

## The Holy Spirit and Christian Worship: The Life-Giving Legacy of the Apostolic Band<sup>1</sup>

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I am going to argue that Baptist ecclesiology and worship is most attuned to the Holy Spirit in Christian worship.

The life-giving power of the Holy Spirit enables people to respond to God, making this aspect of the Spirit's work most vital and significant when considering his role in Christian worship. The Spirit not only gives life, he also mediates God's presence by the word he inspires, the Christ he exalts, and the temple he indwells. In the Bible's symbolic universe, the dwelling place of God constitutes the realm of life. Banishment from God's presence means departure into the unclean realm of the dead. The Spirit imparts the life of the age to come to God's people, enabling them to behold the glory of the Son and render thanks and praise to the Father. The Spirit enables worship and forms the sphere in which it takes place.

In the new covenant the Holy Spirit causes people to be born again, whereby they experience the life of the age to come, are built into a spiritual house, the very temple of the Holy Spirit, and offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Christ. This situation stands in contrast with the old covenant, wherein believing members of the old covenant remnant had circumcised hearts (the Old Testament's way of describing

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those to whom the Spirit gave spiritual life) and the tabernacle and later the temple were indwelt by God's Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

The worship offered to God by Christian churches, therefore, is impossible apart from the Spirit. No one can worship unless the Spirit gives life. This means that no unbeliever can worship. The Spirit regenerates, and the Spirit indwells, mediating God's presence to God's Spirit-born people through God's Spirit-inspired word. As God's Spirit indwells God's people, he makes them his temple, God's dwelling place.

All this anticipates the consummation of all things, when God's people will experience not the beginnings of spiritual life in regeneration (an already/not yet experience of the life of the age to come) but resurrection from the dead; when the presence of God will not be a seal and down payment of future redemption but direct experience, as God and the Lamb become the temple, with the new Jerusalem the holy of holies and the new heaven and new earth the cosmic temple.

This presentation on the Holy Spirit and Christian worship will unfold in three sections: first, we must acknowledge and maintain that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the 66 books of the protestant canon, are both source and constraint for our understanding of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> Through the Scriptures we have access to the truth about the Holy Spirit. Through the Scriptures we verify claims made about the Holy Spirit. And the Scriptures themselves mediate to us the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Second, I will contend for a biblical-theological relationship between the Holy Spirit, the spiritual life of God's image-bearers, and the presence of God.

The new birth is directly related to the third section of this presentation, which deals with the church's worship as the new temple

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<sup>2</sup> James M. Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments*, NAC Studies in Bible and Theology (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> See esp. Roger T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985). For my own brief account of the inerrant canon of Scripture, see James M. Hamilton, "Still Sola Scriptura: An Evangelical View of Scripture," in *The Sacred Text: Excavating the Texts, Exploring the Interpretations, and Engaging the Theologies of the Christian Scriptures*, ed. Michael Bird and Michael W. Pahl (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2010), 215–40.

of the Spirit. These second and third topics are related realities: the life giving Spirit makes people able to enter, experience, and become the dwelling place of God's presence. By faith believers are united to Christ, who is himself the fulfillment of the temple, even as the indwelling Spirit makes God's people the Father's new temple.

#### The Scriptures: Access, Verification, Mediation

The Canon of Scripture being closed, the revelation God has given to his people in the Scriptures being inerrant, perspicuous, and sufficient, believers have access to true, though by no means exhaustive, knowledge of God. If God had not revealed himself in his word, we would have no ability to conjure him, no means of extracting information from him about himself, and no certain knowledge of his Spirit. The creature can only know the creator if the creator chooses to reveal himself. The Scriptures provide us with access to knowledge of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Christians believe that God has revealed himself both in creation and in the Scriptures, the Bible. The Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Because I hold that the canon of Scripture is closed, I also hold that the revelatory sign gifts of the Spirit have ceased.<sup>4</sup> Were such gifts to continue, the canon of Scripture would need to remain open, so that ongoing revelation might be included. Even among continuationists, however, claims of new revelation must be measured by the Scriptures. Any claim of new prophetic revelation, any claim of spiritual experience, indeed anything involving the Holy Spirit or worship, must accord with the teaching of Scripture. The Scriptures enable us to verify whether the spiritual activity is from God or somewhere else.

