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Filled with the Spirit: Wine and Worship in Levitical Light (Ephesians 5.18–21)

Napełnieni Duchem: wino i uwielbienie z perspektywy lewickiej (List do Efezjan 5,18–21)

Abstract. This essay argues that the background of the temple, and particular priestly and levitical activities, explain the logic of Eph. 5.18–21. After setting this text in context and addressing various proposed backgrounds, the proposal of this essay is initially examined in relation to the imperative to be filled ἐν πνεύματι in 5.18, which I argue is a dative of content. After seeing how this fits within the temple themes of the letter, the immediate context is explored to show how similar motifs continue to emerge. In particular, the prohibition of drunkenness is seen in relation to the desire for priests to abstain from alcohol while serving in the temple. The worship that ensues in the first four participles (5.19–20) that are dependent on the imperative to be “filled” (5.18) are similarly seen to be inspired by priestly and levitical actions, since singing was primarily relegated to the temple setting and to a particular levitical office within the cult. This is then finally situated in relation to the subsequent *Haustafel*, which is also grammatically subordinated to the imperative in 5.18. The *Haustafel* contributes to this scene by highlighting how, in the domestic context of early Christian house churches, the gathering was believed to be sacred space in which the church was a temple made of priests who were filled with the Spirit and praised God. In such corporate settings of worship, drunkenness is not to be permitted.

Streszczenie. Autor artykułu argumentuje, że otoczenie świątyni, a zwłaszcza czynności kapłańskie i lewickie wyjaśniają logikę Ef 5,18–21. Po umiejscowieniu tekstu we właściwym kontekście i odniesieniu się do różnych zaproponowanych przesłanek na początku analizowane jest użycie trybu rozkazującego „być napełnionym ἐν πνεύματι” w Ef 5,18, formy, która według autora jest celownikiem treści. Po spojrzeniu na to zagadnienie w relacji do motywów świątynnych listu, analizowany jest najbliższy kontekst, aby pokazać, w jaki sposób pojawiają się podobne motywy. W szczególności zakaz pijaństwa postrzegany jest w łączności z zaleceniem, aby kapłani powstrzymywali się od alkoholu podczas służby w świątyni. Uwielbienie, jakie występuje w czterech pierwszych imiesłowach (5,19–20), które są zależne od trybu rozkazującego, być „wy-

pełnionym” (5,18), jest podobnie postrzegane jako inspirowane przez czynności kapłańskie i lewickie, ponieważ śpiew był uważany za zajęcie typowe dla urzędu kapłańskiego i wiązał się ze sprawowaniem kultu. To zagadnienie jest ostatecznie omawiane w odniesieniu do *Haustafel*, który jest również gramatycznie podporządkowany trybowi rozkazującemu w 5,18. W tej scenie *Haustafel* podkreśla, że w kontekście wczesnochrześcijańskich kościołów domowych zgromadzenie uważano za świętą przestrzeń, w której kościół był świątynią stworzoną z kapłanów napełnionych Duchem i wychwalających Boga. W takim zbiorowym miejscu kultu pijaństwo nie ma prawa bytu.

Keywords: drunkenness; Ephesians; fullness; *Haustafel*; house churches; Levites; priests; singing; Spirit; temple; wine; worship.

Słowa kluczowe: pijaństwo; List do Efezjan; wypełnienie; *Haustafel*; kościoły domowe; lewici; kapłani; śpiewy; Duch; świątynia; wino; uwielbienie.

Introduction

In Eph. 5.18 the letter’s intended audience is prohibited from drunkenness and is instead commanded to be filled ἐν πνεύματι.¹ As a result of this filling, or as an explication of what it entails, four participles pertaining to corporate worship are listed (λαλοῦντες, ᾄδοντες, ψάλλοντες, εὐχαριστοῦντες in 5.19–20) as well as a fifth participle related to submission (ὑποτασσόμενοι in 5.21). Several features of this passage are disputed, including key points of grammar and the background informing what is said here. One significant potential background that has not been teased out is the possibility that temple theology, and in particular priestly and levitical imagery, provides the rationale for the call to avoid drunkenness and the worship associated with the Spirit’s filling. I will explore this possibility in relation to the prominence of temple theology in Ephesians, highlighting how priestly motifs extend that understanding further. Briefly stated, this study seeks to demonstrate that in 5.18–21 the text is informed by the belief that early Christian house churches were the loci of sa-

¹ Due to scholarly disputes about the authorship of Ephesians, I will refer to “the author” of this text rather than to Paul (despite my personal opinion). For a recent defense of authenticity, see D.A. Campbell, *Framing Paul*, pp. 309–38. Equally disputed is whether this text was intended for an audience in Ephesus due to its general nature (esp. when contrasted with Acts 19–20) and the lack of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in some important manuscripts of Eph. 1.1 (e.g. P⁴⁶, K*, B*). UBS⁵ scores its presence a C rating (see rationale in B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, p. 532). For convenience, I will make reference to “the Ephesians” at times without necessarily making any commitments as to who the original recipients were.

cred space in which God’s Spirit was uniquely present, constituting the church corporately as the temple of God and the worship of those participating as that of priests and Levites. The exploration of these items will commence with an overview of 5.18–21 and its literary context, before focusing on key interpretative issues within our primary text of investigation.

1. Overview & Context of Ephesians 5.18–21

The prohibition to avoid drunkenness (μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ) is contrasted with the positive command to be filled ἐν πνεύματι, which has been variously understood and will be explored at length later. From here five participles ensue within 5.19–21 (λαλοῦντες, ἄδοντες, ψάλλοντες, εὐχαριστοῦντες, ὑποτασσόμενοι), which are all grammatically subordinated to the imperative πληροῦσθε in 5.18.² The final participle ὑποτασσόμενοι in 5.21 is the one that is consistently disputed, given its connection to the following section in 5.22–6.9, which discretely addresses “household codes” and appropriate relations within the family structure. For this reason, some treat 5.21 as introducing a new paragraph and the participle as grammatically independent.³ This does not seem like the best approach, however, given the clear dependence of the previous four participles on the imperative from 5.18.

If one regards the participle of verse 21 (ὑποτασσόμενοι) as subordinated to the imperative of 5.18, then this has further implications for the *Haustafel*. This is because the sentence that begins at 5.18 does not conclude until verse 23. Part of what demonstrates that verse 22 continues the same sentence is the fact that it lacks an explicit verb and draws upon the participle from verse 21 for the implied action of submission: αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ. Verses 22–24 contain the first direct address to a specific group within the *Haustafel*, namely, the wives. After this we get husbands (5.25–33), children (6.1–4), and slaves (6.5–9). Given the relation of 5.21 to the *Haustafel*

² Πληροῦσθε is in the passive voice, which means that the command to “be filled” must mean something like “allow yourselves to be filled.” Thus, this use of the passive voice should be viewed as a “permissive passive.” See A. Köstenberger, B. Merkle, and R. Plummer, *Going Deeper*, p. 199.

³ So NA²⁸ and UBS⁵ (the 2017 Cambridge/Crossway *Greek New Testament* has 5.22 beginning a new paragraph). English translations that regard verse 21 as independent of πληροῦσθε include the NIV, RSV, and NRSV, which each render ὑποτασσόμενοι as an imperative. Of course, verbal participles can function independently as imperatives (see D.B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, pp. 650–52; A. Köstenberger, B. Merkle, and R. Plummer, *Going Deeper*, pp. 338–39), but this does not seem likely in 5.21.

just noted, and given the participle's (ὑποτασσόμενοι) subordination to the imperative of 5.18 along with the other participles from 5.19–20, this clearly suggests that the entire *Haustafel* is subordinated to the imperative πληροῦσθε.⁴ The discrete injunctions to each member of the household unit in 5.22–6.9 are to be viewed as expressions of what it looks like to be filled ἐν πνεύματι, and are to be tethered to the overarching principle of mutual submission (5.21; ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις), which transitions into that material.

The transition to the *Haustafel* from 5.18–21 may seem random, but there is one thing to keep in mind: early Christian gatherings for worship took place in house churches. The corporate nature of 5.18–21 is clear from the fact that the participles are all designed to be accomplished in a worship setting.⁵ Thus, the communal orientation of the passage and the domestic setting transition nicely into the *Haustafel*.

Now that we have provided an overview to the passage along with some structural insights, a few questions emerge which will occupy the remainder of this study. Why is a prohibition of drunkenness contrasted with a command to be filled ἐν πνεύματι, and, moreover, what is actually meant by πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι? What is the precise relationship between the imperative and the ensuing participles? What does avoiding drunkenness have to do with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, or with the structure of the household unit? Is there a particular problem that the author is responding to, or are there particular theological notions that constructively inform what is written here? We will begin to answer these questions with the issue of possible backgrounds that the author might be reacting against.

2. The Background & Logic of Ephesians 5.18–21

As for what motivates the author to write 5.18–21, a few different proposals have been suggested. These proposals primarily see the author as reacting to a specific problem, whether presently manifested in the congregations or only potentially so. In particular, a few scholars have argued for an implicit critique

⁴ A new discourse begins after the conclusion of the *Haustafel* in 6.9 with the words Τοῦ λοιποῦ in 6.10, which clearly signal a new section.

⁵ Further, note the reflexive pronoun (ἑαυτοῖς) in 5.19a, the second person plural pronoun (ὕμῶν) in 5.19b, and the reciprocal pronoun (ἀλλήλοις) in 5.21. Further, in 5.18 the prohibition (μεθύσκεσθε) and the positive command (πληροῦσθε) are each second person plural. Thus, this passage should not be over-individualized. So G.D. Fee, *Empowering Presence*, p. 722; T.G. Gombis, "Being the Fullness," pp. 262–64, 269.

of the cult of Dionysus in Ephesians.⁶ Favoring a Dionysian background is the well-known prominence of wine within the cult, but also the prevalence of bacchic hymns, which could parallel 5.19–20.⁷ Additionally, Dionysus was believed to “possess” bacchic worshippers, and wine itself was believed to be a conduit for the deity.⁸ This could reflect the injunction to be filled ἐν πνεύματι instead of being “drunk with wine” (i.e. *being filled with Dionysus*).⁹ As a fertility cult, sexuality was another prominent aspect of bacchic celebrations, which causes some to see the *Haustafel* as an alternative set of sexual and familial ethics.¹⁰ Surely, this proposal has a lot to commend for itself. Against the Dionysian background, however, it is usually suggested that there is nothing in the text of 5.18–21 that necessitates such specificity.

Another possible cultural context that has been suggested is banqueting.¹¹ This background has the advantage of being less specific than worship of Dionysus, and at the same time more ubiquitous within the ancient world. Those who see banqueting in the background note the accompaniment of wine libations and singing hymns in household settings (hence the ensuing *Haustafel*). In favor of banqueting over against bacchic worship is the fact that the former perhaps has more to say for the domesticity of the passage than the latter. Against banqueting as a background is the lack of any reference to meals or libations on the one hand, and the fact that this interpretation cannot really explain how banqueting relates to the positive command to be filled ἐν πνεύματι on the other.

One further possibility is that something similar to the social divisions surrounding the Corinthian Eucharist is taking place (cf. 1 Cor. 11). Although eucharistic celebration appears to be in view (note εὐχαριστοῦντες in Eph. 5.20), this interpretation seems unlikely because nothing in this passage suggests social division.

