

**OLD COVENANT BELIEVERS
AND THE INDWELLING SPIRIT:
A SURVEY OF THE SPECTRUM OF OPINION**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The issues raised by John 7:39, which clearly urges that a new experience of the Spirit will be obtained after Jesus is exalted, have caused many readers of the Bible to wrestle with the question of how believers prior to Jesus experienced the Holy Spirit. There are at least five positions embraced on this issue. There is a sixth position, and while it is often assumed that this sixth position is widely held, and while some have been understood as holding it, an affirmation of this position has not been found by the present author. What has been found, however, is that voices from all sides of this issue genuinely love the Bible—both Testaments—and seek to grapple with the difficult issues the text presents while being faithful to its teaching.¹

This discussion of the history of the inquiry into the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Old Covenant believers will be structured by the six positions represented in the literature. The question is a modern one with roots in Luther and Calvin. Modern dispensationalists resemble Luther in their perception of distinctions between the covenants. Modern covenantal theologians resemble Calvin in their understanding of the continuity of the covenant of grace inaugurated in the garden and continuing to the present. The question of indwelling is rarely addressed by the earlier church fathers.² No claim to exhaustive coverage is made—that would

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¹I have found neither the “impatience” with nor the “wanton neglect” of the OT’s teaching on the Spirit alleged by D. I. Block, “The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of *RWH*i** in the Book of Ezekiel,” *JETS* 32 (1989): 27.

²In the early church the proper articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity dominated the discussion. Affirmations of the Spirit’s existence and activity prior to the incarnation are common, but the question of indwelling is seldom raised. Cf. in this regard, Athanasius [c. 296-373], *Four Discourses Against the Arians*, 1.48 (trans. J. H. Newman, rev. A. Robertson, in *St. Athanasius*, NPNF² 4:334); St. Cyril of Jerusalem [318-386], *Catechetical Lectures*, 16.26-27 (trans. J. H. Newman, rev. E. H. Gifford in *S. Cyril of Jerusalem. S. Gregory Nazianzen*, NPNF² 7:122); Ambrose [340-397], *On the Holy*

require a book-length study. This treatment intends to be representative and fair. The categories are nuanced,³ and *inferring* what authors think has been avoided as much as possible.

The six positions are as follows: (1) Continuity; (2) More Continuity than Discontinuity; (3) Some Continuity Some Discontinuity; (4) More Discontinuity than Continuity; (5) Discontinuity; and (6) Vague Discontinuity. Positions one and five represent opposite ends of the spectrum. Not one author affirms position five as it is defined here, which prompts recognition of position six. In the paragraphs that follow these positions will be defined. It will be seen that these six points on the spectrum are not foisted upon the discussion but arise from what authors say about the Holy Spirit and Old Covenant believers. This material is summarized on the chart of "Positions on the Holy Spirit and Old Covenant Believers" which can be found at the end of this article.

II. CONTINUITY

This position represents those who affirm that Old Covenant believers were *regenerated* and *indwelt* by the Holy Spirit. These scholars see basic continuity in the activity of the Spirit within the Old and New Covenants.

It is probable that in the period of the Reformation the concern to affirm that Old Covenant believers had the Spirit was due to soteriological concerns. The Reformation saw a renewed emphasis on justification as articulated by the Apostle Paul. The controversy between Augustine and Pelagius had solidified the church's understanding of human ability and inability, and both Luther and Calvin were heavily influenced by Augustine's understanding of the writings of Paul. Thomas Goodwin and John Owen are the best representatives of category one from the era of the Reformation.⁴

Spirit, 2.1 (trans. H. De Romestin, in *St. Ambrose*, NPNF² 10:115). Some church fathers do indicate that they see a measure of discontinuity, as will be seen below.

³G. Fredricks oversimplifies the landscape of opinion when he writes, "There are two traditional views regarding the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the OT believer. . . . The first is that OT believers experienced the indwelling ministry of the Spirit and the second is that they did not" ("Rethinking the Role of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of Old Testament Believers," *TJ* 9NS [1988]: 81). This is an oversimplification because Fredricks equates regeneration and indwelling (pp. 85-87), but as will be seen below not all authors equate the two.

⁴For space considerations, only Owen will be cited in this discussion. For an instance in Goodwin's writings [1600-1679] where OT saints are said to be indwelt, see, *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation* (vol. 6 of *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*; n.p.: James Nichol, 1863; reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 8. Jonathan Edwards might be placed here by inference from his theological position, but while he affirms that sanctification is always by the Spirit, he does not use the word *indwelling* or related terms. Cf. *Treatise on Grace*, ed. Paul Helm (Cambridge: James Clark, 1971), 55-56. In *A History of the Work of Redemption*, Edwards highlights the "remarkable pourings out of the Spirit of God" seen in the Scriptures (vol. 9 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*; ed. J. F. Wilson; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 142, 192, 233.

Augustine and Calvin are best understood as representatives of position two.

John Owen's voluminous literary output is still widely read now more than three centuries after he wrote, and some hold that his work on the Holy Spirit is unsurpassed.⁵ As Owen deals with the perseverance of believers in the faith, he writes concerning the indwelling of the Holy Spirit,

Positive affirmations that he doth so *dwell in* and remain with the *saints* are the second ground of the truth we assert. I shall name one or two testimonies of that kind: Ps. Li. 11, saith David, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." It is the Spirit, and his presence as unto sanctification, not in respect of prophecy or any other gift whatever, that he is treating of with God.⁶

The italicized words indicate that on the one hand Owen sees *indwelling* in the OT. On the other hand, not only was the anointed king indwelt, but the *saints* in general were indwelt.

In more recent discussion it is widely acknowledged that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is an eschatological blessing. Sinclair Ferguson is no exception in this regard, and his treatment of the Spirit is helpful. Though Ferguson emphasizes the "new" nature of things that results from Christ's completed work,⁷ he maintains that the continual indwelling of Old Covenant believers is not negated by John 14:17. This results in a confusing interpretation of John 14:17. He writes,

What is in view is not so much a distinction between the Spirit being only "with" believers in the old covenant, while he dwells "in" them in the new covenant, although that view has widespread support. . . . He who was "with" them in Christ's presence would then be "in" them as the Spirit of the incarnate and exalted Christ.