In this section I aim to sketch in the Bible's narrative depiction of the Spirit's activity. From the Scriptures we know that the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters as God spoke the world into being. Through the Word all things were made (John 1:1–3), and the Spirit was there in the making. Psalm 104:30a, "You send your Spirit; they are created," seems to reflect on both the Spirit hovering over the waters at the beginning (Gen 1:2, note the use of *ברא* in Ps 104:30) and God giving the breath of

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Spiritual Gifts: What They Are and Why They Matter* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2018).

life to man in the beginning (Gen 2:7).<sup>5</sup> By his Spirit God gave life to his creation.

The book of Genesis does not spell out the implications of its own narrative with the kinds of theological assertions I am making here. The account depicts, however, a marked turn after the man and woman have rebelled against the Lord (Gen 3:1–7). The fact that they hide themselves from God (3:8) reveals that they have been alienated from him. Their banishment from the Garden (3:23–24) further signifies the end of their enjoyment of the realm of life. Where God is life is. God's dwelling place is the realm of life. To be sent out of the Garden is to be banished from God's presence, where life is, into the unclean realm of the dead. Even before being driven from the Garden, by hiding from God the man and woman showed themselves to be spiritually dead.

The man's response of faith to the word of God, however, seen in the naming of the woman (Gen 3:20), indicates that the Spirit caused life to come when faith came by hearing, and hearing by the promise about the seed of the woman (cf. Rom 10:17). In terminology to be used later in the OT, when God promised that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent, the Spirit circumcised the hearts of the man and the woman (cf. Lev 26:41; Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 6:10), and they believed the word of the Lord. Though banished from God's presence, by Spirit-empowered faith they hoped for a return from exile (cf. Gen 5:29).

God continued to reveal himself to the line of descent that goes down through Abraham to Judah, and though the narrative does not state it, the fact that God's people believed God's word and did what he said to do indicates that the Spirit had circumcised their hearts (cf. Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 6:10).

The Spirit then seems to be visibly present in the pillar of fire and cloud that led Israel out of Egypt (Neh 9:19–20, 30). Having led his people by the Spirit to Sinai, the builders of the tabernacle were empowered by the Spirit (Exod 31:2–3), and the ministry of the Spirit in and through Moses was extended to the seventy elders (see Num 11:25). When the pillar of fire and cloud inhabited the tabernacle (Exod 40:34–38), it seems that God by his Spirit took up residence there.

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<sup>5</sup> For the way Psalm 104:30 reflects on creation to point to the new creation, see James M. Hamilton, *Psalms*, 2 vols., BTCP (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, forthcoming) ad loc.

God's presence in tabernacle and later temple explains the people's sinful confidence that as long as they have the temple, judgment will not fall upon them (Jer 7:4). It also explains Ezekiel's vision of the departure of the glory cloud from the temple prior to its destruction (Ezek 8–11).

As a result of the sin of the man and woman in the Garden, God banished them from his presence. As a result of Israel's sin in the land, God withdrew from the temple, allowing it to be destroyed, and banished his people from the realm of life to the unclean realm of the dead.

When God brought his people back to the land for rebuilding the temple, his Spirit once again pillared among them as he had at the exodus (Hag 2:5). The Spirit empowered Haggai, Zechariah, and others (e.g., Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi), and through them pointed forward to the one to come, the one who would be anointed by the Spirit and preceded by a new Elijah.

Then came the one the Baptist said would baptize in the Spirit and in fire, and he announced the coming of a time when God's people would worship no longer on a mountain but in spirit and truth (John 4:21–24). Jesus taught that God's Spirit would give life to God's people through his word (6:63). His words indicate that God's Spirit would be the sphere in which they would worship (4:23–24). Moreover, as the Spirit indwelt tabernacle and temple, the Spirit would indwell God's people (14:17), but only after Jesus went to the cross (7:39; 16:7).

Once Jesus put an end to sacrifice on the cross, the Spirit took up residence in a temple in which no sacrifices for atonement would be made: the temple of the Holy Spirit (John 20:22).

As the indwelt temple of the Spirit, God's people become sanctifying sacred space in the world (1 Cor 7:12–16). The Holy Spirit indwells God's people corporately and individually (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). They are thus corporately and individually the temple of the Holy Spirit. Worship happens in both their individual lives, in which they are to live as priests, offering up their own bodies as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1–2), and when God's people gather, assembling themselves together to offer the sacrifice of praise on the Lord's day.

