

Lesson for November 8, 2009

Review of Our Spiritual Assets

Gift from God the Father to the Son and Related to God the Son in
Seven Analogies

Gift from God the Father to the Son

Every believer has been given to Jesus Christ by God the Father. In the Church Age the believer becomes part the “body” of Christ (the universal church) and will be the “Bride of Christ” in the future. It is this act that secures forever the believer’s eternal life and assures us that we can never lose our salvation. The believers are said to be the sheep and Christ is the shepherd. In other words, God the Father has given the Son a “flock”. (John 10:1-39)

Christ the Good Shepherd
(Psalms 23:1-4)

Jehovah (Jesus Christ) is the one shepherding the believer. (John 10:11) Sheep are totally helpless if left alone. They cannot guide themselves - we are guided under the filling (control) of the Holy Spirit. (John 16:13-14) Sheep cannot clean themselves - we are cleansed by the Holy Spirit when we acknowledge our sins. (I John 1:9) If sheep are injured, they are helpless without the shepherd - the believer is helpless without the Chief Shepherd. (God is a very present help in time of trouble. Psalms 9:9; 46:1) Sheep are defenseless - we are defenseless without protection from God (John 14:27) Sheep cannot find food or water alone - the Holy Spirit leads us to spiritual food and water (the Word of God). (John 14:26) Sheep are easily frightened - Bible doctrine circulating in our souls calms us. (John 14:16-17) Sheep produce wool that belongs to the shepherd - all that we have belongs to our Shepherd. (John 15:4-5) God always provides life support and blessing to every believer. (I Corinthians 6:1; II Timothy 2:1; II Peter 5:12) The corrected translation of Psalms 23:1 is, “Jehovah is the one shepherding me, I cannot lack for anything.”

Unity of the Believer

Every believer is in union with Jesus Christ and He is in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we are also in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 12:13) The last union is that of all believers of the Church Age. We are members of the “universal church.” When we refer to the Church we are often referring to all believers in this age, not simply the local church. Therefore, we are all members of Christ’s “flock.”

God's Word, on a number of occasions, commands the Church (the flock) to have unity. This is especially important in the local church setting. Division in the local church was common even in the early church. It did not take believers very long to begin causing divisions within the local church.

The proper function of the local church depends on unity among the members. Every believer receives a spiritual gift at salvation and God commands us all to use that gift (or gifts) within the local church. Failure to do so, or desiring the spiritual gifts of others, causes the church to malfunction. No gift is of more importance than the other and no person is of more importance than the next. Only by working together in unity can the local church fulfill its responsibility to win the lost, teach Bible doctrine and support missionaries.

God gave us to His Son as a gift and His Son gives us eternal life and all the necessities for this life. He also sends the Holy Spirit as our mentor, our guide and our source of power as we function in the devil's world. By following our Shepherd and functioning together as a body, God can be glorified in the life of believers in the local church.

Related to God the Son in Seven Analogies

We are permanently related to Jesus Christ at salvation, which is illustrated in the Bible by the use of analogies.

Head and Body

The analogy of "the Head and the Body" is a reference to Christ being the head of the Church, which is called "the Body of Christ". The Church is made up of all believers in this age (the Church Age) from the Day of Pentecost to the Rapture. This, of course, is a reference to Positional Sanctification when the believer is placed into union with Christ at salvation. Therefore, all Church Age believers are members of "the Body of Christ". (Ephesians 4:12-16; 5:23-30)

Shepherd and Sheep

Jesus Christ is our Shepherd because He gives His life for "the sheep" (Positional Sanctification). (John 10:9-11) Jesus Christ is the Great Shepherd, Who was raised from the dead (Experiential Sanctification). (Hebrews 13:20-21) And Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd, Who will come in glory (Ultimate Sanctification). (I Peter 5:4)

Christ is our Shepherd and we are His sheep. As sheep we have certain needs that must be provided for us by the Shepherd. For example, sheep cannot guide themselves (John. 16:13), sheep cannot clean themselves (I John. 1:9), sheep are helpless when injured (Psalms 9:9; 46:1), sheep are defenseless (John. 14:27), sheep cannot find food or water (John 14:26), sheep are easily frightened (John 14:16), sheep produce wool that belongs to the shepherd. (John 15:4-5) Our Shepherd provides guidance, cleansing, help, protection, spiritual food and drink, freedom from fear, *and* all that we have belongs to Him.