⁵Cf. C. C. Ryrie's comments to this effect in his book *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 118.

⁶John Owen, *The Doctrine of the Saints Perseverance Explained and Confirmed* [1654] (vol. 11 of *The Works of John Owen*; ed. W. G. Gould; London: Johnstone & Hunder, 1850-53; reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 331 (emphasis added). Owen also makes the interesting observation, "And thus Adam may be said to have had the Spirit of God in his innocency. . . . He had him not by especial inhabitation, for the whole world was then the temple of God. In the covenant of grace, founded in the person and on the mediation of Christ, it is otherwise. On whomsoever the Spirit of God is bestowed for the renovation of the image of God in him, he abides with him for ever" (John Owen, *Pneumatologia* [1674] [vol. 3 of *The Works of John Owen*, 102]).

The interesting part is that Owen sees "the whole world" as God's temple prior to the fall. We should note, too, that Owen sees the inauguration of the "covenant of grace" upon the breaking of the "covenant of works."

⁷Cf. the lucid discussion of regeneration on pp. 116-30, particularly his discussion of the "New Creation," (S. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996]), 118-19.

The contrast is located not in the manner of his dwelling so much as in the capacity in which he indwells.⁸

It appears that this interpretation of John 14:17 allows Ferguson to leave the door open to affirm that Old Covenant saints were indwelt. He comes close to affirming a real distinction between *with* and *in*, but immediately negates it by the statement, "The contrast is located not in the manner of his dwelling so much as in the capacity in which he indwells." This explanation obfuscates the meaning of the text.

John 7:39 also causes problems for those who affirm continuity between the Spirit's action before and after Jesus. Daniel Fuller seeks to reconcile the words of John 7:39 with his position by explaining:

The only way depraved people can acquire a heart attitude and behavior pleasing to God is to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit (that is, regenerated). . . . But the biggest objection to saying that Old Testament saints were born again comes from John 7:39, "Up to that time the Holy Spirit [was not yet] [sic] since Jesus had not yet been glorified." Many have concluded from this verse that no one was indwelt by the Holy Spirit and regenerated until after Christ came. But since there is so much evidence in the Old Testament to the contrary, we understand John's "not yet" to refer to a time when the Holy Spirit, who had been at work in people's hearts from Adam onward, was to have the additional function of glorifying Jesus.⁹

The problem with Fuller's explanation of John 7:39 is that there are two "not yet's" (the adverbs *ou [pw* and *oujdevpw*) in the verse. Fuller places the first in brackets, as though it is not in the text. It is in the text, however, and cannot be sundered from the phrase, "for the Spirit was not yet *given*." It is the word *given* that must be supplied in translation, not the "not yet."¹⁰ This phrase, "for the Spirit was not yet given," is explaining the relative clause, "whom those who had believed in him were about to receive." Then we find the second "not yet" in the phrase, "because Jesus was not yet glorified." This second "not yet" is the one that Fuller is apparently explaining. He has not explained the first, and seems to imply that it must be supplied by placing it in brackets. The *ou [pw* is in the text,

⁸Ibid., 68.

⁹D. P. Fuller, *The Unity of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 229-30.

¹⁰While the word *given* is not in the best manuscripts (thus the italics), what is in view is clearly the *reception* of the Spirit by believers (*lambavnein*). The phrase *ou [pw ga;r h\n pneu'ma* explains why those who have believed in Jesus are about to receive the Spirit. This phrase could be translated, "It was not yet Spirit," and thereby signify the period of time in which the Spirit will be given to/received by those who have believed. The Spirit, however, seems to be the subject of the verb, and at any rate, "The Spirit was not yet *given*" is a simpler way of communicating the more elusive idea that "It was not yet Spirit" signifies.

and therefore Fuller's argument for his position fails. It is also noteworthy that Fuller clearly equates regeneration and indwelling.

Other authors who could be cited as affirming unqualified continuity include W. C. Kaiser, J. A. Motyer, J. Barton Payne, B. B. Warfield, and Leon Wood.¹¹ By way of summary, these authors either cite Ps 51:11, which does not indicate that ordinary Old Covenant saints had the Spirit, or they cite OT texts that speak of God's Spirit *with* the congregation of Israel. Leon Wood acknowledges that his position is a theological inference when he says, "Since [God] keeps the New Testament saint by indwelling, however, it seems reasonable to believe that He kept the Old Testament saint in the same way."¹²

Can this inference be made when the NT denies that the reception of the Spirit was experienced by those who lived prior to Jesus (John 7:39)? To this question we may add that the continual indwelling of the Spirit is not clearly articulated in the OT. If a person who had read the OT but not the New were asked where God dwells, would that person not respond that God dwells in the Temple? Perhaps the OT's understanding of the sanctification of God's people comes not through his dwelling *in them*, but through his dwelling *in the Temple* in the midst of (i.e., with) Israel (cf. 1 Kgs 8:57-58). It might be that in the attempt to show that the OT is in every way equal with the New, what the Old and New Testaments say about the Old Covenant has been overlooked.

III. MORE CONTINUITY THAN DISCONTINUITY

The difference between adherents of position two and position one is slight. Those who espouse this view hold that there is *no fundamental difference* between the activity of the Spirit in the Old versus the New Covenant, though different language may be employed to describe the activity of the Spirit in the two covenants. In various ways these authors affirm that Old Covenant believers were indwelt by the Spirit, but they qualify their affirmations in an effort to conform their theology to the words of Scripture. It might be objected that continuity is continuity, and there is in reality no distinction between these two positions. The force of that objection is felt, but from the statements below it will be seen that the distinction is legitimate.

¹¹W. C. Kaiser, *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 139-40; J. A. Motyer, *Isaiah* (TOTC; Downers Grove: InterVarsity), 103 n. 1; J. B. Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 174-75, 241; B. B. Warfield, "The Spirit of God in the Old Testament," in *Biblical Doctrines* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1929; reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988), esp. 121-28; Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 70, 85-86.

¹²Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 70.

