

So That You May Know

An Expositional Study of the Epistle of **1 John 4:12**

Chapter 20- God Dwells in Us

192 God Dwells in Us- Part 3

WAOY Thursday 05/22/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" of the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "God Dwelling in Us"- so let's read **1John 4:12** again together:

No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

Now over the last several verses- the Apostle is dealing with a very fundamental question of just who really knows God and who doesn't. John has taught us previously that those who know God- love- because God is love. And then in verse 12- John begins to tell us that no man hath seen God at any time. Now what does this have to do with love? Well, again, John is equated our loving each other with our relationship with God and so knowing God is part and parcel to loving each other.

You see, dear friends, we love one another- not only because there are so many lovable things about each of us- no, sometimes we are not lovable at all and so the *real* reason why we as believers love one another is because God is Love and because God first loved us and saved us and put inside of us part of His Own Divine Nature and since God so loved us even when we were vile sinners- then we ought- we have the duty and responsibility and the obligation to love one another- regardless of the difficulty or the effort involved.

And as we love one another- we are verifying that we belong to Jesus or in other words- as we love- we are proving that we genuinely know God. And then at this moment- John reinforces the fact that no man visibly sees the invisible God at any time. So what John means here is that there is no quick path to knowing God. We can't simply look at God and by seeing God we now know God- no, John says that no

man hath seen God at any time; or in other words- we can't know God quickly or easily- like by looking at him- but we must take the much harder and longer path to knowing God that involves loving one another and of dealing with each other and by this love that is found nowhere else on earth besides the Church inside saved people- we will prove that we know God and we will have the assurance of our own Salvation.

And John teaches that our assurance will not be based on visions or audible voices- but our assurance has to be based on something deeper and stronger than that. Our five senses of seeing, feeling, touching, smelling, and tasting are finite; they are earthly, sensual and temporary attributes that are not permanent; they are not eternal; and they are not spiritual. So our assurance that we indeed do know God must be based on something greeter than our five senses.

Okay, so what is our assurance based if it is not based on what we see and what we hear? Well, in verse 9-11- John partly answers that question. In know that God is love- in that He has manifested this in the death, burial, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not need a vision- I have this that is greater and more important than a vision. God, in His Grace and Wisdom may give me a vision- but I do not seek after one and have no need to have one because I already have something that is far superior to any vision- I have the reality of Who Christ is and what Christ has done. I already have something that is more stable than anything on earth and more sure and certain than anything else. God is in Christ manifesting Himself as Love.

But I have something even more than this. Not only has God manifested His great love towards us in Christ and through what Christ has already done- but now, John says, God dwells in us.

Now I realize that those of us who are alive now have never lived one day when Christianity has not been the dominant force on earth. We Gentiles have grown up hearing about Jesus and Christianity all our lives. But we must remember that when John first wrote this Epistle- the concept that a holy and perfect God would dwell inside sinful human hearts and not dwell in the Temple in Jerusalem was a radical concept that very few believed.

Not one single Old Testament believer ever lived one second with God living inside him. Not one Old Testament hero who raised the dead and who performed miracles and who saw visions and who talked to God even conceived in his mind the idea that God would dwell inside

him. Before the Resurrection of Jesus- the Holy Spirit was very active and busy on the earth. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit did indeed move upon people but He never walked inside any of them. Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah all did great things and saw great things and had a real relationship with God and were indeed saints of God- but none of them had the Holy Spirit walking and dwelling inside them. None of them.

The Bible says the Holy Spirit came upon these people- but then the Bible also says that the Holy Spirit also went. He fell on them-but then He lifted and left them. He moved upon those people; He walked *beside* them- but never in them.

The Old Testament believers saw God lead them by a cloud and by a pillar of fire and in smoke and thunderings and in dark speeches and in signs and in types and in shadows and in part- but God did not dwell in any of them. God dwelling inside human tabernacles was only a faraway promise to those under the Old Covenant and they saw it afar off and they talked about it and they longed for it and they dreamed about it- but none of them ever experienced it one single second.

Jeremiah prophesied about a day that was coming when things would be different when he said in **Jeremiah 31:31-33**:

31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord.