⁶ C.L. Rogers, Jr., “Dionysian Background,” pp. 249–57; S.E. Porter, “Ephesians 5.18–19,” pp. 68–80. See also C.A. Evans (“Ephesians 5:18–19,” pp. 181–200), who sees the cult of Dionysus in the background as well as other expressions of religious intoxication in the ancient world.

⁷ C.L. Rogers, “Dionysian Background,” p. 257; Porter, “Ephesians 5.18–19,” pp. 76–77.

⁸ Dionysus was himself believed to be present in wine even as it was offered as a libation to other gods (Euripides, *Bacchae*, 284: οὗτος θεοῖσι σπένδεται θεὸς γεγῶς).

⁹ C.L. Rogers, Jr., “Dionysian Background,” pp. 254–56.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 257.

¹¹ P. Gosnell, “Ephesians 5:18–20,” pp. 363–71; R.A. Wright, “Drinking, Teaching, and Singing,” pp. 85–104. L.K. Pietersen (“Wine, Debauchery, and the Spirit,” pp. 123–35) contends for the banqueting view, but does not see this as ruling out Dionysus since he was “regularly invoked at banquets” (Pietersen, “Wine, Debauchery, and the Spirit,” p. 134).

What these proposals have in common is that they are reactionary. To varying degrees, they each imagine that the author's words are functioning *polemically against* a particular background. The question is whether the author would not be more specific in trying to keep his readers from falling into certain pitfalls by providing more direct criticism. Is the author motivated by polemics against deleterious actions, or is he positively motivated by certain theological judgments? For instance, the references to singing and worship are not stated in a way that suggest polemical critique of an alternative cult or of pagan meal practices. The author does not critique illegitimate hymns or songs sung to false gods, nor does the author fixate on negative situations that arise when the church gathers. Rather, the worship depicted here is positive and stems ultimately from an understanding of what happens when the Spirit fills Christians (in whatever way that might be understood; see below).

Given the ubiquity of drunkenness, then, some suggest that no specific background is in view.¹² What might contribute to this suggestion is the general nature of Ephesians and the lack of any particular exigency. If there is no specific problem, however, that does not mean that a specific logic is lacking that might inform the rationale behind the text. On the other hand, if there is a specific problem in the background (whether the Dionysian cult, banqueting, eucharistic division, etc), that does not necessitate that the full scope of what informed this passage *was the problem itself*. Rather than reacting or responding, however, the author seems to be *proactively* constructing a theologically-informed exhortation. He is on the *offensive*, so to speak, rather than the *defensive*.

Regardless of what the problem was (or whether there was a problem), my concern is to see the constructive theological logic that contributed to (a) the prohibition against drunkenness, (b) the command to be filled ἐν πνεύματι, (c) the *positive* explication of what that filling looks like through the five ensuing participles, especially corporate worship, and (d) the connection to the *Haus-tafel* in 5.22–6.9. Stated succinctly, I am interested in the logic that informs and buttresses what we see in this passage.

One theological contributor is clearly the wisdom traditions of ancient Israel. This is seen, not least through the immediately preceding references to

¹² So S. Fowl, *Ephesians*, p. 177; F. Thielman, *Ephesians*, p. 358. It should be pointed out that it is not the case that the grammar provides any clarity on this matter. Traditionally, prohibitions have been understood to mean *stop* doing something (present prohibitions) or *do not start* doing something (aorist prohibitions). However, these distinctions are not inherent to the prohibitions themselves. See, e.g., S.E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, p. 357; idem, *Idioms*, pp. 53–55, 224–26; D.S. Huffman, *Verbal Aspect*, p. 106 (cf. pp. 34, 37, 156); M. Aubrey, “Greek Prohibitions.”

wisdom and foolishness in 5.15–17, but also to the fact that the prohibition against drunkenness appears to allude to (or echo) the wording of Prov. 23.31 LXX, which contains the exact phrase as found in Eph. 5.18: μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνω.¹³ Given the verbal and syntactical overlap, the influence of this passage is likely.¹⁴ T. Moritz adds that in favor of an allusion/echo is the fact that οἴνω is redundant, but against the idea of direct influence is the fact that the same overlap of words occurs elsewhere in *T. Jud.* 14.1. Thus, T. Moritz concludes that it is probably the case that we are dealing with a shared tradition.¹⁵ What adds credence to a shared tradition here is the fact that the word ἄσωτία in Eph. 5.18—the debauchery to which drunkenness leads (ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν ἄσωτία)¹⁶—is only found in two places in the Septuagint, and one instance is in Proverbs (Prov. 28.7 LXX). Furthermore, *T. Jud.* 16.1 also connects improper use of wine with ἄσωτία, even speaking of it as one of four evil *spirits* inherent to wine (ἐν αὐτῷ).¹⁷ This all further bolsters the idea that Jewish wisdom traditions are informing Eph. 5.18.

This also means that the author is connecting together *wisdom and the Spirit*. It has already been pointed out that the immediate context of 5.18 contains references to wisdom and foolishness. The prohibition to avoid drunkenness is the second of two prohibitions that are given due to the fact that “the days are evil” (5.16). The first is “do not be foolish” (5.17; μὴ γίνεσθε ἄφρονες).¹⁸ The im-

¹³ Here is the NETS translation of the full verse: “Do not get drunk from wine; rather converse with righteous people, and converse in public places; for if you give your eyes to saucers and goblets, you will afterwards walk around more naked than a pestle.” See the MT: אַל תִּרְאֵ יַיִן כִּי יתאדם כִּי יתן בכּיס עֵינָיו יתהלך בּמישרים: (“Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly”; NRSV). It would seem that the more categorical prohibition of wine in the Hebrew tradition was made to be more specifically associated with the abuse of wine in the Greek tradition.

¹⁴ C.A. Evans, “Ephesians 5:18–19,” p. 190.

¹⁵ T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, p. 94. He also opts for a Dionysian background to the passage, following the work of C.L. Rogers, Jr. (T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, pp. 94–95).

¹⁶ W.J. Larkin (*Ephesians*, p. 124) regards ἐν ᾧ as expressing result. On ἄσωτία see BDAG, p. 148.

¹⁷ The four evil spirits (τέσσαρα πνεύματα πονηρά) are “desire, heated passion, debauchery, and sordid greed” (ἐπιθυμίας, πυρώσεως, ἄσωτίας, αἰσχροκεδίας). See H.C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriachs,” p. 799. The fact that these spirits are *in* wine is intriguing, and we may be tempted to think that Eph. 5.18 is similarly saying that debauchery is inherent to wine. But in 5.18 the ἐν ᾧ is not referring back to wine (οἴνω), but to *being drunk with wine* (μεθύσκεσθε οἴνω). So most; see, e.g., W. J. Larkin, *Ephesians*, p. 124.

¹⁸ These vices come at the end of a series that begin in Eph. 4.17 and extend onward through to the start of the *Haustafel* (5.22–6.9). The prohibition about drunkenness in 5.18 is prominently the final vice in this section.

mediately preceding context is replete with an eschatological dualism of “light” and “dark” (5.8, 11, 13–14), and references are made to God’s wrath (5.6) and vices that keep one away from the kingdom (5.5). Recognizing this eschatological imagery in the immediate context helps to situate these prohibitions within a common set of tropes regarding the importance of being alert, sober, wise, and attentive to the present situation (cf. 1 Pet. 5.8; 1 Thess. 5.6–8; Rom. 13.11–14). In Eph. 5 the idea is that due to the eschatological situation, the author prohibits both foolishness and drunkenness. Since foolishness and wisdom are contrasted in 5.15, this suggests that the contrast between drunkenness and Spirit-filling is also a parallel one: to be drunk is to be foolish, and to be Spirit-filled is to be wise. Elsewhere in Ephesians this connection is made when the Spirit is called “the Spirit of wisdom and revelation” (1.17; πνεῦμα σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως). Thus, we can see how wisdom traditions inform this passage and are combined with certain eschatological impulses.

But I suggest that the main contribution to the logic of 5.18–21 is temple theology and adjacent connotations pertaining to priests and Levites. Of course, these are not at all competing contributions since second temple Jews believed that wisdom was uniquely associated with the temple (cf. Sir. 24), and that the temple and its cult would be restored in the eschaton (cf. Ezek. 40–48). To begin highlighting the importance of temple theology for this passage, we need to explore the meaning of πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι in 5.18. What does the author have in mind, and how exactly are we to understand the contrast of this command with the prohibition against drunkenness?

3. “Be Filled With the Spirit” in Ephesians 5.18

Πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι has been variously understood and translated. Most English translations render this phrase in a way that suggests that *the content of the filling is the Spirit* (e.g. CEB; ESV; KJV; NKJV; MESSAGE; NASB; NIV; NLT; RSV; NRSV). The NET and HCSB are notable exceptions for rendering the Greek with “be filled by the Spirit” to communicate that the Spirit is *the means of filling*. Scholars have traditionally tended to understand this example of ἐν + dative in 5.18 as expressing content in keeping with the majority of English translations.¹⁹

¹⁹ Chrysostom, “Homily XIX,” in P. Schaff, *A Select Library*, p. 138; BDAG, p. 828; J. Eadie, *Ephesians*, p. 398; C.E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, pp. 341, 349–50; A. Köstenberger, “What does it mean,” p. 231; C.A. Evans, “Ephesians 5:18–19,” p. 191. J. Muddiman (*Ephesians*, 248) takes a somewhat unique approach; he sees the human spirit as the sphere of filling with the

A parallel is often found in the references in Luke-Acts to people being “full of” or “filled with” the Spirit. The problem, however, is that this is expressed with a *genitive of content* (Lk. 1.15, 41, 67; 4.1; Acts 2.4; 4.8, 31; 6.3, 5; 7.55; 9.17; 11.24; 13.9, 52). As most scholars who argue against a dative of content in 5.18 point out, typically when the content of filling is specified a genitive of content is used.²⁰ Thus, it is argued that if the author had intended for the Spirit to be the content of filling in Eph. 5.18, he would have used a genitive rather than ἐν + dative. Some therefore assert on grammatical grounds that Luke and Ephesians should not be seen as describing parallel realities of the Spirit’s indwelling.²¹

Indeed, many scholars conclude that a dative of content in Eph. 5.18 is not likely on grammatical grounds. T.K. Abbott’s oft-cited critique of the dative of content is seen as definitive. He stated, “the use of ἐν with πληρώω to express the content with which a thing is filled would be quite unexampled.”²² He goes further in stating that the preposition ἐν “is wholly unsuitable to the idea ‘filled with.’”²³ Following the work of T.K. Abbott, D.B. Wallace has pointed out that “There are apparently no instances of ἐν + dat. for content in biblical Greek after πληρώω.”²⁴ In response, given that there is nothing special about biblical Greek relative to other examples of Koine Greek, what do we find if we cast the net wider? Additionally, why limit this investigation to πληρώω? What about other verbs (πίμπλημι, ἐμπίπλημι) or even adjectives (πλήρης) of filling? I will return to the grammatical arguments here momentarily. Before that we need to address the other grammatical possibilities found in the scholarly literature.