St. Augustine's thoughts on this issue well illustrate the distinction between position one and position two. In a sermon on John 14:15-17, Augustine states,

Already, therefore, had the disciples that Holy Spirit whom the Lord promised, for without Him they could not call Him Lord; but they had Him not as yet in the way promised by the Lord. . . . they had Him not as yet to the same extent as He was afterwards to be possessed.¹³

The qualification of the "extent" of the possession of the Spirit made by Augustine is the kind of thing that prompts the creation of category two. This qualification does not have to do with the *scope* of the Spirit's activity among the people of God,¹⁴ but with the *quality* of the disciples' experience of the Spirit.

John Calvin also fits in this category of more continuity than discontinuity. One might expect that Calvin would hold to complete continuity, for he writes, "The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same."¹⁵ As Calvin continues, however, into the discussion of the five ways in which the OT differs from the New, he writes concerning OT saints,

But suppose our opponents object that, among the Israelites, the holy patriarchs were an exception: since they were obviously *endowed with the same Spirit of faith as we*, it follows that they shared the same freedom and joy. . . . *We shall deny that they were so endowed with the spirit of freedom and assurance as not in some degree to experience the fear and bondage arising from the law. . . . they are rightly said, in contrast to us, to have been under the testament of bondage and fear, when we consider that common dispensation by which the Lord at that time dealt with the Israelites.*¹⁶

While these comments show that Calvin does see some discontinuity between Old and New Covenant believers, his comments on John 7:39 show that he certainly thought they possessed the Spirit prior to the glorification of Jesus. He says,

At that very time, *the disciples had undoubtedly received* the first-fruits of the Spirit; for whence comes faith but from the Spirit? The Evangelist, therefore, does not absolutely affirm that the grace of the Spirit was not offered and given to believers before the death of

¹³Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* [ca. 416] 74.2 (trans. J. Gibb and J. Innes, in *Augustine*, NPNF¹ 7:334).

¹⁴As argued by M. Van Pelt, W. C. Kaiser Jr., and D. I. Block, "What is new about [Ezekiel's] vision is that finally the physical boundaries of the nation of Israel will be coterminous with its spiritual boundaries" ("j" -w_r," in *NIDOTTE*, 3:1077).

¹⁵John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles; Library of Christian Classics, vols. 20-21; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 429 (2.10.2).

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 458-59 (2.11.9) (emphasis added).

Christ, but that it was not yet so bright and illustrious as it would afterwards become.¹⁷

Daniel I. Block¹⁸ is among the list of prominent adherents of position two today, along with Wayne Grudem, and George Eldon

¹⁷John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John* [1553] (trans. W. Pringle; in *Calvin's Commentaries* [Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1847; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979], 17:310) (emphasis added). Though Calvin does not explicitly say that OT saints were indwelt in the passage cited, John 7:39 says the disciples were about to receive the Spirit but Calvin maintains they had *undoubtedly* received the first-fruits of the Spirit. Calvin's comments on Ps 51:10-11 [1557] indicate that he sees David's experience as equivalent to the experience of New Covenant believers: "David, by the word which he here uses, describes the work of God in renewing the heart in a manner suitable to its extraordinary nature, representing it as the formation of a new creature. . . . [H]e acknowledges that we are indebted entirely to the grace of God, both for our first regeneration, and, in the event of our falling, for subsequent restoration. . . . In the verse which follows, he presents the same petition, in language which implies the connection of pardon with the enjoyment of the leading of the Holy Spirit. If God reconcile us gratuitously to himself, it follows that he will guide us by the Spirit of adoption" (ibid., trans. J. Anderson, 5:298-99). In his comments on Rom 8:9-11 [1540], Calvin refers to the Spirit as "the Spirit of regeneration," indicating that he equates indwelling with regeneration (ibid., trans. J. Owen, 19:291).

¹⁸See D. I. Block, *Ezekiel*, 360-61. I place Block here because he indicates that he sees a distinction between "spiritual endowment" and "spiritual infusion" (*Ezekiel*, 360). He assures readers, however, that "the problem was not the absence of the Holy Spirit to transform lives, but that this was not occurring on a national scale. The issue was one of scope" ("The Prophet of the Spirit," 41). Block is disputing with the view that "The role of the Spirit of Yahweh in the life of the Old Covenant believer differed fundamentally from the operation of the Holy Spirit in the NT and in the present," and appears to be rejecting the position "that in ancient Israel the Holy Spirit came upon persons for specific tasks, but in the church he indwells the believer" (*Ezekiel*, 360). In both the *Ezekiel* commentary and his article, "The Prophet of the Spirit," Block cites roughly the same four arguments against the position he rejects (similar arguments also appear in Van Pelt, Kaiser, and Block, "j" ~wτ," *NIDOTTE*, 3:1076-77). *First*, passages that call for circumcision of the heart are cited (Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4). Block then notes that Yahweh promises to circumcise the hearts of his people (Deut 30:6), and that Ezekiel later promises that the Lord will give a new heart (Ezek 36:22-32). In response, I agree with Block that God's Spirit was certainly involved in the sanctification of God's people, but it must be borne in mind that the promises alluded to are *prophetic* and tell of *future* realities. These texts cannot establish that Old Covenant believers were continually indwelt in the way that believers after Jesus are for two reasons: (1) the OT is not clear that they were and (2) the NT seems to be clear that they were not. Block's *second* argument (the four arguments are enumerated differently in the article and the commentary; I am following the article's numbering) is that the view he rejects "misunderstands or disregards" Ps 51:11 ("The Prophet of the Spirit," 40; *Ezekiel*, 360). But this text is not so much disregarded as it is disputed. Apparently in Block's view those who do not see Ps 51:11 teaching the indwelling of the Spirit for salvation misunderstand the text. It seems plausible, however, that David has in view his anointing from the Holy Spirit for kingship, which he knew had departed from Saul (1 Sam 16:14). This seems at least as likely as Block's view that David speaks of "his continued acceptance in the divine presence and the divine presence within him" (ibid.). Psalm 51:11 cannot establish this doctrine by itself. Even if this text does establish that David was indwelt, does it follow that *all* Old Covenant believers were? David was, after all, a prophet inspired by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:30; 4:25), and 1 Pet 1:10-11 indicates that OT prophets had "the Spirit of Christ in them." All Old Covenant believers were not prophets (cf. Num 11:29). Block's *third* argument

