

1 John 4:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

Analysis

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. John provides another test for assurance—the Spirit's presence. "Hereby know we" (en toutō ginōskomen)—this provides certain knowledge, not speculation. "That we dwell in him, and he in us" (hoti en autō menomen kai autos en hēmin)—the mutual indwelling restated from 3:24. The evidence follows.

"Because he hath given us of his Spirit" (hoti ek tou pneumatos autou dedōken hēmin). The perfect tense emphasizes completed giving with continuing possession—God gave the Spirit, and we continue to possess Him. The preposition "of" (ek) could indicate partitive (a portion of His Spirit) or source (from His Spirit). Likely both senses apply—the Spirit given to believers comes from God and is God's own Spirit, though each believer doesn't possess the totality of the Spirit's person (which is omnipresent).

The Spirit's presence evidences both God's indwelling in us and our abiding in God. The Spirit is God (the third person of the Trinity) dwelling within believers, sealing them (Ephesians 1:13), transforming them (2 Corinthians 3:18), and producing fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). This gift provides assurance—if the Spirit dwells in you, evidenced by His fruit (especially love), you have certain proof of salvation. The Spirit's internal witness (Romans 8:16) combined with His external fruit (Galatians 5:22-23) provides objective and subjective assurance of genuine salvation.

Historical Context

The gift of the Holy Spirit was central to apostolic preaching (Acts 2:38). Joel's prophecy of the Spirit being poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28-29) began fulfillment at Pentecost. Unlike Old Testament experience where the Spirit came upon specific individuals for specific tasks, New Covenant believers all receive the Spirit permanently at conversion (Romans 8:9—"if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his").

This teaching was vital against claims that only elite Christians or those with special experiences possessed the Spirit. John affirms that all genuine believers have received the Spirit—this is Christianity's universal mark, not exceptional experience. The Spirit's presence is both gift (grace) and evidence (assurance). The charismatic movement's later emphasis on seeking subsequent Spirit experiences must be evaluated against John's teaching that Spirit-possession characterizes all Christians from conversion.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life gives you assurance that you dwell in God and He in you?
2. How can you distinguish between the Spirit's genuine work and counterfeit spiritual experiences or emotional feelings?
3. If possessing God's Spirit is Christianity's universal mark, how should this affect your confidence in salvation despite feelings of inadequacy?

Interlinear Text

ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτοῦ μένομεν καὶ
Hereby G5129 know we because Hereby he we dwell and
G1722 G1097 G3754 G1722 G846 G3306 G2532

αὐτοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ
he Hereby us because of Spirit he
G846 G1722 G2254 G3754 G1537 G3588 G4151 G846

δέδωκεν ἡμῖν
he hath given us
G1325 G2254

Additional Cross-References

1 John 3:24 (Spirit): And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

1 Corinthians 2:12 (Spirit): Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.