The grammatical arguments for alternative proposals are largely deconstructive (i.e. they point out perceived problems with the dative of content view). Each in their own way suggest that ἐν πνεύματι in 5.18 is used similarly in 2.22 (i.e. in 2.22 the Spirit is either the *means* or the *sphere* of creating a dwelling place for God).

divine Spirit as the content of filling. G. Sellin (*Epheser*, p. 419) also opts for a combination of sphere and content, though the sphere is in the divine Spirit.

²⁰ BDF, p. 95.

²¹ Against this, however, see especially C.J. Collins, “Ephesians 5:18”; A. Köstenberger, “What does it mean.”

²² T.K. Abbott, *Ephesians*, p. 161.

²³ Ibidem, p. 162.

²⁴ D.B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, p. 93 n.62. Cf. H.W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, p. 703.

The most common alternative to a dative of content is a dative of means.²⁵ The key grammatical argument for this position is that οἶνον in 5.18 is probably a dative of means,²⁶ and thus the Spirit is the means of filling just as wine is the means of drunkenness. The thematic argument in favor of ἐν πνεύματι being a dative of means is that in Ephesians God or Christ is the specific content of filling, and thus here in 5.18 the Spirit must be the expressed means of accomplishing the filling.²⁷ The examples provided are 1.23, 2.22, 3.19, and 4.13. The problem with this argument is that four passages are a small sample size from which to assert that the content of filling must be either one of two options (God or Christ), but not a third (the Spirit). In fact, the interchangeability of God and Christ with these filling texts pushes back against any such case that the Spirit cannot also be the content of filling. Not to mention that such a view pits the Spirit against God and Christ in a manner that does not do justice to the theology of Ephesians.

Another suggestion is that ἐν πνεύματι is a dative of sphere, an interpretation made prominent by J.P. Heil and followed by F. Thielman.²⁸ This proposal indicates that the Spirit is the realm of the filling, and both grammatically and thematically it is built upon the analogy of locative understandings of “in Christ” motifs in Ephesians (ἐν Χριστῷ). Within the context of 5.18, it is also suggested that the precise nature of the contrast is between two spheres as denoted by the preposition ἐν: the sphere of debauchery, in which drunkenness takes place (ἐν ᾧ ἐστιν ἀσωτία), and the sphere of the Spirit, in which filling takes place (πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι).²⁹ However, the parallel between drunkenness and filling seems to point in a different direction, not least because of the parallel use of second person plural passive imperatives (μὴ μεθύσκεσθε

²⁵ K.H. Easley, “The Pauline usage of Pneumati,” p. 301; W.J. Larkin, *Ephesians*, pp. 124–25; T.K. Abbott, *Ephesians*, p. 161; T.G. Gombis, “Being the Fullness of God,” p.267; B. Merkle, *Ephesians*, pp. 174–75; D.B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, p. 375; H.W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, p. 704. A more personalized version of a dative of means is a dative of agency, which seems to be expressed by C. Masson (*Éphésiens*, p. 209 n.3), “Ἐν πνεύματι est difficile à traduire: par l’Esprit est trop précis, dans l’Esprit est trop vague; nous proposons: cherchez la plénitude que donne l’Esprit.”

²⁶ B.L. Merkle, *Ephesians*, p. 174; H.W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, p. 700.

²⁷ T.G. Gombis, “Being the Fullness of God,” pp. 266–67.

²⁸ J.P. Heil, *Ephesians*, pp. 230–36; idem, “Ephesians 5:18b.”; F. Thielman, *Ephesians*, p. 360.

²⁹ F. Thielman, *Ephesians*, p. 360.

and πληροῦσθε), but also because “filling” language was used at times as a euphemism for drunkenness.³⁰

The contrast in 5.18, then, does not appear to be between two spheres, but between two contents of filling (wine and the Spirit). In favor of this view is the idea that the Spirit is often described in liquid terms.³¹ Whether this imagery is strictly metaphorical or indicative of how πνεῦμα was conceived, it certainly fits the notion of the Spirit being the content of filling in 5.18. This idea is also compatible with images of wisdom being described like an alcoholic beverage in the writings of Philo; for example, he speaks of wisdom as an unmixed drink³² and as that which provides the unmixed wine and instruction that leads to the most sober form of intoxication.³³ Conceptually, these ideas suggest a juxtaposition of physical drunkenness (as decreasing one’s capacity to reason and to be wise) and spiritual drunkenness (as enhancing reason and wisdom). This does not mean, however, that religious ecstasy is viewed here as being similar to drunkenness in appearance. That kind of comparison can indeed be found in the relevant literature (cf. 1 Sam. 1.12–18; Acts 2.13), but that is not what these ideas from Philo are communicating. There seems to be a similar contrast at work in Eph. 5.18 rather than a comparison.³⁴ Indeed, the effects of excess wine and the “fullness” of the Spirit are juxtaposed in context (i.e. do not be unwise, but be wise).³⁵ One who is full of the Spirit (content) is someone

³⁰ “Filling” is used in other contexts to refer to consuming enough alcohol to lead to intoxication. Cf., e.g., Jer. LXX 13.13; 3 *Macc.* 5.10; Euripides, *Bacchae*, 281.

³¹ In a few places in the NT πνεῦμα is either closely associated with a liquid substance or is itself described like a liquid. See 1 Cor. 12.13; Jn. 3.5; 7.37–39 (Cf. Jn. 4.10–14 in the light of 4.19–26). Additionally, language of the Spirit being “poured out” reflects this set of imagery as well (cf. ἐκχέω in Acts 2.17–18, 33; Tit. 3.6).

³² Philo, *Fuga* 202; *De Vita Mosis* II, 204; *Praem.* 122–23.

³³ For sober intoxication: Philo, *Prob.* 13; *Leg. Alleg.* I, 84; *Leg. Alleg.* III, 82; *De Opif. Mun.* 71; *Fuga* 32, 166 (cf. Sir. 1.16). Philo also compares the unmixed joy of wine with knowledge (*Fuga* 176; ἄκρατον εὐφροσύνην περιποίων ὡς ἀπ’ οἴνου).

³⁴ For a comparison of drunkenness and religious ecstasy in Eph. 5.18, see, e.g., H. Conzelmann, “Epheser,” p. 118; H. Hübner, *Epheser*, pp. 240–41; G. Sellin, *Epheser*, p. 418; M. Dibelius, *Epheser*, p. 92; A.J. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, p. 344.

³⁵ Elsewhere in the NT we find the Spirit and alcohol juxtaposed without their respective effects being compared. In Luke 1.15 it is said that John the Baptist should not drink wine or beer (οἶνον καὶ σίκερα οὐ μὴ πίη); instead, he will be filled with the Spirit (πνεύματος ἁγίου πλησθήσεται). Note also Rom. 14.17, which states that the kingdom of God is not about food or drink (πόσις), but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ). Cf. ms D of *Rehab.* 1.4. In some Jewish texts, drunkenness itself is personified as a spirit (e.g. Isa. 19.14; 29.9–10; 51.21; Mic. 2.11; Pss. *Sol.* 8.14). Whether or not this motif

who will be characterized by the five ensuing participles in 5.19–21 rather than debauchery (ἄσωτία).³⁶

Furthermore, there is a problem with all non-content views of ἐν πνεύματι. The problem is that the content of filling remains unclear from context. Suggestions include “God’s fullness” (probably a reference to his moral attributes),³⁷ “the fullness of the triune God,”³⁸ “the fullness of God in Christ (by the Spirit),”³⁹ “the fullness of the moral excellence and power of God,”⁴⁰ and “gifts of Christ’s love,”⁴¹ to name a few. The thing about each of these non-content interpretations is that none of them are able to draw upon the immediate context to answer this question.⁴² It seems odd that a verb of filling would be utilized without at all specifying *what the content of the filling is explicitly*. Eph. 1.23 and 4.10 may seem to be counter-examples, but in each case the one doing the filling is also the content of filling (τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πλη-

of drunkenness being a spirit informs the author’s wording in Ephesians, there appears to be a juxtaposition and contrast going on in 5.18 rather than a comparison.

³⁶ This might suggest that there is more than just content being expressed here and that the work of the Spirit is also in view in 5.18. Some scholars have therefore opted for a combination view of both *means* and *content*. R. Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, p. 237; A.T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, p. 344; S. Fowl, *Ephesians*, pp. 175–77. G.D. Fee (*Empowering Presence*, pp. 721–22) argues for means, but notes that this also communicates content (see especially p. 721 n.196). Against this idea, F. Thielman (*Ephesians*, p. 359) suggests that combination views should “only come into play if a single meaning makes no sense.” However, to use an example, if I have an empty swimming pool in my backyard that is filled with water after a rain storm, and I say, “my pool was filled by rain,” I both mean that rain was the means of filling *and* that it was also the content of filling. In fact, this fits the contrast with οἶνον in 5.18 further, since it is both the means of drunkenness and the content that is consumed to excess. Whether or not *means* is also grammatically expressed by ἐν πνεύματι alongside *content* in 5.18, however, is not my concern here.

³⁷ D.B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, p. 375. He thus summarizes his reading of 5.18 in this way: “Believers are to be filled *by* Christ *by means of* the Spirit with the content of the fullness of God” (emphasis original).

³⁸ B. Merkle, *Ephesians*, p. 175.

³⁹ T.G. Gombis, “Being the Fullness,” p. 267.

⁴⁰ H.W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, p. 704.

⁴¹ J.P. Heil, “Ephesians 5:18b,” pp. 506–7. Cf. *idem*, *Ephesians*, p. 235.

⁴² There is the possibility that πνεῦμα refers to the human spirit rather than the divine Spirit, presumably suggesting that ἐν πνεύματι is the location of filling (i.e. within the human spirit). So B.F. Westcott, *Ephesians*, p. 81. Πνεῦμα in Ephesians, however, is an external reality, usually referring to the divine Spirit (1.13, 17; 2.18, 22; 3.5, 16; 4.3–4, 30; 6.17–18) and once to a demonic spirit (2.2). The one text that might not be an external (or divine) S/spirit is 4.23. Yet, even if we ignore the way πνεῦμα is used elsewhere in Ephesians, this view also begs the question, *filled with what?*

ρουμένον in 1.23; ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα in 4.10).⁴³ I suggest the same dynamic is true in 5.18, the one doing the filling is also content of filling (the Spirit). Given the lack of what the content is in the context of 5.18, based on other proposals, I am inclined to see God's πνεῦμα as the content.

Chrysostom is a particularly instructive example of someone who reads ἐν πνεύματι in 5.18 as a dative of content. When he refers to the *concept* communicated in 5.18 regarding the content of filling being the divine Spirit, he uses the more common genitive of content in his comments on the verse (Πνεύματος πληροῦνται ἁγίου).⁴⁴ This could suggest that the grammatical arguments made by D.B. Wallace and T.K. Abbott, among others, regarding the unlikelihood of ἐν + dative following a verb of filling communicating content, are overplayed. Chrysostom is capable of fluidly moving to a different grammatical construction without comment.

So then, let's turn now to look at some of the grammatical evidence of verbs of filling being used with datives of content. For this, we will cast the net widely and not limit our investigation to biblical Greek. Grammatically, we have seen that πληρώω typically takes a genitive of content, but there are instances of a verb of filling + dative that indicate content. These are:

Luke 2.40a: Τὸ δὲ παιδίον ἠῤῥξανε καὶ ἐκραταιοῦτο πληρούμενον σοφία (NRSV: "The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom...").⁴⁵

Romans 1.29a: πεπληρωμένους πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ πονηρίᾳ πλεονεξίᾳ κακίᾳ (NRSV: "They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice.").