Ladd.¹⁹ Grudem's discussion is representative and worth quoting at length. He writes,

We should note that it sometimes is said that there was no work of the Holy Spirit *within* people in the Old Testament. This idea has mainly been inferred from Jesus' words to the disciples in John 14:17, "He dwells with you, and will be *in* you." But we should not conclude from this verse that there was no work of the Holy Spirit within people before Pentecost. Although the Old Testament does not frequently speak of people who had the Holy Spirit in them or who were filled with the Holy Spirit, there are a few examples: Joshua is said to have the Holy Spirit within him (Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9), as are Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2; 3:24), Daniel (Dan. 4:8-9, 18; 5:11), and Micah (Mic. 3:8). This means that when Jesus says to his disciples that the Holy Spirit "dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:17), he cannot mean that there was an absolute "within/without" difference between the old and new covenant work of the Holy Spirit. Nor can John 7:39 ("as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified") mean that there was *no* activity of the Holy Spirit in people's lives before Pentecost. Both of these passages must be different ways of saying that the more powerful, fuller work of the Holy Spirit that is characteristic of life after Pentecost had not yet begun in the lives of the disciples.²⁰

is the claim that the view he rejects "ignores" or "evades" the evidence from Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus in John 3 (ibid.). In response to this, many hold that John has written up the conversation that Jesus had with Nicodemus in theological language that will be understood by his readers who have the benefit of living after Jesus' work is complete. I reject that interpretation because John's gospel is quite good at distinguishing between what was understood at the time it was spoken and what was understood later (e.g. 2:22; 12:16; 20:9). So while this conversation took place in the way that it is recorded, *new birth by the Spirit* does not necessarily include *continual indwelling by the Spirit*. While the NT is more explicit about regeneration, the creation of spiritual life in people who are already physically alive can be found in the OT (e.g., Isa 55:3, "Hear that your souls may live!"). Further, the NT does not indicate that regeneration by the Spirit could not happen until after the exaltation of Jesus. Though we may affirm from the OT that the Spirit of God was *involved* in the spiritual re-birth and sanctification of the faithful in the Old Covenant, because of John 7:39, 14:16-17, and 16:7, which indicate that the indwelling of the Spirit *could not happen until Jesus was glorified*, we are not permitted to infer—in the absence of *explicit* OT evidence—that Old Covenant believers had the same experience of the Spirit that those who live after Jesus enjoy. Block's fourth concern has to do with the context of Ezekiel on one hand ("The Prophet of the Spirit," 41) and "ecclesiological continuity between the testaments" on the other (*Ezekiel*, 360). These arguments do not outweigh the concerns here articulated.

¹⁹Ladd notes the newness of what Jesus is promising, but thinks that Ps 51:10-11 show that in a real sense OT saints were indwelt (*Theology*, 325-26).

²⁰Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 637 (emphasis his). Later in the volume Grudem writes, "These believers, who had had an old-covenant less-powerful experience of the Holy Spirit in their lives, received on the Day of Pentecost a more-powerful new-covenant experience of the Holy Spirit working in their lives" (ibid., 771). G. W. Grogan seems to be very close to Grudem; he writes of salvation in the Old Covenant, "This salvation was effected inwardly by the Holy Spirit, but their experience of Him was less conscious than that of the N.T."

Grudem is correct to point out that some OT saints are spoken of as having the Spirit *in* them. Each example he gives, however, is a person who is either a national leader, a prophet, or otherwise extraordinary. Even writers as dispensational as John Walvoord and Charles Ryrie acknowledge this aspect of the Spirit's indwelling ministry; their concern is that the indwelling of the Spirit found in the OT is *selective* as to persons and *temporary* as to duration.²¹ By contrast, Jesus promised the disciples that the other Paraclete would be with and in them forever (John 14:16-17).

This is an important point because Grudem appears to be responding to the view "that there was no work of the Holy Spirit *within* people in the Old Testament."²² As indicated by the absence of names in category five (see below and the chart at the end of the article), I have not found *anyone* who articulates the view that the Spirit of God did not operate on the hearts of Old Covenant believers. In fairness to Grudem, some dispensationalists have left themselves open to being interpreted this way. Because they are silent on certain issues, it is easy to assume that they think the Spirit was not involved in the lives of Old Covenant believers. On closer inspection, however, they do not affirm this; they simply do not explore the question. Many affirm that Old Covenant believers were not continually indwelt by the Spirit in the way that New Covenant believers are, but again, regeneration by the Spirit does not necessarily entail continual indwelling by the Spirit (Ps 119:25; Isa 53:3). Dispensationalists do speak as though they think regeneration happened in the Old Covenant. Grudem is correct on the point that the greater "power" and "fullness" of the New Covenant ministry of the Spirit is in view, and he does not affirm a universal, continual indwelling ministry of the Spirit in the lives of Old Covenant believers.

In articulating his position this way, just as Block is closer to position one than to position three, Grudem is closer to position three than he is to position one. This spectrum of opinion is not uncommon in discussions of this nature. The authors in positions one and two all agree that Old Covenant believers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. They have not, however, successfully incorporated John 7:39, 14:17, and 16:7 into their understanding.²³ Part of the reason they affirm that Old Covenant believers were indwelt is that

believer" ("The Experience of Salvation in the Old and New Testaments," VE 5 [1967]: 23).

²¹Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit*, 41-42; J. F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit* (Wheaton: Van Kampen, 1954), 71-73.

²²Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 637 (emphasis his).

²³When I originally set out to pursue this project I intended to argue that Old Covenant believers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Repeated reading of the gospel of John forced me to change my position. Before changing my view, I tried very hard to make John 7:39, 14:17, and 16:7 fit that interpretation. I was not helped by those who hold this view, for no explanation of how these texts fit this framework allows the texts to mean what they say. In the face of the evidence, this position was abandoned.

they connect regeneration to indwelling. They then rightly reason that without regeneration all persons are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1), and wrongly conclude that all who were regenerated were also indwelt. Perhaps these concerns can be addressed without denuding John's teaching on the New Covenant ministry of the Spirit.²⁴

IV. SOME CONTINUITY SOME DISCONTINUITY

This position is the mid-point of the possible views. Representatives of this position affirm that while Old Covenant believers were *regenerated* by the Spirit, they were *not indwelt* by the Spirit. Millard Erickson,²⁵ James I. Packer,²⁶ along with Willem

²⁴For an attempt to understand how Old Covenant believers could live faithfully if they were not indwelt by the Holy Spirit, see my dissertation, "He Is With You and He Will Be In You" (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, forthcoming).