As God's people make disciples (Matt 28:18–20), those new believers likewise become temples of the Holy Spirit, even as they also extend the area of the temple comprised of God's corporate people. In this way, the church carries forward Adam's mandate to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (Gen 1:28; cf. Col 1:6). As God's temple expands to fill the

earth through this fruitful multiplication, God's people fulfill God's purpose by the power of God's Spirit, and from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting, the name of the Lord is praised.

When all the elect have heard, Christ will return and bring all God's purposes to full consummation. The believing dead will be raised. Jesus will reign for a thousand years, and then after Satan's final defeat all will be raised from the dead for the final judgment. At that point the new Jerusalem will come down from God out of heaven as a new holy of holies, and God will dwell with his people.

#### The New Birth: Life of the Age to Come

In John 3 the evangelist presents Jesus telling Nicodemus of the way only those who experience the fulfillment of Ezekiel 36 will be able to see and enter God's Kingdom, the realm of life. When Jesus speaks to Nicodemus of the need to be "born of water and spirit," he speaks of the cleansing Ezekiel prophesied, when God's exiled people would be sprinkled with clean water (Ezek 36:25).

I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules (Ezek 36:24–27).

Through Ezekiel the Lord makes a number of promises here: restoration to the land of promise; cleansing from defilement and idolatry; a new heart and spirit; removal of a dead heart of stone to be replaced by a living heart of flesh; his own Spirit in their midst; and divine power to fulfill the law.

The people's exile to the unclean realm of the dead made this eschatological cleansing necessary. With the cleansing comes a new heart and new spirit (36:26), and God promises moreover to put his own Spirit in the midst of his people that they might obey him (36:27).

To be restored to the land of promise spells restoration to God's presence, and to be in God's presence the people must be clean.<sup>6</sup> To stay in God's presence they must fulfill the terms of the covenant by living out fulfillment of the law.<sup>7</sup> To fulfill the law they need a heart change whereby they desire to obey. The best part of all this, of course, is God's own presence in their midst by means of the Spirit. To live in God's place under God's rule as God's people is to participate in God's kingdom.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, 5).

Jesus told Nicodemus that in order to see and enter God's kingdom, the realm of life, one must be born again, born of water and spirit. Jesus presents this new birth as the fulfillment of Ezekiel's chapter 36 prophecy concerning the return from exile (Ezek 36:24-27).

Elaborating upon these realities, Jesus continues into Ezekiel's chapter 37 prophecy concerning the resurrection of the dry bones from the dead by the power of the Spirit. Jesus speaks of this new birth that the Spirit accomplishes in terms of the Spirit blowing where he pleases, just as he blew upon the dry bones in Ezekiel 37.

. . . he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. . . there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' . . . Then he said to me, 'Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. . . So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together . . . Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord

GOD: come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live . . . And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land (Ezek 37:1-4, 7, 9, 14).

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<sup>6</sup> See 1 Corinthians 6:11, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of Scripture are drawn from the ESV.

<sup>7</sup> Romans 8:4, "in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

Having spoken of the fulfillment of Ezekiel 36:24–27 in John 3:3–5, Jesus speaks in terms of Ezekiel 37 in John 3:8, The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

The Lord addressed Ezekiel as “son of man” in Ezekiel 37, and Jesus references himself as the Son of Man in John 3:13–14. Jesus seems to be presenting himself to Nicodemus as the Son of Man who will bring to fulfillment what Ezekiel prophesied concerning new life, resurrection, and return from exile. When Jesus speaks of the new birth, he presents it in terms of Ezekiel 36 and 37, chapters that deal with not only new inner life, a living heart of flesh, but also with resurrection from the dead. The reason for this seems to stem from the fact that when someone experiences the new birth, they enjoy the beginnings of resurrection life. The Spirit causes the life of the age to come to begin already, though it will not yet take full hold until Christ returns and dead believers rise in glorified bodies.

This dynamic also explains the New Testament’s twofold use of the term “regeneration.” The term *palingenesia* occurs exactly twice in the New Testament: first in Matthew 19:28, where it is translated “the new world” (ESV) or “the renewal of all things” (NIV), and again in Titus 3:5, where it refers to the regeneration of individual believers, those who have been born again, made alive, regenerated. The most natural explanation of the use of the term in these two ways holds that the regeneration of an individual believer causes him or her to partake of the life of “the new world.” This understanding explains other statements Paul makes in 2 Corinthians and Romans.

In 2 Corinthians 5:17 Paul writes, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, new creation! The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (my translation). This indicates that those who are in Christ partake of the new creation that God will accomplish at the end of all things. In fact, so fully has the new life taken hold in them that the old can be described as gone, with the new having come. Those who are in Christ are new creations.