2 Corinthians 7.4b: πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει (NRSV: "I am filled with consolation").

Sirach 39.6a: ἐὰν κύριος ὁ μέγας θελήσῃ, πνεύματι συνέσεως ἐμπλησθήσεται (NETS: "If the great Lord wants, he will be filled with a spirit of understanding").

⁴³ The one doing the filling is more clear in 4.10. On 1.23, see the discussion below; regardless of the grammatical issues, however, the one doing the filling is also the content of the filling.

⁴⁴ As noted in C.J. Collins, "Ephesians 5:18," p. 20.

⁴⁵ There is a minor text-critical issue here. The genitive σοφίας is found in \aleph^1 , A, D, K (etc), whereas the dative is found in \aleph^2 , B, L (etc). The variant in this case does not impact the meaning (i.e. it is either a genitive of content or a dative of content), but it could be ruled out as evidence of a dative of content if the genitive was determined to be original. On the principle of preferring the more difficult reading, it makes sense why a scribe might opt for the more familiar genitive form following a verb of filling, making the dative form likely to be original.

2 Maccabees 6.5: τὸ δὲ θυσιαστήριον τοῖς ἀποδισταλμένοις ἀπὸ τῶν νόμων ἀθεμίτοις ἐπεπλήρωτο (NETS: “The altar was covered with abominable offerings that were forbidden by the laws.”).⁴⁶

2 Maccabees 7.21a: ἕκαστον δὲ αὐτῶν παρεκάλει τῇ πατρίῳ φωνῇ γενναίῳ πεπληρωμένη φρονήματι (NETS: “She encouraged each of them in their ancestral language. Filled with a noble spirit...”).

3 Maccabees 4.16a: Μεγάλως δὲ καὶ διηνεκῶς ὁ βασιλεὺς χαρᾶ πεπληρωμένος (NETS: “The king, meanwhile, continued to be exceedingly joyful”).⁴⁷

3 Maccabees 5.30a: ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς ῥηθείσιν πληρωθεὶς βαρεὶ χόλω (NETS: “But he was filled with violent anger at what was said...”).

Shepherd of Hermas 34.7: καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν πεπληρωμένος τοῖς πνεύμασι τοῖς πονηροῖς (“and from then on, since he is filled with the evil spirits”).⁴⁸

Shepherd of Hermas 43.3: ὁ γὰρ διάβολος πληροῖ αὐτὸν τῷ αὐτοῦ πνεύματι (“for the devil fills him with his own spirit”).⁴⁹

Shepherd of Hermas 43.9: καὶ πλησθεὶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ λαλεῖ εἰς τὸ πλῆθος (“and being filled with the Holy Spirit the man speaks to the multitude”).⁵⁰

Josephus, *War* 1.420: ἐπλήρωσεν δὲ τὸν περίβολον βασιλείοις πολυτελεστάτοις (“filled up the remaining space with the most costly palaces round about”).⁵¹

Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 2.92: οἱ τὰ μὲν ἴδια ταμεῖα πληροῦσιν, ἅμα τοῖς χρήμασι (“filling their own stores with money”).⁵²

⁴⁶ Contextually, 2 Macc. 6.4a is worth noting since, as C.E. Arnold (*Ephesians*, p. 351) points out, it uniquely brings together themes of the temple, notions of filling, and even the concept of “debauchery” (ἀσωτία) as in Ephesians 5.18: τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἱερόν ἀσωτίας καὶ κώμων ὑπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐπεπληροῦτο (NETS: “For the temple was filled with debauchery and reveling by the nations”).

⁴⁷ Clearly a dative of content: “greatly and exceedingly filled with joy.”

⁴⁸ M.W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 221.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 229.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 230.

⁵¹ W. Whiston, *Josephus*, p. 691.

⁵² C.D. Yonge, *The Works of Philo*, p. 577.

Sibylline Oracle 5.201: πληρούμενος αἵματι πολλῶ (“filled with much blood”).⁵³

3 *Baruch* 15.2: ἐπλήρωσεν αὐτὰ ἐλαίῳ (“he filled (the baskets) with oil”).⁵⁴

Letter of Aristeas 98: δόξῃ πεπληρωμένον (“ineffible in glory”).⁵⁵

Letter of Aristeas 178: προήχθη δακρῦσαι τῇ χαρᾷ πεπληρωμένος (“At this the king was moved to tears, so deeply was he filled with joy”).⁵⁶

Letter of Aristeas 261: καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα πρὸς τὸ προπιεῖν ὁ βασιλεὺς [λαμβάνειν] ἐτράπη, χαρᾷ πεπληρωμένος (“After this the king, filled with joy, proceeded to drink their health”).⁵⁷

Against this evidence, it is noted that these are simple datives and are not governed by the preposition ἐν as in Eph. 5.18.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the fact that οἶνω is a simple dative in 5.18a whereas πνεύματι is the object of the preposition ἐν is seen as further evidence against ἐν πνεύματι expressing content. Here are examples of a verb of filling, however, used with ἐν + dative to express content:

2 Kings 9.24a LXX: καὶ ἔπλησεν Ἰου τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ τόξῳ (NETS: “And Iou filled his hand with his bow”).

2 Esdras 9.11b LXX: ὧν ἔπλησαν αὐτὴν ἀπὸ στόματος ἐπὶ στόμα ἐν ἀκαθαρσίαις αὐτῶν (NETS: “they have filled it from mouth to mouth with their impurities”).

Psalms 64.5 LXX: πλησθησόμεθα ἐν τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς τοῦ οἴκου σου (NETS: “We shall be filled with the good things of your house”).

Micah 3.8 LXX: ἐὰν μὴ ἐγὼ ἐμπλήσω ἰσχὺν ἐν πνεύματι κυρίου καὶ κρίματος καὶ δυναστείας (NETS: “Otherwise I will replenish strength in the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment and of dominance...”).⁵⁹

⁵³ J.J. Collins, “Sibylline Oracles,” p. 398.

⁵⁴ H.E. Gaylord, Jr., “3 (Greek Apocalypse of) Baruch,” p. 677.

⁵⁵ R.J.H. Shutt, “Letter of Aristeas,” p. 19. This is referring to a tiara “fully of glory” with the name of God inscribed.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

⁵⁸ So D.B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, p. 374.

⁵⁹ On this passage, see esp. the discussion in C.J. Collins, “Ephesians 5:18,” pp. 13–15, especially as it pertains to the possibility of ἰσχὺν being an adverb.

Sirach 47.15: γῆν ἐπεκάλυψεν ἡ ψυχὴ σου, καὶ ἐνέπλησας ἐν παραβολαῖς αἰνιγμάτων (NETS: “Your soul covered the earth, and you were full with illustrations of riddles”).

Psalms of Solomon 4.12a: ἐπλήσθη ἐν παρανομίᾳ ἐν ταύτῃ (NETS: “At this he was filled with transgressing the law”).⁶⁰

Ignatius, *Smyrneans* 1.0: πεπληρωμένη ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ (“filled with faith and love”).⁶¹

T. Job 41.5b: τότε Ἐλιφᾶς ἐμπλησθεὶς ἐν τῷ Σατανᾷ ἐξεῖπέν μοι λόγους θρασεῖς (“Then Elihu, inspired by Satan, spoke out against me insulting words”).⁶²

In addition to this evidence, the adjective πλήρης can also be found with ἐν + dative to communicate content:

2 *Clement* 16.4: μακάριος πᾶς ὁ εὑρεθεὶς ἐν τούτοις πλήρης (“Blessed is everyone who is found full of these”).⁶³

⁶⁰ R.B. Wright (“Psalms of Solomon,” p. 656) sees ἐν ταύτῃ in *Pss. Sol.* 4.12 as referring to a place (“at one (place)”) based on 4.9, which refers to “a man’s peaceful house” (“Psalms of Solomon,” p. 655), and based on 4.11, which refers to the destruction of that house. Thus, R.B. Wright translates 4.12 as “He is satisfied with lawless actions at one (place)” taking the verb in the sense of “fulfilled” rather than “filled,” and seeing the ἐν + dative of ἐν παρανομίᾳ as expressing instrumentality. Taking the verb in 4.12a in terms of satisfaction seems unlikely because 4.12b states that his eyes are now on another house that he seeks to destroy with his words (καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπ’ οἶκον ἕτερον ὀλεθρεῦσαι ἐν λόγοις ἀναπτέρωσεως). Indeed, 4.13 compares this person to Hades because they are never *satisfied* (οὐκ ἐμπίπταται ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ ὡς ἄδης ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις). This makes satisfaction in 4.12a very unlikely. The comparison is that he is never satisfied, and 4.12b is the proof of it because he goes from destroying one to looking for another to destroy. In this light, I suggest that ἐν παρανομίᾳ in 4.12 should be understood as a dative of content (as is the case with the NETS translation).

⁶¹ M.W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 110.

⁶² R.P. Spittler, “Testament of Job,” p. 861. The idea of content (i.e. “filled with Satan”) is especially likely because just a few verses later (*T. Job* 42.2) it says “that the one who spoke in him was not a human but a beast” (R.P. Spittler, “Testament of Job,” p. 861; τὸν ἐν αὐτῷ λαλήσαντα μὴ εἶναι ἄνθρωπον ἀλλὰ θηρίον), which highlights the concept of Satan *indwelling* him. Further, it appears Spittler mistranslated Ἐλιφᾶς as “Elihu” (it ought to be “Eliphaz”).

⁶³ M.W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 76. In context, “these” refers to praying, charity, love, fasting, etc.

Shepherd of Hermas 34.1: οὐκ ἀποπλανᾷ δὲ τοὺς πλήρεις ὄντας ἐν τῇ πίστει (“But it does not lead astray those who are filled with faith”).⁶⁴

Shepherd of Hermas 48.4: ὅσοι οὖν πλήρεις εἰσιν ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἀνθεστήκασιν αὐτῷ ἰσχυρῶς (“So also the devil comes to all God’s servants to empty them. All those who are full in the faith resist [Satan] mightily”).⁶⁵

From these examples we have seen verbs and adjectives of filling with the dative communicating content, even when combined with ἐν + dative. At the very least, this evidence should be seen to provide *the grammatical possibility* of a dative of content being expressed in Eph. 5.18. There may be other reasons to opt for another possibility, but a dative of content should not be ruled out. I contend that when the grammar is viewed alongside the thematic and contextual factors outlined previously, a dative of content is preferable.

This grammatical possibility is a live option even in the light of the fact that elsewhere in the NT ἐν πνεύματι does not communicate content.⁶⁶ In none of those instances is the phrase used with a verb of filling. A similar dynamic exists for the instances of ἐν πνεύματι in the LXX, although in the one instance where ἐν πνεύματι does follow a verb of filling (Mic. 3.8 LXX), it does seem to communicate content (as noted in the evidence above).⁶⁷ When we look at the other instances of ἐν πνεύματι in Ephesians (2.22; 3.5; 6.18), what separates 5.18 is the verb of filling, which again explains the difference in grammatical categorization. However, I do not think that the difference in grammar amounts to a difference in theology. From 2.22 we should reasonably see the connection to temple theology inherent in the phrase ἐν πνεύματι, even if in 2.22 the church as the dwelling place of God is built “by the Spirit” (means) or “in the Spirit” (sphere).

⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 220.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 235. In context this is about jars full of wine and jars partially full of wine. The partially filled ones are a concern because they could turn sour, whereas the full jars are not a concern. The author states that Satan does not bother with the full ones because he knows that they are full (οὐ κατανοεῖ τὰ πλήρη· οἶδε γὰρ ὅτι πλήρη εἰσὶ).

⁶⁶ It occurs 35x beyond Eph. 5.18. Cf. Matt. 3.11; 12.28; 22.43; Mark 1.8, 23; 5.2; Lk. 1.17; 3.16; Jn. 1.33; 4.23–24; Acts 1.5; 11.16; Rom. 2.29; 8.9; 9.1; 14.17; 15.16; 1 Cor. 12.3 (x2); 14.16; 2 Cor. 6.6; Gal. 6.1; Eph. 2.22; 3.5; 6.18; Col. 1.8; 1 Thess. 1.5; 1 Tim. 3.16; 1 Pet. 1.12; Jude 20; Rev. 1.10; 4.2; 17.3; 21.10.

⁶⁷ Although lacking a verb of filling, 2 Kgs 2.9 LXX may be an additional example of ἐν πνεύματι expressing content: καὶ εἶπεν Ελισαίη Γενηθήτω δὴ διπλᾶ ἐν πνεύματι σου ἐπ’ ἐμέ (NETS: “And Elisaie said, ‘Do let twofold in your spirit be on me.’”).

Thus, regardless of how we might understand the grammar in Eph. 5.18—whether ἐν πνεύματι communicates that the Spirit is the content, means, or sphere of the filling—the theology informing this passage is best understood to be the temple. Scholars who weigh in on the grammar differently have argued for temple theology here, so it is not the case that one grammatical option fits this theology over against others. Some scholars who opt for a dative of content do contend for temple theology in 5.18 (so C.E. Arnold, A. Köstenberger, A.M. Stirling).⁶⁸ Yet, a dative of content is not always seen as being rooted in temple theology. J. Eadie, who highlights the importance of temple theology elsewhere in Ephesians, and who argues for content in 5.18, simply does not make any connection to a temple theology in this verse.⁶⁹ Furthermore, some, like C.J. Collins, argue for content in 5.18 and yet deny the relevance of temple theology for this passage.⁷⁰ Additionally, it is not the case that only those who argue for a dative of content in 5.18 make connections to the temple. Some scholars who argue for a dative of means, like T.G. Gombis, focus strongly on connecting 5.18 to the letter's temple theology.⁷¹ The grammar does not necessarily dictate the theology here. So with that being said, we are now in position to see how 5.18 contributes to the larger temple theology of Ephesians, before turning to see how the letter's temple theology is expanded further in the context of 5.18–21.

4. Temple Theology in Ephesians

The emphasis on being filled with the Spirit in 5.18 fits the prominent temple text in 2.11–22, where the Spirit's work creates the reality of the community constituting the temple of God.⁷² *By the Spirit* (ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι) both Jews and Gentiles have access to the Father as members of the same household (2.18–19). What makes this a reality for Gentiles is the destruction of “the dividing wall of hos-

⁶⁸ C.E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, pp. 341, 350; A. Köstenberger, “What does it mean,” p. 234; A.M. Stirling, “Transformation and Growth,” p. 142.

⁶⁹ Eadie's comments on 5.18 are interesting because he sees temple theology elsewhere (as in 3.17–19), but does not address it here (J. Eadie, *Ephesians*, p. 398).

⁷⁰ C.J. Collins, “Ephesians 5:18,” p. 19 n.18.

⁷¹ T.G. Gombis, *The Drama of Ephesians*, pp. 174–75; idem, “Being the Fullness,” p. 268.

⁷² For studies on the temple theme in Ephesians, see, e.g., A.M. Stirling, “Transformation and Growth”; G.K. Beale, *The Temple*, pp. 259–63; D. Peterson, “The New Temple,” pp. 164–72; G. Macaskill, *Union with Christ*, pp. 148–54.

tility” (2.14; τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ), which is probably best understood to be a reference to the partition separating the Court of Gentiles from the rest of the Jerusalem temple.⁷³ The church is now itself a “holy temple” (2.21; ναὸν ἅγιον) built on a prophetic and apostolic foundation (2.20; ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ), with Christ as the cornerstone (2.20; ἀκρογωνιαίου). It is a building joined together that grows (2.21; οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη αὐξει) and is built into a dwelling for God (συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ) *by the Spirit* (2.22; ἐν πνεύματι).⁷⁴

Thus, the pneumatology of Ephesians aids the influence of temple theology behind πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι in 5.18. What also fits this interpretation of 5.18 is how the language of “fullness” and “filling” functions within Ephesians. It seems very likely that πλήρωμα and cognates are informed by temple theology.⁷⁵ As Köstenberger points out, the temple was a place that was “full of” or “filled with” God’s glory/Spirit/presence (cf. Exod. 40.34–35; 1 Kgs. 8.10–11; 2 Chron. 5.13–14; 7.1–2; Hag. 2.7; Ezek. 10.4; 43.5; 44.4; Isa. 6.1).⁷⁶ Indeed, as he also points out, *all of creation* is full of God’s glory as well (cf. Num. 14.21; Ps. 72.19; Isa. 6.3; 11.9; Hab. 2.14),⁷⁷ which is itself a temple motif given the fact that the temple was perceived to be a microcosm of creation as a whole.⁷⁸

⁷³ So, e.g., C.E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, pp. 159–60; G. Macaskill, *Union with Christ*, p. 151. *Contra*, e.g., A.T. Lincoln (*Ephesians*, p. 141), who essentially sees it as a metaphorical reference to the Mosaic Law. The theology of Gentiles being brought in to the temple structure itself is also seen through an intertextual allusion. The author of Ephesians writes in 2.13–14 that Christ “our peace” (ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν) makes those who were “far” (μακρὰν) to be “near” (ἐγγύς). With this language of “peace,” “far,” and “near” many have noted an allusion to Isa. 57.19, which is the only passage in the LXX to contain those three key terms. As G.K. Beale (*The Temple*, p. 261) notes, this portion of Isa. 57 refers to the temple in the immediate context (57.13–15) and draws upon 56.3–8 where aliens, foreigners, and eunuchs are expected to worship and participate fully in the temple. Indeed, in that section it famously states, “for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations” (56.7; NETS).

⁷⁴ The church as temple was a common early Christian belief (e.g. 1 Cor. 3.16; 6.19; *Barn.* 16).

⁷⁵ So G. Munderlein, “Die Erwählung.”; C.E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, 118, 350–51; idem, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, pp. 83–84; A. Köstenberger, “What does it mean,” p. 230; A.M. Stirling, “Transformation and Growth,” pp. 137–43;

⁷⁶ Scripture passages taken from A. Köstenberger, “What does it mean,” p. 230.

⁷⁷ Scripture passages taken from A. Köstenberger, “What does it mean,” p. 230.

⁷⁸ J.D. Levenson, “The Temple.” Indeed, this fits G.K. Beale’s (*The Temple*) biblical-theological observation that the temple theme develops along a trajectory that anticipates the entire cosmos becoming God’s temple (cf. Rev. 21–22).

In G. Munderlein's study of πλήρωμα language in Colossians, he connects πλήρωμα with the *Shekinah* presence of God in the temple.⁷⁹ Colossians 1.19 states that in Christ (ἐν αὐτῷ)⁸⁰ the whole "fullness" was pleased to dwell (εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι), and further in 2.9 it states that in Christ (ἐν αὐτῷ) the whole fullness of divinity dwelled bodily (κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς). G. Munderlein notes that εὐδοκεῖν and κατοικεῖν from Col. 1.19 "seien termini technici für den Gedanken an Gottes spezielles Nahesein auf Erden."⁸¹ Thus, these references to πλήρωμα in Colossians are best viewed as expressions of temple theology, and these parallels in Colossians are instructive for the meaning of πλήρωμα in Ephesians.

The key text to demonstrate that πλήρωμα has temple connotations in Ephesians is 3.14–19, as argued by R.L. Foster.⁸² In 3.19 the reference to τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ with which the church is to be filled (πληρωθῆτε) is best understood as being similar to the glory that fills God's temple. The key observation is the way that this passage develops from the temple text at the end of chapter 2. Ephesians 3.14–19 picks up directly from 3.1 (note the discourse cue in each text: τούτου χάριτι), making 3.2–13 a bit of an excursus.⁸³ In the light of this observation, this means that 3.14–19 is intentionally continuing the theology from the end of Eph. 2 with its vision of Jews and Gentiles united by the Spirit as a dwelling place for God.⁸⁴

Several temple themes emerge in this passage that strengthen this structural observation. Important temple themes in 3.14–19 include, (a) references to δόξα (3.16, 21), (b) Christ indwelling believers (κατοικῆσαι) in 3.17,⁸⁵ and (c) the foundation reference in 3.17 (τεθεμελιωμένοι) that parallels the foundation of the new temple in 2.20 (ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ).⁸⁶ Other possible temple

⁷⁹ G. Munderlein, "Die Erwählung."

⁸⁰ The subject of the personal and relative pronouns in the Colossian hymn is "the Son of God's love" from verse 13 (τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ).

⁸¹ G. Munderlein, "Die Erwählung," p. 274. A great example of this is Ps. 67.17 LXX (68.17 MT), which speaks of YHWH's ascent to Zion and choice of that mountain as the place of his dwelling: ὁ εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς κατοικεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ.

⁸² R.L. Foster, "A Temple in the Lord."

⁸³ So, e.g., J. Eadie, *Ephesians*, p. 254; T.G. Gombis, "Being the Fullness," p. 261 n.7.

⁸⁴ See especially R.L. Foster, "A Temple in the Lord." Cf. A.M. Stirling, "Transformation and Growth," pp. 139–40; G. Macaskill, *Union with Christ*, pp. 152–53.

⁸⁵ So R.L. Foster, "A Temple in the Lord," pp. 87–88, 91; N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, p. 716.

⁸⁶ A.M. Stirling, "Transformation and Growth," p. 140; R.L. Foster, "A Temple in the Lord," pp. 87–88, 92. Given the prominence of temple motifs, as well as the emphasis on the temple being constructed, built, and even growing or expanding, R.L. Foster ("A Temple

themes, although contested, are the measurement references in 3.18 (τὸ πλάτος καὶ μῆκος καὶ ὕψος καὶ βάθος). Various proposals can be found for what is measured, including the dimensions of Christ's love⁸⁷ or power.⁸⁸ J. Eadie, however, made the case for a temple interpretation long ago, noting that these are "architectural terms" that are "so applicable to a building."⁸⁹ R.L. Foster has recently extended this line of thought, noting that the dimensions echo Ezek. 43 LXX with the description of the altar.⁹⁰ In making this case, R.L. Foster does not undermine the argument that Christ's love is in view in Eph. 3 here, but specifies that it refers to that love as expressed concretely in "the sacrificial love' of Christ in his death."⁹¹ A.M. Stirling develops R.L. Foster's points further about the background of Ezekiel for Eph. 3.19 by noting that the highest concentration of dimension terminology in the OT is in Ezek. 40–48 regarding the construction of a future temple.⁹² Indeed, these four terms from Eph. 3.18 appear in Ezek. 40–48 LXX multiple times: πλάτος (18x), μῆκος (42x), ὕψος (5x), and βάθος (2x). All of this evidence combines to suggest that τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ in Eph. 3.19 is language of the glory of God that will fill the temple, which in this case is the community of believers (drawing upon 2.11–22).⁹³

Another prominent πλήρωμα passage is 1.23. As is often noted, virtually every aspect of this verse is disputed.⁹⁴ Most argue that τὸ πλήρωμα is in apposition to τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ rather than αὐτὸν (in 1.22b), because of proximity and grammatical agreement (since αὐτὸν is masculine rather than neuter).⁹⁵ Thus, the "fullness" refers to the church.⁹⁶ Note the context of 1.22b–23 (below):

in the Lord," p. 95) contends that the references to "building" in 4.12, 4.16, and 4.29 also carry connotations of temple theology.