²⁵Erickson argues that OT believers were regenerated but not indwelt in *Christian Theology* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 992-95.

²⁶On continuity with respect to regeneration, Packer writes, "Jesus' words, '... you are clean . . . ' (John 13:10; 15:3) imply that they were regenerate before the passion" (*Keep in Step with the Spirit* [Grand Rapids: Revell, 1984], 87). On discontinuity with respect to indwelling, he explains the importance of God's *presence* in the OT, "The presence of which I speak here is not the divine *omnipresence* of traditional theology, which texts like Psalm 13:9; Jeremiah 23:23, 24; Amos 9:2-5 and Acts 17:26-28 define for us as God's awareness of everything everywhere as he upholds it in its own being and activity. . . . [W]hen I use the word *presence* I have in view something different. I mean by this word what the Bible writers meant when they spoke of God being present with his people . . . to bless Often this was expressed by saying that God was 'with' them" (*Keep in Step*, 48).

Then, regarding the New Covenant ministry of the Spirit, Packer writes, "The distinctive, constant, basic ministry of the Holy Spirit under the new covenant is so to mediate Christ's presence to believers . . . that three things keep happening. *First, personal fellowship with Jesus. . . . Second, personal transformation of character into Jesus' likeness. . . . Third, the Spirit-given certainty of being loved, redeemed, and adopted*" (*ibid.*, 49 [emphasis his]).

Note the words "distinctive" and "constant" in the quotation just given. Fredricks classes Packer with those who hold that Old Covenant saints were indwelt, but his oversimplification of the spectrum of opinion fails him here. Fredricks notes that there is some variety of expression, but insists that "all [including Packer] affirm the Spirit's active indwelling ministry in the lives of OT saints" ("Rethinking," 82, see note 4 for the citation of Packer). In fact Packer does not *affirm* this at all. In the article that Fredricks cites (J. I. Packer, "The Holy Spirit and His Work," *Crux* 23.2 [1987]: 2-17), Packer lists seven functions of the Spirit of God in the OT. The fifth is to "Elicit personal response to God in the form of faith, repentance, obedience, righteousness, openness to God's instruction, and fellowship with him through praise and prayer." Then, when summarizing the material, Packer says that the Spirit is the "quickener" and "enabler" ("The Holy Spirit," 7—this is the page Fredricks cites). Packer then proceeds to discuss what the NT teaches about the Spirit, and in this discussion he mentions *indwelling* at least twice (*ibid.*, 8, 13). Thus, Packer uses the word *indwelling*, but not when discussing OT saints. Further, though he uses the term regeneration regarding Old Covenant believers in *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (p. 87), in the discussion Fredricks cites, he does not even go that far, using the more vague language of "personal response to God . . ." and referring to the Spirit as the "quickener" ("The Holy Spirit," 7). Fredricks seems to make certain assumptions: (1)

VanGemeran²⁷ and Bruce Ware²⁸ fit in this category.²⁹ Because VanGemeran goes into more than customary detail regarding the *manner* of the Spirit's work in the OT, his position will be considered here.

In two pregnant paragraphs VanGemeran suggests a biblical trajectory of the Spirit's work that is worth pursuing. He writes,

Packer is a more Calvinistic theologian; (2) he affirms that the Spirit played a part in the faithfulness of Old Covenant believers; (3) he must, therefore, hold that they were indwelt. When Fredricks discusses the problems he sees with the view that Old Covenant believers were not indwelt this perception is confirmed. He writes, "We are left with one of two options. The first is that OT believers like Noah, Abraham, Joseph, or Job—about whom nothing is said of their having the Spirit—lived in bondage to sin. . . . The second option is that these OT saints were enabled to live their lives through the power of the Spirit" ("Rethinking," 87). But being enabled by the power of the Spirit is not necessarily synonymous with being indwelt. Fredricks has assumed that those who do not think Old Covenant saints were indwelt thereby think that the Spirit *had nothing to do with their faithfulness* (if they did not have the Spirit, they "lived in bondage to sin" [ibid.]) He has thus classed all who deny indwelling to Old Covenant believers in category five, which no one affirms, see below. Moreover, he has again oversimplified the issue because a number of authors clearly speak of the Spirit's role in the lives of OT saints, while maintaining that he did not *indwell* them (cf. the authors in positions three and four).

²⁷VanGemeran is clear that Old Covenant saints were regenerate, saying, "God expected nothing less from his Old Testament people than he does today. The saints were those who were circumcised of heart, or 'regenerate'" (*The Progress of Redemption* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988], 167). The quotation below regarding God's dwelling indicates that he does not conceive of Old Covenant saints as indwelt.

²⁸In a paper presented at a national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Ware states, "My model proposed here of the distinctive NC role of the HS can account for His role in certain respects, e.g., regeneration, while stopping short of indwelling believers to bring about transformation of character. The qualitatively distinct NC role of the Spirit focuses on His permanent indwelling to effect obedience, not His role in bringing one to faith" (Bruce A. Ware, "Rationale for the Distinctiveness of the New Covenant Work of the Holy Spirit," [November, 1988], 7). Cf. also id., "The New Covenant and the People(s) of God," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* (ed. C. A. Blaising and D. L. Bock; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 68-97.