33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Jeremiah said that the day was coming when God's Law would no longer be found on tables of stone but would be written on the tables of the heart by the very finger of God. This is a statement regarding the Holy Spirit dwelling and walking in us as a result of us being regenerated and born again through the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now the fact that Jeremiah began his prophecy here by saying, **"Behold days are coming"** shows us very clearly that this had not

happened before. And in fact- even before this- way back in **Exodus 29:45**- God gave a glimpse of what it would be like under the New Covenant just days after the first Covenant had been given when He said:

I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God.

Paul, operating in his capacity as an Apostle of Jesus Christ gave us the correct interpretation of this very verse when he wrote in **2 Corinthians 6:16** and said:

Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "*I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.*"

So you can see that God dwelling inside human hearts is strictly a New Covenant reality that never came about through the blood of animals and was never manifested from a priesthood that was made up of sinful priests. No, a superior Covenant; which was based upon superior Promises; which was purchased by a superior Sacrifice and which was ministered by a superior and sinless High Priest is the only reason that you and I can say that God dwells in us.

And we must never take this for granted. And we also must ask ourselves this. If the Old Testament saints could do all that they did *without* God dwelling in them- what should we be doing today with the Holy Spirit walking inside us.

Why would anyone seek after a vision that is in part when we already have the fullness of Jesus Christ? Why seek after a prophecy that is in part that comes from the lips of sinful and very fallible Man when we already have the completed Revelation of God written in infallible and inerrant Words that come right out of the Mouth of God?

Why would anyone seek to build up their faith based on the carnal five senses when they already have the reality of God dwelling in us? It just makes no sense. Either these people don't know what all we have in Christ, or they have come to the conclusion that what we have in Christ is not enough.

The fact of God dwelling in us should thrill our hearts; it should

revolutionize our lives. The knowledge that a holy and sinless Almighty God dwells inside my sinful heart should cause me to walk in such power and victory that nothing that satan throws at me should ever affect me.

And I really believe this. It is a testimony that we either don't know that God dwells inside us through Jesus Christ, or we have come to the conclusion that it isn't enough that God dwells in us that we seek after earthly and carnal comforts to our struggles. What on this earth could possibly be better and more beneficial and more important to me than God dwelling inside me? A new car? A raise on my job? Physical healing?

Every single believer who has come to faith in Jesus Christ has more power and more ability in God right now than all that the Old Covenant saints had combined. These wonderful people walked with God faithfully *without* the indwelling of God's Spirit- so don't tell me that we can't walk with God now that God lives inside us.

The weak, effeminate spirit that has captured the modern Church is a direct result, dear friends, of real bad teaching and of us not valuing God enough to make time to know His Word and we need to fix that problem right now.

But let me show you just how rare it used to be that God actually dwelled inside anybody. Read with me **John 1:29-34**:

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

30 "This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'

31 "I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water."

32 John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.

33 "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'

34 "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

Now this is the account of when John the Baptist first identified Who Jesus was. Notice in verse 33 what John the Baptists said was the

determining factor as to why he knew that Jesus was God in the flesh. Please notice that John begins verse 33 with these words- **“I did not recognize Him”**. Then he goes on to say this:

... but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'

Now God is the One Who sent John to baptize with water. So, God told John that when he saw the Spirit of God with his own natural eyes descending on an individual and remaining on him- that that was the proof that this was the Christ.

Now remember, dear friends, that John never saw one single miracle that Jesus performed because it wasn't too many days after John meets Jesus here that he was arrested and soon after had his head cut off. So, John was not convinced that Jesus was God by any of the miracles that Jesus was to perform later on. And John was not convinced that Jesus was God by anything that Jesus taught- because once again- John was not privileged to hear anything that Jesus taught. And John never saw Jesus on the Cross either.

So, if it wasn't the signs or the wonders; and if it wasn't the teachings or the Crucifixion that convinced John- what was it that made John the Baptist cry out, *“Behold the Lamb of God”*.

It was the fact that John saw the Spirit descending on Jesus and for the first time in human history- the Spirit didn't lift; He didn't depart; and He didn't leave- but He remained. And John is teaching us here that those who have been truly born from above love one another and they manifest this love precisely because God now dwells inside them and walks in them and remains in them too.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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