

Brokenness and God's indwelling

With whom does God dwell?

And one shall say, "Heap it up! Heap it up! Prepare the way, Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people." For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would fail before Me, And the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry and struck him; I hid and was angry, And he went on backsliding in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will also lead him, And restore comforts to him and to his mourners. "I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near," Says the Lord, "And I will heal him." But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. "There is no peace," Says my God, "for the wicked" (Isaiah 57:14-21 NKJV).

With whom does God dwell? With whom does God make His home?

This text was written to ancient Israel after they were taken captive to Assyria and Babylon. We believe that this part of Isaiah was written during the captivity or shortly after many Israelites came back to Israel. It was not only written to the Israelites (as a group) who were left over after the captivity, but to individuals in Israel who backslid and departed from worshipping the true God. Because of their (Israel's) covetousness and idolatry God left them and struck them. Our text says: "Take up the stumbling block out of the way." There were stumbling blocks in the way of Israel. They couldn't get to God. There was a wall of separation between them. Their sins separated them from God. God calls them sons of the "witchdoctor" or "sorcerers" (Isaiah 57:3). And earlier in the chapter, God says: "Inflaming yourselves with gods under every green tree, Slaying the children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks?"; "On a lofty and high mountain you have set your bed; Even there you went up to offer sacrifice" (Isaiah 57:5, 7 NKJV). Now the book of Samuel says that the sin of rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft

and the sin of stubbornness as the sin of idolatry! If you are rebellious, you are the same as people committing witchcraft! If you are stubborn, you are as those who commit idolatry! They (the Israelites) also committed sexual immorality. Israel worshiped other gods and made their children go through the fire. They sacrificed their children to other gods e.g. Molec. Isn't abortion on demand doing the same in our communities? "I did it my way" was a popular song of Frank Sinatra. This is the way of destruction. In the movie *Invictus*, the actor playing Nelson Mandela proudly states his life philosophy: "I am the Master of my fate, I am the Captain of My soul." Think for a minute. Because of this philosophy Israel as a nation was almost obliterated. Regarding Israel: "He went on backsliding in the way of his heart" (Isaiah 57:17). Isaiah 59:1,2 gives the reason why there was a barrier between God and them: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1, 2 NKJV). Israel was in this state of need and desperation. My friend, are you also in this state? Do you feel that God's presence is far from you? Has anything become more important to you than God? Is He still your first love? Or should I ask: Has God ever been your first love?

1. Who is God and where does God dwell?

-- God inhabits eternity. He lives in another dimension beyond time and space. God has no beginning. We have beginnings. We were born into this world, but not God. God is high and lofty as our text declares. God is holy. He is without moral corruption. He is not evil but infinitely glorious and good. There is no darkness within Him. He cannot sin. He is exalted. He is almighty. He is invisible. Spirit. Just. The angels and seraphim's before His throne cries day and night: holy, holy, holy (Revelation 4; Isaiah 6:1-8). There is none like Him. No thing, person or being can come close to His magnificence.

-- But although God dwells in the high and holy place, He dwells with the humble and contrite ones. He revives the humble in heart; He revives the contrite in spirit (Isaiah 57:15). What does that mean? God dwells with those who know that in themselves dwells no good thing (Romans 7:18). God dwells with those who know without God they are

damned and lost. God dwells with those whom He has crushed. The word "contrite" in Hebrew literally means "to be broken into pieces." God lives with the broken in heart (Psalm 34:18).

"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit" (Psalms 34:18 NKJV).

After King David was convicted of his sins of adultery and murder he exclaimed "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge... Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalms 51:4, 10-11 NKJV). And: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise" (Psalms 51:17 NKJV).

And in Isaiah 66 it is written: "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word" (Isaiah 66:2 NKJV).

Jesus said: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:4,5 NKJV).

God dwells with those who have godly sorrow for sins. Paul, the apostle, wrote: "For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death" (II Corinthians 7:10 NKJV).