²⁹Other arguments to the effect that Old Covenant saints were regenerated but not continually indwelt can be found in G. F. Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament* (trans. G. E. Day; Clark's Foreign Theological Library, 1883; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n. d.), 141-42; L. D. Pettigrew, *The New Covenant Ministry of the Holy Spirit* (New York: University Press of America, 1993), 13-14; J. Rea "The Personal Relationship of Old Testament Believers to the Holy Spirit," in *Essays on Apostolic Themes* (ed. P. Elbert; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), esp. 94, 96, 102-3; and P. Toon, *Born Again* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 61. A. H. Lewis argues for the regeneration of OT saints ("The New Birth Under the Old Covenant," *EvQ* 56 [1984]: 34-44), but he does not discuss indwelling. He concludes that "it was the *prophetic gift*, not the new birth, that 'those who believed in him' were later to receive (John 7:39)," and he sees this prophetic gift as given at Pentecost in Acts 2 (ibid., 42-43 [emphasis his]). Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock are under category four, "More Discontinuity than Continuity," because of the statements found in their book *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton: Bridgepoint, 1993). Blaising wrote the relevant section of *Progressive Dispensationalism*, and in personal correspondence with Bock he stated that while he does not mind being placed in position four, he does see Old Covenant believers as "regenerate."

To Israel God revealed his glorious presence. He had kept people away from his presence after Adam's expulsion from Eden and dramatically symbolized the impossibility of reentrance by stationing the cherubim at the entrance of Eden (Gen. 3:24). When Yahweh came to dwell in Israel, however, he had Israel make gold cherubim and place them over the ark of the covenant in order to symbolize his presence "in the tents of Shem" and the possibility of access to his glory through the ministry of the high priest.

The presence of God was more fully manifest in the incarnate Christ, who now dwells in each believer with his Spirit of glory. The Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts to the great glory awaiting all the children of God in the new heaven and earth; the New Jerusalem [sic]. Then the triune God will dwell among the renewed humanity (Rev. 21:3).³⁰

What VanGemeran hints at here is attractive. Because of the nature of the book he wrote (*From Creation to the New Jerusalem* in five hundred pages), VanGemeran does not expound at length on how this understanding relates to the sanctification of believers before and after Jesus.

V. MORE DISCONTINUITY THAN CONTINUITY

In this category we find those who affirm that Old Covenant believers were operated upon by Yahweh, and by inference it may be said that it was God's Spirit who ministered to them. These scholars are very close to those in category three, but they generally stop short of saying that Old Covenant believers were *regenerated* by the Spirit. They do, however, affirm that the Spirit did not *indwell* Old Covenant believers.

More discontinuity than continuity between the Spirit's work in the Old and New Covenants is articulated by an early church father, Novatian [210-280]. Novatian is just as concerned with the deity of the Holy Spirit as his contemporaries, but he articulates clear discontinuity regarding indwelling in his treatment of the Holy Spirit. He writes,

In the former not as being always in them, in the latter as abiding always in them; and in the former distributed with reserve, in the latter all poured out; in the former given sparingly, in the latter liberally bestowed; not yet manifested before the Lord's resurrection, but conferred after the resurrection.³¹

Martin Luther also articulates the measure of discontinuity here under discussion. Commenting on John 2:21-22, where Jesus speaks of the Temple of his body Luther says, "Until now God had restricted His presence to the temple in Jerusalem; that was to

³⁰VanGemeran, *The Progress of Redemption*, 81-82.

³¹Novatian, *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* [256] chap. 29 (trans. R. E. Wallis in *Fathers of the Third Century* in ANF 5:640).

terminate now.”³² Luther continues to expound the discontinuity he perceives when he comes to John 7:39. He says,

One must not fall prey to the foolish notion that the Holy Spirit was not created until Christ had risen from the dead. No, this text states that the Spirit had not yet been given; that is, He was not yet fulfilling His office. The old message and Law were still in effect. For this reason we often say and teach that one must distinguish between the Law and the Gospel. . . . But how one might be able to keep the Law, or how they could be saved who had not observed its precepts and could boast of no good works—that no one knew. For the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, and Christ was not yet glorified.³³

Because Luther confesses ignorance as to how Old Covenant believers were sanctified it might be better to place him in the category of “Vague Discontinuity.” That category, however, is reserved for those who do not raise the question of the sanctification of OT saints. Luther raises the question, but he does not answer it. Just as Luther’s well-known dilemma regarding James and Paul can be resolved, a resolution for this question can be found in the Scriptures. Moreover, an answer can be given and the full force of John 7:39 can be allowed to stand.³⁴

Lewis Sperry Chafer,³⁵ is one of the prominent recent adherents of this position, along with D. A. Carson, Craig Blaising and Darrell

³²Martin Luther, *Sermons on the Gospel of John*, trans. M. H. Bertram (ed. J. Pelikan; vol. 22 of *Luther’s Works*; Saint Louis: Concordia, 1957), 248. Luther continues in this vein saying, “God is no longer limited to a definite locality, as He was in the Old Testament in the temple in Jerusalem” (*ibid.*, 249).

³³Martin Luther, *Sermons on the Gospel of John* (trans. M. H. Bertram; ed. J. Pelikan; vol. 23 of *Luther’s Works*; Saint Louis: Concordia, 1959), 278.

³⁴For an attempt to put these texts together the reader is again referred to my forthcoming dissertation, “He Is With You and He Will Be In You.”

³⁵Regarding discontinuity on indwelling, Chafer writes, “The same indwelling of the Holy Spirit becomes, as well, an age-characterization. This is a dispensation of the Spirit. . . . The present age is distinguished as a period of the indwelling Spirit, whose presence provides every resource for the realization of a God-honoring daily life” (L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 4 vols. [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993; originally published in 8 vols. by Dallas Seminary Press, 1947-1948], 6:123). Regarding continuity on regeneration, Chafer says, “The doctrine of individual regeneration is obscure in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament it becomes definite (John 3:1-6)” (*ibid.*, 7:265). A. H. Lewis (“The New Birth Under the Old Covenant,” 36) and Millard Erickson (*Christian Theology*, 992-93) both conclude that Chafer does not think that Old Covenant believers were regenerated. Against this conclusion, Chafer is not affirming that OT saints were not regenerated, but is affirming that “nothing indeed is said with respect to these” so that “Old Testament saints are invested with these blessings only theoretically” (*Systematic Theology*, 6:72-74). Saying that the OT is silent and affirming that the regeneration of Old Covenant believers is theoretical is not the same thing as saying that they were *not* regenerated. While Chafer proceeds to deny that OT saints were indwelt in the passage cited by Lewis, he does not likewise deny regeneration, though he does distinguish regeneration in the Old Covenant from regeneration in the New, saying, “With respect to regeneration, the Old Testament saints were *evidently renewed*; but as there is no definite doctrinal teaching relative to the extent and