⁸⁷ So, e.g., A.J. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, pp. 207–13; H.W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, pp. 486–88.

⁸⁸ C.E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, pp. 214–17; idem, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, pp. 90–96.

⁸⁹ J. Eadie, *Ephesians*, p. 254.

⁹⁰ R.L. Foster, "A Temple in the Lord," p. 92.

⁹¹ Ibidem, p. 92.

⁹² A.M. Stirling, "Transformation and Growth," p. 139.

⁹³ R.L. Foster, "A Temple in the Lord," p. 94.

⁹⁴ The issues are helpfully outlined and addressed by H.W. Hoehner (*Ephesians*, pp. 294–301).

⁹⁵ So, e.g., H.W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, p. 299.

⁹⁶ *Contra* Robert Hermans ("La christologie d'Ephésiens"), who argues that the Christ is the πλήρωμα.

καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ,
ἣτις ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ, τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου.

Discerning what is meant by the rest of the passage is more complicated. H.W. Hoehner contends for a passive sense of πλήρωμα, the passive voice for πληρουμένου, and an adverbial function of τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν, opting for the translation: “which (indeed) is his body, the fullness of him who is being filled entirely.”⁹⁷ In this interpretation, Eph. 1.23 is interpreted similarly to parallel passages in Col. 1.19 and 2.9 where the fullness of God is in Christ, which H.W. Hoehner then conveys as meaning that in Eph. 1.23, “God’s fullness which is filling Christ is filling the church.”⁹⁸ A.J. Lincoln, among others, opts for the middle voice and an adjectival interpretation of τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν, which means that Jesus is the one who fills everything.⁹⁹ This is understood to be parallel to 4.10, where it is clear that Christ (by virtue of descending and ascending) fills all things (ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα). A parallel with 4.10 therefore also suggests an adjectival rather than an adverbial understanding for τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν in 1.23 (cf. τὰ πάντα in 4.10).¹⁰⁰ At the end of the day, whether the passage is about how God fills Jesus entirely (passive πληρουμένου and adverbial τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν) or how Jesus fills all things (middle πληρουμένου and adjectival τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν), there are clear temple connotations at work.¹⁰¹ I suggest that this is the case regardless of the various grammatical debates in 1.23. Given the parallels to 4.10, it is perhaps preferable to interpret the less clear text (1.23) in the light of the clearer one (4.10).

Ephesians 4.10 is not only parallel to 1.23 according to a particular interpretation of 1.23, but also as it extends the letter’s temple theology in its own way. It does this through using filling language to articulate the implications of Christ’s *ascent to the heavenly temple* in a creative citation and interpretation of Ps. 68.18 MT (67.19 LXX).¹⁰² The unique use of Ps. 68 here in Eph. 4.8–10

⁹⁷ H.W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, p. 285.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 299. So similarly, F. Thielman, *Ephesians*, p. 115.

⁹⁹ A.J. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, p. 77. Cf. G. Macaskill, *Union with Christ*, p. 150.

¹⁰⁰ H.W. Hoehner (*Ephesians*, p. 298), however, sees the active voice of πληρώσῃ in 4.10 as mitigating the argument that πληρουμένου in 1.23 is in the middle voice. He contends that if an active sense was meant in 1.23 then the active voice would have been used.

¹⁰¹ A.M. Stirling, “Transformation and Growth,” p. 138; R.L. Foster, “A Temple in the Lord,” pp. 95–96.

¹⁰² In the interpretative comments regarding the implications of ascent (4.9–10), namely that Jesus must also have descended, it is preferable to see this descent as a reference to Jesus’ death, which would make his descent and ascent a pattern that parallels his death and resurrection. Thus, the descent is not a reference to the incarnation (So, e.g., D.B. Wal-

is coordinated in many respects to the apparent use of Isa. 26.19 and 60.1–2 in Eph. 5.14,¹⁰³ due to the fact that both citations are introduced with the formula διὸ λέγει. Ephesians 5.14 provides additional implications for a temple interpretation of 5.18. In context, the shining of Christ in 5.14 includes the transformation and enablement accomplished by the Spirit in 5.18.¹⁰⁴ This is clear even in the original context of Isa. 60, since the shining of Isa. 60.2b connects back to the provision of the Spirit mentioned in Isa. 59.21b LXX as an expression of the covenant (καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἢ παρ’ ἐμοῦ διαθήκη, εἶπεν κύριος: τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐμόν, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ σοί). The immediate context in Isaiah anticipates a return from exile and a renewal of the covenant manifested in the outpouring of God’s Spirit.

The use of Ps. 68 and Isaiah together in Ephesians suggests that God is returning to his people by means of giving them his Spirit. In the words of N.T. Wright about early Christian beliefs more generally, “YHWH has returned to his Temple.”¹⁰⁵ Indeed, Ps. 68, cited in Eph. 4.8, praises God for his arrival to Zion originally. And by citing the Psalm here in Ephesians, now with implicit reference to a heavenly Jerusalem (cf. Heb. 12.22; Gal. 4.26; Rev. 21.2), the implication is that in the person of Jesus and the outpouring of the Spirit, YHWH has returned in a climatic way and in a manner that fulfills Isaianic

lace, *Greek Grammar*, pp. 99–100), nor to Pentecost (See esp. W.H. Harris III, *The Descent of Christ*, pp. 152–59, 171–97), but rather the descent has Jesus’ death in view. Whether the full extent of this deathly descent is to Hades (e.g. C.E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, pp. 252–54) or merely to “the grave” (e.g. T.G. Gombis, “Cosmic Lordship,” p. 378) is not as important here, since in either case the fact of Jesus’ death is forefront. It is in this death and resurrection (descent/ascent) dichotomy that the author understands Jesus to be “filling all things” (4.10). Similarly, in Colossians, the Son’s death and resurrection is seen as giving him authority and supremacy over all spheres, including the living and the dead (Col. 1.18). A.M. Stirling (“Transformation and Growth,” pp. 141–42), in his extended study on temple themes in Ephesians, sees the Pentecost interpretation as helping to further develop the temple connotations of filling imagery in Ephesians. The problem with this view is that it seems to conflate Jesus and the Spirit, makes the descent *subsequent* to the ascent, and seems to miss the importance of Jesus’ death and resurrection for defeating the “powers” that pervade the letter (cf. Eph. 1.20–23) and are essential to the meaning of leading captivity itself as a captive from the Psalm. More importantly for our purposes, however, the Pentecost interpretation is not essential for temple theology in 4.8–10. We already have Jesus ascending to the heavenly temple in the use of the Psalm, and filling language is clearly not limited to the Spirit in Ephesians.

¹⁰³ This is contested, but see J.M. Lunde and J.A. Dunne, “Isaiah in Ephesians 5:14.”

¹⁰⁴ J.M. Lunde and J.A. Dunne, “Isaiah in Ephesians 5:14,” p. 102.

¹⁰⁵ N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, p. 710.

expectations. From that position as ascended to the heavenly temple (4.8–10), Jesus shines upon his people (5.14) and gives them his Spirit to fill them (5.18).

From this survey we have seen that temple themes pervade Ephesians. The temple theology in Ephesians, as articulated through the letter's pneumatology, use of filling language, and OT citations, serves to confirm a temple interpretation of 5.18. In making his case for the prominence of temple motifs in Ephesians, R.L. Foster contends that "the temple metaphor seems more central to the author's desire for the Ephesians' self-imagery."¹⁰⁶ I affirm this conclusion, yet R.L. Foster does not mention 5.18 in his study. Similarly, A.M. Stirling, who has written perhaps the most extensive study on the temple in Ephesians, rightly says that 5.18 is about "the filling of the new temple with the presence of God,"¹⁰⁷ yet he does not develop this further in relation to the specific prohibition against drunkenness, nor with the ensuing participles of worship, nor with the *Haustafel* that follows. Despite the lack of attention on these issues in other treatments of temple theology in Ephesians, all of this holds together quite nicely actually, since, as N.T. Wright highlights, temple theology is typically utilized for the purpose of addressing *unity and holiness*.¹⁰⁸ I suggest that we see this come together in 5.18–21 through (a) the prohibition of drunkenness, (b) the corporate setting, and (c) the proper orders of the household in the *Haustafel*. With the remainder of this study, therefore, I aim to extend the temple themes that we have seen in Ephesians by highlighting how they help us interpret the other key features in the immediate context of 5.18. In brief, we will see how priestly and levitical injunctions are woven together to suggest that the church filled with the Spirit is a group comprised of priests and Levites serving in sacred space.

5. Levitical Priests, Alcohol, and the Temple Cult

A temple interpretation of Spirit-filling in 5.18 sheds light on the prohibition of drunkenness by way of priestly regulations against consuming alcohol while ministering in the temple. As is stated in Lev. 10.8–9 (NETS):

And the Lord spoke to Aaron saying: You shall not drink wine nor sikera (Οἶνον καὶ σικερα οὐ πῖεσθε), neither you nor your sons with you, whenever you enter into the tent of witness or when you approach the altar, and you will not die; it is

¹⁰⁶ R.L. Foster, "A Temple in the Lord," p. 95.

¹⁰⁷ A.M. Stirling, "Transformation and Growth," p. 142.

¹⁰⁸ N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, p. 710.

a perpetual precept throughout your generations to distinguish between the holy and the profane and between the unclean and the clean.

This prohibition is repeated in brief in Ezek. 44.21 (NETS): “And no priest shall drink wine (οἶνον οὐ μὴ πίωσιν πᾶς ἱερεὺς) when they enter into the inner court” (cf. *Ps.-Hec.* 199). Alcohol is to be avoided when approaching the altar, Philo asserts, because of “hesitation, and forgetfulness, and sleep, and folly” (*Spec. Leg.* I, 98).¹⁰⁹ Josephus also affirms that priests abstain from alcohol “lest otherwise they should transgress some rules of their ministration” (Josephus, *War* 5.5.7).¹¹⁰ Granted these texts speak of absolute prohibition against alcohol rather than drunkenness, it is clear that abstinence here is a boundary to ensure that the effects of drunkenness do not lead to errors in execution. Indeed, drunkenness is implied in these abstinence texts, especially since wine itself was consumed by priests on other occasions, and tithes of wine were set aside for them.¹¹¹

With this priestly background the prohibition of drunkenness in a text like Ephesians that is so replete with temple theology is given immense clarity. Just as the ancient priests serving in the ancient temple were not meant to drink while serving in the temple, so that the effects of alcohol did not hinder their duties and responsibilities, so here in Ephesians we have a similar prohibition against drunkenness when the church is gathered together as the temple indwelt with the Spirit of God.¹¹² Here in Ephesians our priests are not prohibited from drinking, but only from drunkenness. Of course, the eucharistic celebrations would have undoubtedly included wine (cf. 1 Cor. 11.21, 23–26). Consuming wine to the point of excess would not have been in keeping with the sacredness of the gathering. In the context of Eph. 5 we are given an important glimpse into the nature of excessive alcohol consumption—*the abuse of alcohol is ultimately distorted worship*. It is to the priestly and levitical background of singing that we now turn to round out the temple theology of 5.18–21.