Vine and Branches

In this analogy Christ is the vine and believers are the branches. The branch takes its life from the vine. The branch must periodically be “pruned” so that it will continue to produce a maximum amount of fruit. In the same manner, when we as believers abide in Christ (continue in fellowship) and He is abiding in us (God’s Word, the mind of Christ) we are able to produce maximum divine good. Just as a branch will wither and die when separated from the vine, the believer will experience temporal death (temporary loss of his spiritual life in time) by staying out of fellowship with God for a prolonged period of time. Failure to abide in Christ and to allow His Word to abide in you results in the failure to execute the Christian Way of Life.

Abiding in Christ means that you understand God’s recovery system from personal sin. It also means that you *use* it to spend a maximum amount of time in fellowship with God, being controlled by the Holy Spirit. Abiding in Christ also means that His Word is circulating in your soul, which is the means by which the Holy Spirit guides and teaches you. (John 15:1-14)

Cornerstone and Stones

A cornerstone in biblical times was much more than a mere symbolic stone placed in the corner of a building with the names of builders, architects, founding members, etc. In biblical times a cornerstone was a load-bearing stone that connected and held together two walls of a structure. It is with this in mind that Peter and Paul used the cornerstone as a type of Christ and smaller stones to represent believers. Both are necessary to the overall building, but it is the Chief cornerstone (Jesus Christ) that we rely upon to “bear the load” and to “connect us” together with God and other believers.

Paul, for example uses the analogy to show that believing Jews and Gentiles are united in the body of Christ. (Ephesians 2:20) Peter uses the analogy to refer to the Royal Priesthood of the believer (living stones) and the spiritual house that they are building. (I Peter 2:1-8)

High Priest and Priests

Jesus Christ is our royal High Priest. (Hebrews 5:6,10) In order to become our High Priest, Christ had to become a human being. Jesus Christ represented us before God first on the “altar of the Cross”, and now represents us in Heaven before the throne of God. By becoming our High Priest, Jesus Christ became our mediator with God. (I Timothy 2:5-6) As believers in this age, we belong to His priesthood (the Royal Priesthood). This priesthood is far superior to any that existed in the past. (Hebrews 7) As our High Priest, Christ won the strategic victory over Satan in the Angelic Conflict. (Hebrews 4:14-16; 6:17-20)

Bridegroom and Bride

During the Church Age, God is forming a bride for the Bridegroom (Jesus Christ). It is the body of Christ (the Church) that will become the “Bride of Christ” in the eternal state. This analogy refers to the fact that we are uniquely united to Christ at salvation. We are placed into union with Him in the same manner as a bride and a bridegroom “become one” in marriage. (I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 21:9) As the Bride of Christ we will participate in the marriage feast, which will be a time of joy and celebration. As the Bride of Christ, Church Age believers will be “dressed in fine white linen”, which is a reference to God’s righteousness. (Revelation 19:7-9)

King and Royal Family

The fact that God has a kingdom means that there must be a king. We have seen that Jesus Christ will be the king on earth during the Millennium, but who is the king of the Kingdom of God? Remember that the Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. Therefore, the king of this kingdom must be a spiritual being. The king of this kingdom is also Jesus Christ. He is perfect humanity and perfect deity in one Person forever. Jesus Christ is uniquely qualified to be both the earthly ruler as part of the royal line of David and to be the spiritual ruler as the Second Person of the Godhead. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in one Person forever.