Bock,³⁶ Donald Bloesch,³⁷ and Michael Green.³⁸ D. A. Carson is something of an exception among commentators on John. Space and time limitations keep many from considering the broader theological implications of John 7:39 or 14:17. The function of the verses in the gospel are generally noted, and the commentator proceeds to the next verse or the next issue in Johannine studies. Carson, however, makes the following helpful observations,

One of the most remarkable aspects of Jesus' teaching in this passage, however, is that it is the *triune God* who takes up his dwelling in the disciples of Jesus. This truth is unavoidable: "I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the *Spirit of Truth*. . . . The Old Testament writers were concerned that God should live with men [citing 1 Kgs 8:27; Ezek 37:27; Zech 2:10]. . . . John insists that this occurred historically in the incarnation: "The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us" (1:14). But now we are brought a stage further: this God reveals himself to the individual believer and takes up residence within him [citing 2 Cor 6:16; Lev 26:12; Jer 32:38; Ezek 37:27; Eph 3:16, 17a; Rev 3:14-21].³⁹

character of that renewal . . . it cannot be demonstrated that this spiritual renewal known to the Old Testament, whatever its character may have been, resulted in the impartation of the divine nature, in an actual sonship, a joint heirship with Christ, or a placing in the household and family of God" (ibid., 6:73) (emphasis added).

³⁶The following is the key passage on this question in *Progressive Dispensationalism*: "We should not assume that God had never before conditioned the hearts of His people, that His Spirit had never before indwelt them, or that He had never before forgiven them of their sins. However, the new covenant makes these blessings a constitutive *abiding* feature of God's relationship to His people. They will be given to *all* the people ('from the least of them to the greatest,' Jer. 31:34) *forever* ('from now and forever,' Isa. 59:21)" (Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 156) (emphasis theirs).

³⁷D. G. Bloesch, *The Holy Spirit* (Christian Foundations; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 297.

³⁸Green articulates a generally accepted view of the Holy Spirit in the OT: "On the whole, you had to be someone rather special in Old Testament days to have the Spirit of God. A prophet, a national leader, a king, perhaps some specially wise man (Proverbs 1:23) or artistic person (Exodus 31:3)—in which case you would be beautifying the Lord's Tent of Meeting, or enunciating the Lord's wisdom. But the Spirit of God was not for every Tom, Dick and Harry. To be sure, there were promises in a very general sense that 'My Spirit abides with you: fear not' (Haggai 2:5), but this was an assurance to the people as a whole, not a promise to the individual. The gift of God's Spirit was on the whole to special people for special tasks. It was not generally available, nor was it necessarily permanent" (*I Believe in the Holy Spirit* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975], 25-26). He also affirms that, "The Spirit is no less than the personal, moral, active power of the Lord God" (ibid., 31).

³⁹D. A. Carson, *The Farewell Discourse* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 46-47. I place Carson in this category for the following reasons: (1) He clearly sees discontinuity, so he cannot be in position 1. (2) He does not affirm that OT believers experienced the Spirit in the same *fundamental* manner as NT believers, so he cannot be in position 2. On John 7:39 he writes, "What the Evangelist means is that the Spirit of the dawning kingdom comes as the result—indeed, the entailment—of the Son's completed work, and up to that point the Holy Spirit was *not* given in the full, Christian sense of the term" (Carson, *The Gospel According to John* [PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991],

These considerations cannot be minimized as we seek to answer the question of what role the Holy Spirit played in the lives of Old Covenant believers. The OT does provide an explanation for how its saints became believers and remained faithful, and the New Covenant reality of the Spirit continually dwelling in believers is not to be read back into the OT. The Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35), and John 7:39, 14:17, and 16:7 stand in our way when we try to force that interpretation. *This does not mean that the Spirit was not involved at all* in the lives of OT saints. That would be full discontinuity, the position next to be considered.

VI. DISCONTINUITY

This position represents the view that the Spirit of God *had nothing to do* with the faithfulness of those who lived under the Old Covenant. As mentioned above, I have been unable to locate a single *affirmation* of this position. It appears from statements that are made by some who affirm more continuity that certain authors, particularly dispensationalists, are often assumed to hold this position.⁴⁰ While we can perhaps wish that some authors had written more,⁴¹ to assume that they hold a position that they do not affirm is unfair.

329) (emphasis his). (3) While he refers to God being *with* the OT faithful in *The Farewell Discourse*, he does not affirm that they were regenerated, so he was not placed in position 3. His comments on John 3:1-15 support the decision not to place him in position 3. He writes, "Jesus is not presented as demanding that Nicodemus experience the new birth in the instant; rather, he is forcefully articulating what must be experienced if one is to enter the kingdom of God" (*John*, 195).

⁴⁰Cf. the discussion of Grudem above, and see too Block, "The Prophet of the Spirit," 40 n. 38, where he cites John F. Walvoord.

⁴¹All the blame is not to be placed on the shoulders of those who make wrong inferences. It may be that Charles Ryrie most leaves the door open to this assumption. The problem with his discussion of "The Holy Spirit in Relation to Man in the Old Testament" seems to be the fact that he does not raise the question of the Old Covenant believer's regeneration or sanctification. He does have one brief paragraph under the heading "Restraint of Sin" (*The Holy Spirit*, 42), but when he later discusses "Regeneration" (*ibid.*, chap. 11, 64-66) the reader finds not a word regarding whether or not Old Covenant believers were regenerated. Ryrie does affirm that *some* OT figures were indwelt, but not permanently (pp. 41-42). The reader is left wondering whether Ryrie feels the tension with what he does not say – for he seems to *imply* that some believing Israelites were not acted upon by the Spirit. In personal conversation with Dr. Ryrie on 10 June, 2002, he stated to the author that while he may have to read the NT into the Old, he thinks that Old Covenant saints "show the fruits of what we call regeneration." Ryrie gave John 3 (just as Block cited this passage, "The Prophet of the Spirit," 40) as an example of where he would go to argue for the regeneration of Old Covenant believers. Ryrie reasoned just as Block and others do that Jesus seems to have expected Nicodemus to understand. This indicates that there is a tendency on the part of some to set dispensationalists up as straw-men. Ryrie expressed to the author that he felt that he had been silent where the Scriptures were silent.