¹⁰⁹ C.D. Yonge, *The Complete Works of Philo*, p. 543. Cf. Philo, *De Ebr.* 126, 129, 138; *De Vit. Cont.* 73; *Spec. Leg.* I, 100, 247–50. Philo (*De Ebr.* 2) also notes that “the priests who are engaged in offering sacrifices” are those who “have taken the great vow” and thus are “expressly forbidden to drink unmixed wine” (C.D. Yonge, *The Complete Works of Philo*, p. 207).

¹¹⁰ W. Whiston, *Josephus*, p. 849. Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 3.12.2; *C. Ap.* 2.195–96a.

¹¹¹ So, e.g., Deut. 24.4; Philo, *Virt.* 95; Jud. 11.13; Tob. 1.7 [G^{II}]; *Jub.* 32.10–15; cf. Josephus, *War* 5.13.6; *Palaea Historica* 140.10–14.

¹¹² Josephus notes that the Essenes practice a “perpetual sobriety” (*War* 2.8.5; see W. Whiston, *Josephus*, p. 726), which may be somewhat informed by their similar temple-as-community theology.

6. Levitical Singing in the Temple & Familial Singing in the Home

The prohibition to avoid drunkenness and the command to be filled ἐν πνεύματι in 5.18 is initially explicated in terms of corporate worship with the first four of the five ensuing participles (5.19–20). Scholars dispute whether we ought to understand the five participles as the *result*¹¹³ of the filling or the *means*¹¹⁴ of the filling. D.B. Wallace objects to the idea of these being participles of means because that would suggest a “mechanical” notion.¹¹⁵ C.E. Arnold rightly points to 4.30 for guidance here, which speaks of grieving the Holy Spirit, suggesting that grieving the Holy Spirit “hinders the full reception of the Spirit,” whereas the participles in 5.19–21 are the “means by which the Spirit can fill the lives of believers.”¹¹⁶ Just as we saw the priestly connotations of avoiding drunkenness, I suggest that the references to corporate singing are part of an explication of being filled with the Spirit (thus, *means*). I suggest too that this is similarly rooted in priestly concerns that are connected to the letter’s temple theology. In particular, these priestly and levitical responsibilities pertain to singing and playing musical instruments in the temple cult.

Eckhard J. Schnabel has provided a comprehensive account of singing in second temple Judaism and early Christianity. What he finds is that singing in the NT did not originate from synagogue culture. In fact, there does not appear to be evidence of regular synagogal singing. As Schnabel states, “there is no explicit evidence that the worshippers sang psalms or hymns” in the synagogue, and further that “the earliest unambiguous reference to singing in a synagogue comes from a text written in the fifth-sixth century A.D.”¹¹⁷ Additionally, he observes that out of the NT, Philo, Josephus, the Mishnah, the Tosefta, the Jerusalem Talmud, and the Babylonian Talmud there is not a single reference to singing in synagogues.¹¹⁸ As far as we know from the extant evidence, in ancient Israel there were two primary settings where singing occurred. These were the domestic and cultic spheres: in the temple, the Levites sang as they served in the Temple; in the home, families would sing hymns during the Passover

¹¹³ A. Köstenberger, B. Merkle, and R. Plummer, *Going Deeper*, p. 320; D.B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, p. 639; W.J. Larkin, *Ephesians*, pp. 125–27, 129; A.J. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, p. 345; F. Thielman, *Ephesians*, p. 361.

¹¹⁴ C.E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, pp. 343, 351–57; T.G. Gombis, “Being the Fullness of God,” p. 269.

¹¹⁵ D.B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, p. 639.

¹¹⁶ C.E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, p. 350.

¹¹⁷ E.J. Schnabel, “Singing and Instrumental Music,” p. 319. Cf. *Acts Pilate* 16.7–8.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 320.

celebration (cf. Matt. 26.30; Mark 14.26).¹¹⁹ Of the two spheres, the former cultic sphere is addressed far more often, making the temple the primary setting of this activity in ancient Israel, being the occupation of Levites who were trained to use the instruments designed to accompany the hymns and psalms that were to be sung in the temple.

David was the original figure known for song-writing and playing/making the instruments used in the temple cult (cf. 1 Sam. 16.18; 2 Sam. 23.1). He was responsible for instructing the Levites in the proper songs for the proper occasions, and for teaching them how to play the instruments (1 Chron. 6.31–32; 15.16; Josephus, *Ant.* 7.12.3). David would even lead them in this process (1 Chron. 16.1–36; note especially 16.9, 23). Chenaniah was the leader of Levites (ἄρχων τῶν Λευιτῶν) and leader of singers (ἄρχων τῶν ᾠδῶν) because of his intelligence (ὅτι συνετός ἦν in 15.22). Those who were meant to sing in the temple had to be taught (δεδιδασκούμενοι) and they all had to be intelligent (πᾶς συνίων in 25.7; cf. 25.6). David numbered the Levites and delegated their specific duties, including those who would sing and would learn to play the musical instruments (2 Chron. 23.18; Josephus, *Ant.* 7.14.7). Although the music was primarily assigned to certain Levites among the sons of Asaph, some Aaronic Levites also participated (cf. 1 Macc. 13.47; 2 Macc. 1.30; Josephus, *Ant.* 9.13.3).¹²⁰

The primary locale for singing was the tent of meeting and the temple. While the ark was brought to Jerusalem the people sang hymns and songs of praise (1 Sam. 6.5; 1 Chron. 15.27; Josephus, *Ant.* 7.4.2). After Solomon built the temple, a procession full of sacrifices, singing, and dancing ensued as vessels from the tabernacle were transferred over (Josephus, *Ant.* 8.4.1). Special trees were brought in to support the temple and also to create the instruments for the Levites (Josephus, *Ant.* 8.7.1). The strong association of singing with the Jerusalem temple is also seen in passages like Ps. 137.3–4, which speaks of the people not wanting to sing the songs of Zion in a foreign land while in a state of exile (cf. also Lam. 3.14; 5.14).¹²¹ When the temple was rebuilt during the

¹¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 321.

¹²⁰ Other references to singing, hymns, and instrumentation in cultic contexts by Levites include: 1 Esdras 5.56–62; Ezra 3.10–13; 8.17; Neh. 11.22; 12.24, 27–37, 45–47; 2 Chron. 5.12–13; 7.6; 23.12–13; 29.27–30; 34.12. For a distinction between Levites and singers, see Philo, *De Ebr.* 94; Neh. 7.1, 43–45; 13.10. Sometimes a distinction is made between priests and singers too (Neh. 10.39; 13.5), and between all three (Ezra 2.70; 7.7, 24; Neh. 7.73; 10.28). On occasion singing was done by non-Levites, though the settings were still largely cultic (e.g. 1 Kgs 8.53; Neh. 7.67; 1 Chron. 16.42; Ps. 27.6; 4 Macc. 4.11–12; Philo, *Virt.* 95.

¹²¹ This portrait of exile and lament is also met with explicit language of judgment against the temple cult. In Amos 5.23, God says he despises the feasts and festivals of the

Persian empire, sacrifices were reinstated, garments were given to the priests, and the instruments were given to the Levites for singing hymns (Josephus, *Ant.* 11.3.8). Once the temple was finally rebuilt, “the priests, adorned with their accustomed garments, stood with their trumpets, while the Levites, and the sons of Asaph, stood and sung hymns to God” (Josephus, *Ant.* 11.4.2).¹²² There was also singing when the temple was rededicated after the Maccabean revolt (1 Macc. 4.53–56; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.7.7),¹²³ and after other fiascos as well (1 Macc. 13.47, 51). Singing would also accompany different festival celebrations at the temple (2 Macc. 10.7; 3 Macc. 6.35; Josephus, *Ant.* 11.5.5).

In the Mishnah, primary reference in regards to singing is to the Levites singing in temple settings (*m. Bik.* 3.4; *m. Pesah.* 5.7; *m. Sukkah* 5.4; *m. Tamid* 7.4; *m. Mid.* 2.5).¹²⁴ Outside of temple settings, the Mishnah refers to singing in domestic settings for Passover (*m. Pesah.* 9.3), which again corresponds to the two spheres noted by E.J. Schnabel.¹²⁵ Intriguingly, regarding domestic settings for Passover celebrations (*Spec. Leg.* II, 145–49), Philo speaks of the home in which Passover is being celebrated as having “the character and dignity of a temple” (*Spec. Leg.* II, 148; σχῆμα ἱεροῦ καὶ σεμνότητα περιβέβληται). He comments in particular on the meat for the meal as a “victim being sacrificed” (ἱερείου), and those who celebrate gather “to fulfil their hereditary custom with prayer and songs of praise” (πάτριον ἔθος εκπληρῶσοντες μετ’ εὐχῶν τε καὶ ὕμνων).¹²⁶ In the light of all of the evidence surveyed so far, this custom of “songs of praise” that Philo mentions here, I suggest, also contributes to the “character and dignity” that makes the homes celebrating Passover *like a temple*.¹²⁷ Indeed, Philo notes elsewhere something similar about this function of worship, drawing such a strong connection between singing and the temple, by stating that through praises and hymns (δι’ ἐπαίνων καὶ

people (5.21) as well as their sacrifices (5.22), so he wishes to be removed from their “songs” (5.23; μετὰστησον ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ ἦχον ψδῶν σου, καὶ ψαλμὸν ὀργάνων σου οὐκ ἀκούσομαι). This further highlights the connection between singing and temple practices. Later the judgment is expressed as turning singing into lament (8.10).

¹²² W. Whiston, *Josephus*, p. 349.

¹²³ Similarly, the Jews sang hymns to God following military victory (cf. 1 Macc. 4.24, 33; 2 Macc. 10.38; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.8.5; 14.9.2). In Jud. 16, Judith sings a hymn of praise in the light of God’s victory (Jud. 16.1–17; cf. 15.13), and then she arrives in Jerusalem to make offerings and sacrifices (Jud. 16.18).

¹²⁴ As noted in E.J. Schnabel, “Singing and Musical Instrumentation,” p. 320.

¹²⁵ E.J. Schnabel, “Singing and Musical Instrumentation,” p. 320.

¹²⁶ C.D. Yonge, *The Complete Works of Philo*, p. 582.

¹²⁷ Elsewhere Philo describes hymns and singing during the celebration of the Passover at the temple (*De Vit. Cont.* 79–89).

