

2 Corinthians 6:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Analysis

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? (τίς δὲ συγκατάθεσις ναῷ θεοῦ μετὰ εἰδώλων; *tis de synkatathesis naō theou meta eidōlōn?*)—Synkatathesis means agreement, union, or compact. Naos (temple) refers to the inner sanctuary, the holy of holies where God dwells. Eidōlon (idol) refers to false gods and their images. Paul's fifth rhetorical question reaches the climax: God's temple cannot coexist with idols—this would be the abomination of desolation itself.

For ye are the temple of the living God (ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζώντος, *hēmeis gar naos theou esmen zōntos*)—Paul answers his own question by identifying believers corporately as God's temple. Theos zōn (living God) contrasts with dead idols (Ps 115:4-7). This echoes 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and anticipates Ephesians 2:19-22. Christians individually and corporately are indwelt by God's Spirit, making them sacred space. To compromise with idolatry is to defile God's holy dwelling.

As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them (καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι Ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω, *kathōs eipen ho theos hoti Enoikēsō en autois kai emperipatēsō*)—Paul combines Leviticus 26:11-12, Ezekiel 37:27, and perhaps other texts in a composite quotation. Enoikeō (dwell in) and emperipateō (walk among) express God's covenant presence—the fulfillment of tabernacle/

temple theology. What was promised to Israel now applies to the church.

And I will be their God, and they shall be my people (καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεός, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μου λαός, kai esomai autōn theos, kai autoi esontai mou laos)—This is the covenant formula repeated throughout Scripture (Gen 17:7-8; Ex 6:7; Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:28; Rev 21:3). Believers enjoy covenant relationship with the living God, who dwells in them by His Spirit. This sacred identity demands separation from idolatry.

Historical Context

The Corinthian church existed in a city filled with pagan temples and idol worship. Temples to Apollo, Aphrodite, and other deities dominated the cityscape. Christians were tempted to compromise by participating in temple feasts and pagan rituals for social or business reasons (1 Cor 8-10). Paul reminds them that they themselves are God's temple, making such compromise unthinkable.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does understanding yourself as 'the temple of the living God' affect your view of personal holiness and what you allow into your life?
2. What modern 'idols' might you be allowing 'agreement' with in ways that defile God's temple?
3. How should the reality that God dwells in and walks among His people motivate both personal purity and corporate holiness in the church?

Interlinear Text

τίς	δὲ	συγκατάθεσις	ναὸς	θεός	μετὰ	εἰδώλων		
what	And	agreement	hath the temple	God	with	idols		
G5101	G1161	G4783	G3485	G2316	G3326	G1497		
ὑμεῖς	γὰρ	ναὸς	θεός	ἐστε	ζῶντος	καθὼς	εἶπεν	
ye	for	hath the temple	God	are	of the living	as	hath said	
G5210	G1063	G3485	G2316	G2075	G2198	G2531	G2036	
ὁ	θεός	ὅτι	Ἐνοικήσω	ἐν	αὐτοῖς	καὶ	ἐμπεριπατήσω	
G3588	God	G3754	I will dwell	in	their	and	walk in	
	G2316		G1774	G1722	G846	G2532	G1704	
καὶ	ἔσονται	αὐτοῖς	θεός	καὶ	αὐτοῖς	ἔσονται	μοι	λαός
and	I will be	their	God	and	their	I will be	my	people
G2532	G2071	G846	G2316	G2532	G846	G2071	G3427	G2992

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 21:3 (Temple): And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Exodus 29:45 (References God): And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

Hebrews 8:10 (References God): For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Leviticus 26:12 (References God): And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

Jeremiah 32:38 (References God): And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

Ezekiel 11:20 (References God): That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Jeremiah 31:33 (References God): But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 24:7 (References God): And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

1 Corinthians 6:19 (Temple): What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Hosea 2:23 (References God): And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.