VII. VAGUE DISCONTINUITY

In this category are those who simply affirm that the Holy Spirit operates in new and distinct ways in the New Covenant *without raising the question* of how Old Covenant believers came to faith and lived obediently. Most commentators on John's gospel fit into this category. When commenting on John 7:39 or 14:17, unless theological considerations prompt them to elaborate upon relative continuity (e.g., Calvin) or discontinuity (e.g., Carson), they generally affirm that the Spirit is experienced in new measure after Jesus is glorified without inquiring as to how Old Covenant believers became and remained faithful.⁴²

VIII. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Since the Reformation, those who have followed Calvin have affirmed a good deal more continuity between the Testaments than those who have followed Luther. As an extension of this, covenant theologians usually affirm that Old Covenant believers were indwelt, while dispensationalists usually insist that they were not. This, of course, does not explain all affirmations of continuity or discontinuity. Not all who affirm continuity are covenant theologians (e.g., Block, Wood), and not all who affirm discontinuity are dispensationalists (e.g., Novatian, Luther). Nor does it necessarily follow that affirmations of discontinuity go hand-in-hand with a low view of sin or a high view of human ability (i.e., libertarian freedom). Though that may sometimes be the case, not all

⁴²For commentaries and other books on John that do not raise the question of how Old Covenant believers were made faithful, see, C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 329, 463; T. L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 464-66; C. L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 138, 201; Brown, *John*, 324; F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel and Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 182-83, 302; R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 303-4; G. M. Burge, *The Anointed Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987); id., *John* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 229, 396; C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), 418; E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (ed. F. N. Davey; 2d ed.; London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 323-24; A. J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 154; J. C. Laney, *John* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 147, 262; F. J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 406-7; L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 378-79, 577; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:157; G. S. Sloyan, *John* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988), 181-82; D. M. Smith, *John* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 274; B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 1:278-79. For other representatives of "Vague Discontinuity" see Irenaeus [fl. c. 180], *On the Apostolic Preaching* 1.6, (trans. J. Behr; Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), 44 ; Origen [185-254], *De Principiis* 2.7.2 (trans. F. Crombie; in *Fathers of the Third Century*, ANF 4:285); Tertullian [fl. c. 200], *An Answer to the Jews*, chap. 13 (trans. S. Thelwall, in *Latin Christianity*, ANF 3:170); Chrysostom [c. 347-407], *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John*, 51.2 (trans. C. Marriott; rev. P. Schaff in *Chrysostom*, NPNF¹ 14:184); Ryrice, *The Holy Spirit*, 41-44; Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 71-73.

who aver that Old Covenant believers were not indwelt are un-Calvinistic in their understanding of soteriology (e.g., Carson, Ware).

Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that even where strong covenant theology is not motivating an interpreter, a reaction to dispensationalism might be. References to those who hold that there was no “inner” work of the Spirit in the Old Covenant, or to those who hold that the Spirit was not involved at all in the regeneration and sanctification of Old Covenant believers, are probably references to dispensationalists, because dispensationalists commonly emphasize the new nature of the Spirit’s work. Prominent dispensationalists, however, whether progressives such as Craig Blaising, Darrell Bock, and Bruce Ware, or more classical/ revised dispensationalists such as Charles Ryrie, John F. Walvoord, and Lewis Sperry Chafer all indicate that they think that the Spirit, in various degrees, was involved in the faithfulness of Old Covenant believers. If a scholar is going to attack position five, that scholar needs to establish that someone actually affirms position five. Attacking straw men does not bring us any closer to understanding the Spirit’s role in the lives of Old Covenant believers.

One gets the impression that some OT scholars are eager to affirm that *everything* found in the NT was present in the Old. Certain scholars (e.g., Kaiser, Block) seem wont to defend the OT against any possibility that the NT might be perceived as somehow “better” than the Old (though this seems to be argued by the NT, e.g., John 1:18, 2 Cor 3-4, and Heb 1:1-2). The contention here is that the OT has within itself a God-ordained, God-inspired means for the regeneration and sanctification of its saints—a means that allows for the operation of the Spirit upon Old Covenant believers while also allowing the full force of John 7:39, 14:16-17, and 16:7 to stand.

Perhaps those who affirm continuity have said too much, and those who affirm discontinuity have said too little. John 7:39 does not permit us to infer that OT believers were indwelt, but some explanation of how they became and remained faithful must be given. Genuine questions remain that continue to be raised and that call for our attention. How does the OT treat regeneration and sanctification? Can regeneration by the Holy Spirit, which is featured prominently in the NT, be found in the pages of the OT? If the word is not used, can we infer that it was happening? Can regeneration by the Holy Spirit be separated from the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit?⁴³

⁴³For an attempt to address these issues see my forthcoming dissertation, “He Is With You and He Will Be In You.”

POSITIONS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT AND OLD COVENANT BELIEVERS						
Position	1. Continuity	2. More Continuity than Discontinuity	3. Some Continuity Some Discontinuity	4. More Discontinuity than Continuity	5. Discontinuity	6. Vague Discontinuity
Definition of Position	Regenerated and indwelt	Differences acknowledged but not seen to be fundamental differences	Regenerated but not indwelt	Operated upon by God, and by inference his Spirit, but not indwelt	The Spirit had nothing to do with the faithfulness of Old Covenant believers	Indwelling denied, but the question of regeneration is not raised
PROPOSONENTS						
Early Church		Augustine		Novatian		Origen Irenaeus Tertullian Chrysostom
Reformation	J. Owen T. Goodwin	J. Calvin		M. Luther		
Modern	S. Ferguson G. Fredricks D. P. Fuller W. C. Kaiser J. A. Motyer J. B. Payne B. B. Warfield L. Wood	D. I. Block G. W. Grogan W. Grudem G. E. Ladd	M. Erickson G. F. Oehler J. I. Packer L. D. Pettegrew J. Rea W. A. VanGemenen B. A. Ware	L. S. Chafer C. Blaising and D. Bock D. A. Carson M. Green		C. K. Barrett R. E. Brown G. M. Burge C. C. Ryrie J. F. Walvoord