ὑμνων) the world is made worthy of being a temple (*De Plant.* 126; σύμπας ὁ κόσμος ἱερὸν ἀξιόχρεων). This idea seems to be compatible as well with the idea that singing promotes, or is at least conducive with, the presence of the Spirit.¹²⁸

The implication of cultic contexts providing the primary setting for hymns and singing suggests that the early Christian house churches were regarded as sacred spaces in which those filled with the Spirit were like Levites offering their worship to God.¹²⁹ The democratization of singing within early Christianity was likely concomitant with the relativization of sacred space to the indwelling of God's Spirit in the church.¹³⁰ It is also likely that early Christians believed that they were participating in the worship of the

¹²⁸ There are a couple of episodes in the Deuteronomistic History that speak of singing as an apotropaic practice to ward off evil spirits and also as a means of grace. David was originally called upon by Saul to play and sing for him while he was disturbed by a demonic spirit (1 Sam. 16.16–22, 23; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 6.8.2), which had the affect of bringing him back to his right mind. This would happen periodically (1 Sam. 16.23). Later on Saul unsuccessfully tried to kill David with a spear during a situation in which he requested for David's assistance in alleviating the demonic presence again through music and hymns (1 Sam. 19.9–10; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 6.11.3). On the other side of the equation someone was brought in to play for Jehosaphat, and during that time "the hand of the Lord" (χειρ κυρίου in 2 Kgs 3.15 LXX) came upon him as the music played, which seems to be more than correlation (see also Josephus, *Ant.* 9.3.1; cf. *Ant.* 9.1.2; 20.9.6). This background is intriguing considering the relationship between worship and being filled "with the Spirit" in Eph. 5.18–21. It may shed some further light on the proposal made earlier that these participles in 5.19–21 are participles of means rather than result. Further, the association of singing and musical instrumentation *with God's Spirit* only further highlights the centrality of the temple context for this kind of activity, given that the temple is the place where God's Spirit uniquely dwells.

¹²⁹ This kind of theological insight is probably similarly applicable to the Qumran community. They composed a number of hymnic materials and temple theology was likewise relativized around the community itself. This point is indebted to B.S. Rosner in informal discussion. E.J. Schnabel ("Singing and Instrumental Music," p. 322), however, registers the caution that even though hymns were found at Qumran, that does not mean that we know that they were sung.

¹³⁰ As E.J. Schnabel ("Singing and Instrumental Music," pp. 336–37) affirms, "In terms of Jewish culture, the most plausible influence is the singing and music of the Levites in the Jerusalem Temple, the singing in domestic settings, and the singing and composing of Jewish religious groups." Further, he suggests that the logic of the church being the temple "may have given to the Jewish-Christian leaders of the early congregations the confidence to adapt practices of Temple worship such as singing and music for their regular assemblies" ("Singing and Instrumental Music," p. 337). He also adds that the house church setting also provides explanatory value to this dynamic.

heavenly temple above,¹³¹ which made house churches a localized extension of that temple activity. This fits the way that worship itself became understood in terms of sacrificial imagery, being compared/contrasted with sacrifices, offerings, and libations.¹³² This is not only consistent with the temple theology of the NT as a whole, and Ephesians in particular, but also with the designation of believers as “saints” or “holy ones” (ἅγιοι). As McKnight affirms about holiness language, it is “used especially for the Temple, its utensils and its priests.”¹³³ This is due to “the Lord’s presence” and thus all within that space likewise “become sacred, saintly and holy.”¹³⁴ Priests were called “holy” and “consecrated” (e.g. Ex. 30.30; Lev. 21.6–8), and Levites were too (e.g. 2 Chron. 23.6). Throughout Ephesians the author designates his readers as *holy* (cf. Eph. 1.1, 15, 18; 2.19; 3.8, 18; 4.12; 5.3; 6.18). Indeed, the author affirms that believers were chosen “in Christ” prior to creation *for the very purpose of being holy and blameless* (1.4; cf. 5.27). This means that Ephesians would reflect a similar theology to what we see in 1 Pet. 2.5–10, which not only speaks of believers as the temple, *but also as the priests who operate within the temple*.¹³⁵ Believers are a “spiritual house” (αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικός) intended *to be a holy priesthood* (εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον) who as priests offer “spiritual sacrifices” (1 Pet. 2.5; πνευματικὰς θυσίας). Then in 1 Pet. 2.9 the priestly language is reaffirmed once more as a “royal priesthood” (βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα). This conflation of cultic images in 1 Pet. 2 (the sacred space and the sacred practitioners) is precisely what I suggest is informing the logic of Eph. 5.18–21.

The holy status of the recipients of Ephesians is due to the presence of the Holy Spirit to whom believers were sealed (1.13; 4.30), which is true not just for the Jewish people, but for Gentiles as well. Those Gentiles who were previously alienated are now called “fellow citizens of the saints” and “member’s of God’s household” (2.19; συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ). Together Jews and Gentiles now comprise a *holy* temple (2.21; ναὸν ἅγιον). Indeed, the way that Jews and Gentiles comprise God’s dwelling place and

¹³¹ Cf. Rev. 5.9; 14.3; 15.3; *T. Lev.* 3.8; *Apoc. Zeph.* A; *Rechab.* 15.6; 16.1, 3. Perhaps this may explain why singing would be associated with burial (cf. *Apoc. Ezra* 7.15; *Apoc. Zeph.* [Akhmimic] 1.1–2).

¹³² *Ign. Rom.* 2.2; *Sibyl. Or.* 8.498 [within 8.485–500]; cf. Philo too who speaks of sacrifices of praise in *Spec. Leg.* I, 224 and 227.

¹³³ S. McKnight, “Saints Re-Formed,” p. 217.

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 217.

¹³⁵ What 1 Peter and Ephesians also share in common is the idea that Jesus is the cornerstone of this new temple (Eph. 2.20; 1 Pet. 2.6–8).

have access to God is through the work of the Spirit (ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι in 2.18; ἐν πνεύματι in 2.22).

A few OT texts connect psalms sung in the temple with the anticipation of Gentile participation in the cult. Isaiah 66.20 LXX refers to the children of Israel bringing psalms and sacrifices to the temple (τὰς θυσίας αὐτῶν μετὰ ψαλμῶν εἰς τὸν οἶκον κυρίου). The context anticipates Gentiles participating in the temple cult as demonstrated in the next verse, which speaks of *Gentiles becoming priests and Levites* (ιερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας in Isa. 66.21 LXX). Zechariah 6.14 LXX also refers to “a psalm in the house of the Lord” (καὶ εἰς ψαλμὸν ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου) in a context in which a messianic figure called “Branch” is prophesied as being the one who is going to build the house of the Lord (6.12 LXX; καὶ οἰκοδομήσει τὸν οἶκον κυρίου). As a result of the Branch’s actions, those from far away (οἱ μακράν) will come and build the house of the Lord (6.15 LXX; καὶ οἱ μακράν ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἤξουσιν καὶ οἰκοδομήσουσιν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ κυρίου), participating in this temple project.

In the light of the background of singing in temple settings, the language of singing in 5.19–20 is best interpreted as carrying forward priestly and levitical connotations, not least through the temple theology of being filled with the Spirit in 5.18 and the grammatical subordination of the participles in 5.19–20. Although E.J. Schnabel comments on 5.19,¹³⁶ he does not develop a temple theology in the light of being filled in the Spirit in 5.18. Here in 5.18, then, I suggest that we have a glimpse of the early house churches gathered together, filled with the Spirit of God, imagined as priests and Levites worshipping in God’s temple. This serves to explain the nature of the transition into the *Haustafel*, since the gathering for corporate worship would have been in people’s homes. As Fee notes, “In Paul’s mind there is the closest kind of link between Christian worship and the Christian household. This is almost certainly because the former (worship) took place primarily in the latter (the household).”¹³⁷ It is in mundane first-century dwellings that the sacred presence of God was to be found. As a result, worshipers were like priests and Levites with duties to sing praises to God, and thus they ought not to get drunk and thereby fail in this responsibility. Indeed, the house churches were viewed as constituting the temple of God (which coheres with, as well as combines, the two primary spheres for singing in ancient Judaism).

¹³⁶ E.J. Schnabel, “Singing and Instrumental Music,” p. 312–13.

¹³⁷ G.D. Fee, “Ephesians 5:18–6:9,” p. 4. For more on the nature of early Christian house churches, see, e.g., W.J. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, pp. 9–50; R.J. Banks, *Paul’s Idea of Community*, pp. 26–46.

The connection between worship and temple theology can also be seen in the parallel text of Col. 3.16, where a command that the word of Christ *dwell within* the readers is given (Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικεῖτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως), followed by multiple participles that include references to the corporate gathering of teaching, singing, and giving thanks (διδάσκοντες, νουθετοῦντες, ἄδοντες, εὐχαριστοῦντες). Additionally, we also see the same string of references to the kinds of songs that were sung (ψαλμοῖς, ὕμνοις, ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς).¹³⁸ There are obvious parallels in terms of grammar and vocabulary, but there are also important conceptual and thematic parallels. The language of indwelling surely evokes the temple theology of Col. 1.19 and 2.9,¹³⁹ which further supports the connection of sacred temple space and singing. Furthermore, the notion of *indwelling* in Col. 3.16 parallels the notion of *Spirit-filling* in Eph. 5.18, and it provides additional corroboration for the idea that πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι is best interpreted as a dative of content. What stands out by way of contrast between these two passages is the ascetic reference to drunkenness in Ephesians, made notable by the critique of asceticism in Colossians (2.16–23).¹⁴⁰ I suggest that here in Ephesians the reference to avoiding drunkenness serves to extend the temple theology of the passage even further.

Conclusion

To conclude this study, then, I have argued that priestly and temple theology informs 5.18–21 and helps to explain the prohibition of drunkenness, the command to be filled ἐν πνεύματι, the praise and worship that ensues, and the household codes that are grammatically subordinated to the command to be pneumatically filled. This is all rooted in the nature of early Christian house-

¹³⁸ Also, they are in the same order and are all plural datives. In Eph. 5.19 πνευματικαῖς is missing from some manuscripts, but UBS⁵ scores its presence a B rating; note B.M. Metzger (*A Textual Commentary*, pp. 540–41): “In the opinion of a majority of the Committee, it is more likely that πνευματικαῖς was accidentally omitted from several witnesses (P⁴⁶ B it^d Ambrosiaster) because of homoeoteleuton, than added in almost all witnesses by assimilation to Col 3.16, where the text is firm.”

¹³⁹ Again, on this see G. Munderlein, “Die Erwählung,” 274.

¹⁴⁰ However we understand the issue of literary dependence, the prohibition of drunkenness in Ephesians is likely not incidental to the logic of the passage (and this might be especially the case if Ephesians is dependent on Colossians). D.A. Campbell (*Framing Paul*, pp. 309–38), who views Ephesians as the Laodicean letter (Col. 4.16), contends that Ephesians was written at the same time as Colossians, the latter having a particular exigency that the former did not.

hold gatherings and the belief that such a gathering constituted the temple of God. This proposal aimed to address each aspect of the passage in a coherent manner, and contends that a positive theological logic informs the text regarding the appropriate behavior of priests and Levites within the temple, which is now understood and applied in relation to the corporate worship setting in house churches where the Spirit of God was present. This is to be contrasted with other proposals that see 5.18–21 as largely based on a polemical reaction. Rather, the robust temple theology that many scholars have suggested pervades Ephesians has been seen to inform our passage as well.

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