Paul’s words in Romans 8 complement the picture sketched in to this point. In Romans 8:15 Paul says that believers have received the Spirit of adoption. Then in Romans 8:23 he speaks of the way that believers groan inwardly, waiting eagerly for adoption as sons, this adoption being defined as the redemption of our bodies. The redemption of the body



would appear to be the resurrection of the body. To be adopted, then, is to be raised from the dead to full participation in the Father's family by the Spirit's power, heirs with the firstborn Son. To have received the Spirit of adoption is to receive a down payment, a first installment, an initial experience of the resurrection life that will become reality in the age to come, when the dead are raised and their bodies redeemed. As Paul puts it in Romans 8:11, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."

Synthesizing the concepts we have seen to this point, we can say that those who have experienced the new birth have the Spirit blow through them the way the resurrecting Spirit does in Ezekiel 37, giving life to the dead. As they experience the new birth, they are made alive by the Spirit and cleansed by the new covenant sprinkling, which enables them to enter God's kingdom, the clean realm, the realm of life. The resurrection quality of regeneration can also be seen in the way that those who are regenerated are described with the same term, *palingenesia*, used to speak of the regeneration of all things. And those to whom the Spirit has given the new birth, whom the Spirit has regenerated, are united to Christ by faith. They are united to, indeed, *in* Christ, who is himself the fulfillment of the temple, and the Spirit indwells them, making them the new temple. This indwelling Spirit is the Spirit of adoption as sons, and when the adoption is finalized, the dead will be raised, bodies redeemed, and all will be made new.

Flowing out of the old covenant, then, are a number of significant concepts for our understanding of the Holy Spirit and Christian worship. These include: death and life—life in God's presence, death outside it; clean and unclean—what is clean goes with life, while death is unclean; the defining principle in all this is the presence of God—God is holy and dwells only in a clean realm of life, while sin defiles, results in death, and separates from God.

The old covenant introduces these concepts, providing the framework within which promises of the new covenant will be made and fulfilled.

### The Church's Worship: The Temple of the Holy Spirit Exalts the Son

Everything that I have said to this point will hopefully put the building blocks in place for a biblical theological understanding of the

Holy Spirit and Christian worship that is distinctively Baptist, Baptist precisely because biblical.

This biblical and Baptist biblical theology of the Holy Spirit and Christian worship affirms historic, classical Trinitarian confessions. We can see the inseparable operations of the members of the godhead regarding worship in, for instance, Ephesians 2:18, “For through him [Jesus] we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”

Because only those who have been born again can see and enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3, 5), only those who have experienced this washing of regeneration (Tit 3:5) have been cleansed from defilement so that they can enter the realm of the Spirit. This means that only those who have experienced the new birth can worship the Father in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

Thus we can say that worship takes place in the sphere of the Spirit, that only those who have experienced the new birth the Spirit brings can see and enter God’s kingdom, and therefore only those who have been made alive by the Spirit can worship. In God’s mercy, he continues to draw people by the Spirit to trust in Christ that they might worship the Father.

The *location* of worship in the new covenant is the sphere of the Spirit. The *state* of the worshipers is that they are born again. The *content* of worship, it seems to me, is informed by the regulative principle (loosely applied, on which see below).

Location of worship:	in the Spirit
State/Manner of Worship:	only those born again
Content of Worship:	loose regulative principle

As John presents Jesus explaining, the Spirit’s role is to lead the followers of Jesus to glorify Jesus: When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you (Joh 16:13–14).

Under the old covenant, God by his Spirit indwelt Israel's tabernacle and later the temple.<sup>8</sup> In the new covenant, God's people are his temple. This reality informs Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 3:16, "Do you not know that you are God's temple, and the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

Under the old covenant rites of cleansing and sacrifices for atonement were administered by the priests, while the Levites worked and served at tabernacle and temple (Num 3:8). In the new covenant the death of Christ has fulfilled sacrifices for atonement, people experience the washing of the word (Eph 5:26), the washing of regeneration (Tit 3:5), being born of water and spirit (John 3:5), and believers are priests (1 Pet 2:9),<sup>9</sup> offering their bodies as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1), themselves a spiritual temple built of the living stones (1 Pet 2:5), offering the sacrifice of praise (Heb 13:15).

Jesus himself pointed things in this direction. The Gospel of John presents Jesus saying to the Samaritan woman,

the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . . the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth (4:21, 23–24).

