *The New Testament: The Church in the New Testament*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

³⁹ Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).