

Lesson for September 27, 2009

Review of Our Spiritual Assets

Sealing, Filling and Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Sealing of the Holy Spirit

The sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit is our assurance from God of a secure future. The word in Greek for sealing is “sphragizo” and means to secure, to signify ownership or to authenticate. We must always interpret Scripture in the time in which it was written. In Biblical times a seal or signet was used to authenticate a transaction or to show ownership of property.

A perfect illustration of this is found in the Book of Esther in the Old Testament. In this story the king sends his ring with his servant, which is to be used as the seal of authority. Even though the ring was used by a servant with no authority, it carried the authority of the king. It is the person behind the seal who has the authority, the seal being authentication that the king has authorized the transaction.

In the same manner, God seals the believer at salvation with His seal. God’s seal is not a ring, but rather the Holy Spirit Himself. “The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” What exactly does the Holy Spirit seal for the believer? We are told in Ephesians 1, where Paul enumerates certain spiritual blessings that belong to all believers. In verse four he states that we are the elect (chosen for privilege) of God and that we are made holy (set apart) and blameless before Him (a reference to our position in Christ). In verse five we are told that we have been predestined (a predetermined plan for each of us) and that we have been adopted into the family of God. Verse six tells us that we have been accepted in the beloved. In verse seven we learn that we have been forgiven and redeemed and in verse eight and nine we are told that God’s will has been revealed to us. In verses ten and eleven we find out that we have an eternal inheritance as a result of being in union with Christ. And finally in verses twelve and thirteen we are told that God places His seal on these blessings by sending His Holy Spirit to indwell us because of our faith in Christ.

The reason God the Holy Spirit is our seal is that He is the One Who is able to search and know the “heart” (mind) of man. Heart also refers to the center of man’s will, intellect and emotions. It is *not* referring to the pumping organ. The reason the word for heart is used to designate the soul is that the physical heart circulates blood to the entire body. In like manner the soul circulates information. It is doctrinal information circulating in the soul that the Holy Spirit uses to teach and to guide the believer.

Filling of the Holy Spirit

The filling of the Holy Spirit is for every believer in Christ. The purpose of this filling is to empower the believer to live the Christian Way of Life. When a believer is living the Christian Way of Life, he brings glory and honor to Christ. All believers are immediately filled with the Holy Spirit the moment they trust Christ as their Savior. The first time we sin after salvation however, we lose the filling of the Holy Spirit and we are out of fellowship with God. In order to restore both the filling of the Holy Spirit and our fellowship with God, we must simply name our known sins to God. (I John 1:9) We are then commanded to move forward with the execution of the Christian Way of Life, which the Scripture calls "walking in the light." (I John 1:5-10) The filling of the Holy Spirit is potential, depending on the volition (free will) of the believer. It is also a command and literally means "*keep on being filled with the Spirit.*"

To be filled is to be controlled by or empowered by the Holy Spirit in the same manner as a person is controlled by alcohol when he is intoxicated. We choose to allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives by allowing Him to control our thinking. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ." This means we must have the Word of God stored in our souls. It is this doctrinal information that the Holy Spirit uses to control our lives. Divine Viewpoint Thinking produces divine production.

The Greek word for "filling" is "pleroo" and has four meanings, which all apply to the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- 1) *To fill up a deficiency* – Without the power and control of the Holy Spirit, the believer has no ability to learn and apply Bible doctrine. In other words, he is deficient of the doctrinal information necessary to execute the Christian Way of Life. (Colossians 1:25; I John 4:4)
- 2) *To be fully possessed* – Since God the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in the Church Age, the potential exists for him to be fully controlled by God's supernatural power. This means that the believer can reside in God's plan by utilizing God's system. (I Corinthians 6:19-20)
- 3) *To be fully influenced* – If the Holy Spirit is allowed to fill the deficiency and fully possess the believer's life, then every area of that life will be influenced by the power of the Holy Spirit. If the power of the Holy Spirit is rejected, the believer is going to be fully influenced by Satan's cosmic system. (Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18)

- 4) *To be filled with a certain quality* – There is no higher quality than the integrity of God. It is this quality that becomes resident in the soul of the believer as the Holy Spirit is allowed to control, possess and influence the soul. It is also this quality that leads a believer to spiritual maturity. (Ephesians 3:19, 4:10; Philippians 1:11; I John 1:4; Revelation 3:2)

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is neither seen nor felt. It is a fact stated in the Word of God for us to believe. Technically, it is when the believer is placed into union with Jesus Christ at salvation. There are seven baptisms in the Bible and the baptism of the Holy Spirit is but one of these. The word for baptism in Greek is “baptisma” and literally means “to dip.” It was used to describe the dyeing of a garment or the drawing of wine by dipping the cup into the bowl. Since John the Baptist and Jesus used the word to describe water baptism as submersion, the accurate interpretation of the word is “to dip into or submerge.” (I Corinthians 12:13)

When a person trusts Christ as Savior they are positionally “dipped into” or “submerged” into the “body of Christ.” This, of course, is speaking of positional truth, signifying our union with Christ. Water baptism for believers has always been a picture of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Submersion into water pictures how the believer becomes united with Christ. (Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:4-5)

Identification

As I stated, there are seven baptisms in the Scriptures and all are for the purpose of identification. Of these seven, four are ritual identifications and three are actual identifications. In the apostate times in which we live, water baptism (ritual) and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (actual) have been distorted into a system of works. Water baptism, for example, is taught by some ministers as a necessity for salvation, which is false doctrine. No one has ever been saved by being submerged in water. The only purpose for water baptism is identification: Identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, which it pictures. It was a teaching aid for the early church before the canon of Scripture was completed. As a matter of fact, water baptism is mentioned only once after the historical record in the book of Acts and it is mentioned as a source of division in the church of Corinth. (I Corinthians 1:11-17)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit results in a union, which never before existed for the believer. This union with Christ is unique and sets up many potentials for the believer. Being placed in union with Christ is called Positional Sanctification. Positional Sanctification describes our new relationship with God through Christ.

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Our new relationship is permanent, based on our faith in Christ and it never changes, regardless of the believer's spiritual condition. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, therefore, sets up the potential for the believer to make his daily experience (Experiential Sanctification) align with his position in Christ (Positional Sanctification). This means that we are to exhibit the character of Jesus Christ on a daily basis by means of the power of the Holy Spirit Who is indwelling us. (John 14:20; I Corinthians 12:12-27)