-- God dwells with those who have seen what their sins have done to God. What have our sins done to God? Isaiah 53:5 says: "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. "(Isaiah 53:5 NKJV). 2000 years ago Jesus Christ was broken and crucified on a cross on Golgotha, because of our sins not only for our sins. In the Hebrew, Isaiah 53:5 can also be translated as "He was wounded **because** of our sins, He was bruised **because** of our iniquities." Have you realized that your sins held Jesus to the cross? We sing this in church "our sins has held Him there" in the song: "How great the Fathers love for us." Yes, Jesus died as our substitute, in our

place to absorb the wrath of God and to satisfy the just requirement for sin, which is death, for our sins, but He also died because of our sins! He died because of us! Has your heart been broken “in pieces” because of your sins? Have you been shattered because of what you did to Jesus?

-- God can help those who have come to the end of themselves. God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.

The Bible says: “But He gives more grace. ---- Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:6, 8-10 NKJV).

The self-sufficient cannot receive God. Those infatuated with what money can buy will not receive God. It is easier for a camel to go in through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (Mark 10:25). The love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). But God dwells with the contrite and humble in heart!

2. What does God give to the humble and contrite in heart?

-- Our text says: "For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls which I have made" (Isaiah 57:16). If God keeps his anger towards us, we will all perish. However, God is holy and just and cannot have unity with sin or people in unity with their sins. It is like two magnets both positive or both negative. Have you tried to bring them together? They cannot be brought together. They push one another off. It is a scientific law. So does sin push God off. In the same way: people united with sin (their wickedness) cannot be reconciled with God.

-- Sin is so contrary and offensive to God that He has instituted the death penalty for every sin. God commanded Adam and Eve in the garden: “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:16-17 NKJV). Ezekiel 18:20 declares: "the soul that sins must die", and Romans 6:23 states:

"the wages for sin is death." The Bible also says in Habakkuk "You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness" (Habakkuk 1:13 NKJV). God abhors every kind of sin and rebellion. That is why only in Jesus Christ and only through His death on the cross as our substitute, could atonement for our sins have been made. He died the death we had to die to forgive our sins and make us right with God.

-- So what does God give to those who trust in Jesus and repent of their sins?

-- **Peace.** Shalom. Salvation. When Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples, He said: Shalom or as it is translated in English: Peace (John 20:19,26). If we look at the meaning of Shalom in the Hebrew, it can be translated as: Spiritual blessings. Or freedom from your enemies. Security and safety from your enemies. Or even material prosperity. Even in the Old Testament, it has the meaning of holistic salvation. When Jesus said, "Shalom" to His disciples after He rose from the dead it meant: Forgiveness of sins! Deliverance from the power of sin and death! Security in God! Safety from God's future wrath. Even eternal life! In this case, it means all the spiritual benefits God can lavish on a person.

-- **Healing.** "I will heal you." Sin causes spiritual sickness. Sin could result in physical sickness as well. It causes defilement. In this context, it primarily means spiritual healing. In Isaiah 53:5 the Bible says: "By your (God's) wounds (stripes) we are healed." This text primarily refers to the wounds of Jesus Christ, that He suffered on the cross. Jesus was wounded in our place, and by His wounds, we are forgiven from our sins. Also in Chapter 57 of Isaiah the word, healing, refers to a spiritual state of salvation, where the turning from backsliding of a nation and individuals within that nation to God has been accomplished by God.

-- **Guidance.** God says: "I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will also **lead** him" (Isaiah 57:18 NKJV). God is not only interested in comforting, healing and restoring His contrite ones, but in guiding them until they die. Salvation includes Lordship. God wants to be your Savior and Guide. He watches over those who come to Him in humility. Jesus cannot and will not only be your Savior and Restorer, but He will be your Mater and Lord! When God saves you, you give ownership to Him. As God promises those in Psalm 32 who receive forgiveness of

sins: “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you” (Psalms 32:8-9 NKJV).