With these words Jesus points to a day that has dawned when local worship in the temple in Jerusalem will be replaced by worship in spirit. I understand these references to worship in spirit and truth to refer to worship that will not be limited to a particular place but that will take place in the domain, or the sphere of the Spirit.

Consider these statements in John's Gospel:

- "what has been born of the Spirit is spirit" (3:6);
- They will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (4:23);
- "God is spirit" (4:24);

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<sup>8</sup> For descriptions of God's presence prior to the construction of the tabernacle, see James M. Hamilton, "God with Men in the Torah," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 113–33.

<sup>9</sup> See also Romans 15:16, "to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

- “the words I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (6:63);
- “for it was not yet spirit” (7:39).

These phrases seem to describe God’s existence and realm.<sup>10</sup> God is spirit, and those who are born of the Holy Spirit enter that realm and partake of that existence. The words of Jesus partake of that realm and impart that life. After Jesus goes to the cross to be glorified, he gives the Spirit to his disciples and brings them into the new state of affairs where worship takes place “in spirit and truth.” Peter seems to describe the same reality:

For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does. (1Pet 4:6). [cf. CSB: “live by God in the spiritual realm”].

Faith in Christ unites to Christ, and those united to Christ have experienced the life giving power of the Spirit, the cleansing and renewal and induction into kingdom of God. As a branch must be connected to the vine to bear fruit, followers of Jesus must abide in his words, maintaining a vital connection to him, to bear the fruit of the Spirit. As John puts it, “Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us” (1John 3:24).

This abiding in Christ by the Spirit-inspired words of Scripture enables the participation in the Spirit, the “worship in spirit,” described by the following phrases:<sup>11</sup>

- Romans 8:9, “You, however, are not in the flesh but **in the Spirit**, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”

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<sup>10</sup> See also 1 Peter 3:18, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.” Not the rendering of this last phrase by the CSB, “made alive in the spiritual realm.” Paul seems to refer to those who participate in the realm of the Spirit as the “spiritual” in 1 Corinthians 2:13, “And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.”

<sup>11</sup> Admittedly, some of these phrases may pertain more to *manner* than *sphere*.

- Romans 14:17, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy **in the Holy Spirit.**”
- 1 Corinthians 12:3, “Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says ‘Jesus is accursed!’ and no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except **in the Holy Spirit.**”
- 1 Corinthians 14:2, “For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries **in the Spirit.**”
- Ephesians 6:18, “praying at all times **in the Spirit**, with all prayer and supplication.”
- Jude 1:20, “But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying **in the Holy Spirit.**”

The indwelling Holy Spirit has given life by means of regeneration and has ushered the made alive and cleansed believer into the kingdom of God, the Spirit’s sphere. As the new temple of the Holy Spirit, believers are simultaneously those who partake of the new creation—the new heavens and new earth being itself the realization of God’s cosmic temple.

As the Lord Jesus builds the church, he builds the temple of the Holy Spirit, the new creation, and this would appear to explain the imagery that informs 1 Peter 2:4–9,

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Similar temple imagery seems to inform Paul's words in Ephesians 2:19–22,

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,<sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,<sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.<sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

The author of Hebrews assumes such concepts and speaks of how the sacrifices of praise from the new temple in Hebrews 13:15, "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name."

The Spirit centers the worship of those who whom he gives life on the word and Christ, which leads to a loose application of the regulative principle. God's people respond to his revelation of himself by singing the Bible, reading the Bible, praying the Bible, preaching the Bible, and enacting the Bible (by observing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper). Each of these is commanded in the Scriptures.

Paul urges believers to sing the Bible in statements such as Ephesians 5:19, "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart." Paul also calls for the reading of the bible when he writes in 1 Timothy 4:13, "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching." We see apostolic examples of praying the Bible in passages such as Acts 4:23–31, and the James 5:16 and other texts call God's people to pray for one another. Paul enjoins the preaching of the word in 2 Timothy 4:2, "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching." As for baptism and the Lord's Supper, both were instituted by the Lord Jesus and passed on to the churches by example in Acts and instruction in the epistles.

All of this leads me to contend that Baptist ecclesiology and worship (Baptist because biblical, being centered on the Spirit-inspired word, which reveals the Spirit-exalted Christ, known by those made alive and

indwelled by the Spirit of the Father who raised Jesus from the dead) is most attuned to the Holy Spirit in Christian Worship.