

## Paul, The Spirit and the People of God

### Questions on *Chapter 2: God Revisits His People*

1. If God is eternal, unchanging, and omnipresent, why do we have a chapter on his presence?
2. Fee introduces this chapter by talking about the importance of *presence* in human relationships. Can you think of an example when personal presence was most important to you—a time when an absence turned presence met a keenly felt need?
3. Fee quotes Moses in Ex 33:15-16 imploring God to send his presence with the Hebrews: “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?” In the Ancient Near East, gods were understood to dwell in geographic regions and be associated with particular nations. Is Moses’ request simply in keeping with this idea, or there something else going on?
4. Read Isa 63:9-14. (If you like, also read Ezek 10:2-5, 15-19.) Why did God withdraw his presence, and why does he promise to restore his presence?
5. What are the three dimensions of God’s promise of renewed presence? (Read #1-#3, p. 16.)
6. Read the first two paragraphs of p. 19. Paul issues a stern warning against those who threaten the integrity of God’s house, his people. How is it that Paul could issue such a strong warning *then*, yet the integrity of God’s house as the believing Church in North America seems at times to be in complete disarray, with no consequences for those who pillage and plunder it and leave its members scattered, confused and misled?
7. Read Fee p. 21 and par. 1 of 22. Here Fee unpacks Paul’s argument from 2 Cor 2-4 regarding individuals as temples of God’s Spirit. What is the gist of that argument?
8. In Acts 7 we have a speech about God’s presence, contrasting the Old and New Covenants, this time by Stephen. Stephen’s outlook seems a little different from Paul’s (and Fee’s), since he takes pains to point out continuity between the two.

The first pattern you may notice in his speech is that Stephen is keen on geography. Location after location is mentioned, as if this were an ancient near-east travelogue. Stephen deliberately mentions places outside the temple and holy land where God manifests himself: his revelation to Abraham in Mesopotamia, his giving Joseph wisdom in Egypt, and speaking to Moses out of the burning bush in the desert (a “holy place”, the same phrase his opponents use of the temple in 6:13). The God of the OT is clearly *not* a God confined to the temple.

Unlike Fee’s reading of Paul, this may feel like a point of *continuity* between the Old Covenant and the New. Is this at odds with Fee’s assessment of Paul a saying the restriction of the Presence to Temple and Tabernacle in the OT is a point of discontinuity between OC and NC?

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*Fun Fact:* George Bernard Shaw (granted, not known for his exegesis) called Stephen a “tactless and conceited bore” for repeating in Acts 7 history the council already knew.