-- **Himself.** The Indwelling Holy Spirit. There would be no abiding peace, healing, and guidance without the abiding Holy Spirit. Because of Isaiah 53, because of the Suffering Savior, Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross 2000 years ago, Isaiah 57:15 can become a reality in our lives. Because Jesus Christ was bruised and broken for our sins, **God** can indwell us. He can make His home within us. That is an awesome reality! In John 14:23, Jesus also said to His disciples: “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” (John 14:23 NKJV). It is the purpose of God to make a home in His creatures, to those who will come to Him in contrition and in humility!

3. The extent and limitations of His indwelling.

-- **the extent** – (verse 19) “to those who are far and those who are near”.

-- God’s Indwelling was meant for all the Israelites in the Babylonian Empire living in the 5th and sixth centuries BC and then for those Israelites living in the Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires empires in the succeeding centuries. It was meant for the scattered ones as well as for those who returned to Israel.

-- Listen to how Paul in the letter to the Ephesians interprets God’s purpose in salvation: “Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ***you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*** For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached ***peace*** to you

who *were afar off and to those who were near*. For through Him, we both have access by one Spirit to the Father” (Ephesians 2:11-18 NKJV). There is now peace in Christ for the Gentile nations as well as the Jewish nation. God has made us one by the blood of Christ, to those who are far and to those who are near!

-- But the salvation of God is also meant for ALL ethnic groups and not only some Gentiles. In Revelation 7:9 when we look forward to the future we hear these words: "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of **all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” (Revelation 7:9-12 NKJV). Psalm 67:1-3 also states: "God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us, Selah. That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among **all nations**. Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You” (Psalms 67:1-3 NKJV). In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus said to His disciples: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of **all** the nations (Ethne) baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV).

-- And peace and salvation are also meant for the destitute and crushed ones among us, for those who are far and for those who are near (verse 19). Some are so far away because of their sins that they don't see their way back to God. This week I had someone call me and tell me that God would never be able to forgive him, because of his sins. Our text says, peace to those who are far away! Friend, are you far away in your sins? Have you backslidden in your heart? God's peace and salvation are also meant for the marginalized, the poor, the homeless and the foreigners among us! It's meant for the prostitutes and the drug-addicts!

-- **The limitations of God's Indwelling:** But it excludes the wicked. "No peace for the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21). Why? Because they are like the waves that continually cast up mire and dirt. They are like the troubled sea. They are proud and self-sufficient. They show they are not repentant of their sins. Their sins don't trouble them. They have set their faces against God. Psalm 36:2,4 states: "For he (the wicked) flatters himself in his own eyes, When he finds out his iniquity and when he hates. He devises wickedness on his bed; He sets himself in a way that is not good; He does not abhor evil" (Psalms 36:2, 4 NKJV). Phillipians 3:18 states: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, ...and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame— who set their mind on earthly things" (Philippians 3:18, 19 NKJV). There is no peace for the wicked," their end is destruction. There is no salvation for them. Their part will be in the lake of fire. The proud in heart are an abomination in God's sight. Proud people think they don't need God. Revelation 20:15 declares: "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15 NKJV).

Conclusion: With whom does God dwell?

God dwells with those who humble themselves before God.

God dwells with those who repent of their sins,

with those who confess their sins,

with those who have godly sorrow for their sins,

with those who have a contrite heart,

with those whom God gives a new heart, where the Holy Spirit dwells.

Those who've looked at the Suffering Savior, Jesus Christ, and see that they are responsible for His death.

Those who have seen their sins, loathed it and trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and in His finished work at the cross alone.

All the things mentioned here is a work of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God.

John Stott, the theologian, said: "Before we can understand what God has done for us at the cross, we must understand what we have done to Jesus Christ at the cross."

Because of Isaiah 53:3-5. "He was bruised for (or because of) our iniquities. He was crushed for (or because of) our transgressions, the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him. By His wounds we are healed.",

Isaiah 57:15 can become a reality in us: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Has God made His home within you?

Do you have the Holy Spirit as an abiding reality in your life?

That is the goal of the gospel!