

## PNEUMATOLOGY (73)

7) Spirit baptism is distinct from Spirit filling .

Spirit baptism is permanent . Spirit baptism is non-experiential . Spirit baptism is **not** commanded . Spirit filling is temporal . Spirit filling is experiential . Spirit filling is commanded .

Undoubtedly, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is one of the most significant and vital doctrines in all the Bible, especially for this age. It is a doctrine that affects a believer's life, walk, standing, state, position, and possessions. It is no wonder that Satan has done his best to keep God's people in ignorance and to keep this doctrine in obscurity. This doctrine can literally bring power to God's people.

We have been examining in this study the work of the Holy Spirit. We have clearly seen that there are two categories of work that the Holy Spirit accomplishes: Category #1 - The Spirit's work in the world ; Category #2 - The Spirit's work in the believer .

Category #1 contains two works: 1) His work as restrainer ; 2) His work as convictor .

Category #2 contains five works: 1) His work of regeneration ; 2) His work of indwelling ; 3) His work of baptism ; 4) His work of sealing ; and 5) His work of filling .

We come now to the fourth work of the Holy Spirit as it relates to the believer:

**Work #4** - The work of the Holy Spirit in sealing .

There are three New Testament passages that specifically mention the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit: 1) II Cor. 1:22 ; 2) Ephesians 1:13 ; 3) Ephesians 4:30 .

This particular ministry is **not** evidenced in the Old Testament, but is a peculiar work of the Holy Spirit in this New Testament dispensation of grace (Eph. 3:2). The "sealing" of the 144,000 Jews during the Great Tribulation is a different type of sealing (Rev. 7:3).

In order to come to a true understanding of this doctrine, we will also approach this in question/answer style:

**(Sealing Question #1)** - Who is sealed with the Holy Spirit?

The answer to this question is all believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit, every single believer in Jesus Christ.

It must be remembered that II Corinthians 1:22 was written to the Corinthians . The Corinthians were some of the most carnal believers in the New Testament, yet Paul draws no exception concerning the Spirit's sealing ministry. In other words, although they were carnal, they were sealed. Furthermore, Paul's exhortation not to "grieve" the Holy Spirit demands that all believers have the Holy Spirit.

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In fact, the very verse that demands that we not grieve the Holy Spirit is one that specifically speaks of the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30).

There are no exceptions; all believers have been sealed by the Holy Spirit.

**(Sealing Question #2)** - When is the believer sealed with the Holy Spirit?

It may be observed from Scripture that the believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit the moment he believes. One key verse of Scripture that establishes this reality is Ephesians 1:13.

The A.V. translates this verse this way: "...in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

The NASV translates this verse this way: "...having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise." In this instance, the NASV is the better translation.

The best grammatical view is that the believing action and the sealing action were simultaneous. What this means is that both actions occurred at the same moment. It is also noteworthy to point out that the participle "believed" and the verb "sealed" are both aorist tense, indicating they occurred at one moment or one point in the past. Also the verb "sealed" is passive, meaning the believer had nothing to do with the sealing action. In other words, the moment a person believes, this gracious event of sealing occurs.

**(Sealing Question #3)** - Who does this sealing work?

It is very evident that the sealing work is **not** a work of man. It is clearly and completely a total work of God (II Corinthians 1:21-22). It is equally clear that the divine member who accomplishes this work is the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). When we consider all of these ministries of the Holy Spirit in this age, which includes the sealing ministry, it is no wonder Jesus Christ said that when He left He would send us a Comforter (John 14:16, 26).

**(Sealing Question #4)** - How long is one sealed with the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 4:30 gives us clear insight that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit to the day of redemption.

If we compare this statement with Romans 8:23, we may conclude that this sealing work of the Holy Spirit certainly is operative until we receive our new, glorified body. We may accurately say that the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit is operative in our lives until we get to glory.

The preposition found in Ephesians 4:30 "to" (AV), "for" (NASV, NIV) is one that expresses entrance, direction and motion (Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 133). By using this preposition, God wants us to know that we are sealed until we move from this world and enter and move into heaven.

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What happens to the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit after we get to heaven is not stated but the sealing ministry does guarantee every believer that he will reach his destination of heaven.

**(Sealing Question #5)** - What does a seal signify?

According to C. I. Scofield, there are at least three significant symbolisms expressed by the picture of a seal:

- 1) A seal signifies a finished transaction (Jer. 32:9-10).
- 2) A seal signifies ownership (Jer. 32:11-12).
- 3) A seal signifies security (Esther 8:8; Dan. 6:17).

Certainly all three symbolisms may be seen in the work of the Holy Spirit when He seals the believer (Scofield Note from Ephesians 1:13).

**(Sealing Question #6)** - What are the practical ramifications of sealing?

Above all else, the sealing work of the Holy Spirit emphasizes security. When one has been sealed with the Holy Spirit, that one is God's property and the salvation is so secure that it guarantees every believer that he will reach the "day of redemption."

At the moment of our salvation, the sealing work of the Holy Spirit guarantees we will reach our final destination. We are sealed by God with His Spirit until the day of our redemption.

One who doubts eternal security is one who is ignorant of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. One may be absolutely certain that one who does not believe in eternal security has probably **NEVER** seriously studied Pneumatology. For this Holy Spirit's ministry alone, not even considering regeneration, indwelling or baptism, absolutely guarantees the believer that he is sealed forever.

From a practical perspective, Ephesians 4:30 clearly indicates that this sealing ministry ought to promote purity in our lives. The context pertains specifically to purity in actions (4:28), speech (4:29, 31), and attitudes (4:32). The fact that we are sealed by God's Spirit should motivate us not to grieve God's Spirit. Time and time again we observe that it is positional doctrine that promotes practical holiness. One who is weak in doctrine will be weak in holiness for it is the one which produces the other.

**Work #5** - The work of the Holy Spirit in filling.

Here is a very unique work of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer accurately observes:

"Of all the five ministries of the Spirit to the believer—regenerating, indwelling, sealing, baptizing and filling—the last named is alone commanded and expected of the believer.

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The implication is that this ministry, quite unlike the other four, depends upon human cooperation and adjustment. It is clear that beyond the one responsibility of believing on Christ unto salvation, no obligation rests upon the Christian respecting the first four ministries named. The command to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), being addressed to the child of God, not only indicates that it is an experience subsequent to salvation, but that the Christian's own faithfulness determines the degree of filling" (Vol. 6, p. 174).

One only has to observe Christians and it is relatively obvious that some are more spiritual than others. One does not need to be a great theologian to see that some believers seem to have a much closer walk with God than others do. Some believers are more active in their service for God than others; this is pure fact. Since all believers have Spirit regeneration, Spirit indwelling, Spirit baptism and Spirit sealing, it is only logical to ask what dynamic is it that determines one's level of spirituality. The true doctrinal answer to this question is Spirit filling. The one dynamic which differs from believer to believer is the dynamic of being filled with the Spirit. This is determined by one's faithfulness to God's Word. The more faithful one is, the more filled one is.

Perhaps the easiest way to truly understand this pneumatological doctrine is again by asking and answering a series of questions:

**(Spirit Filling Question #1)** - What exactly is the filling of the Holy Spirit?

A relatively good understanding of what it means to be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit, or to be under the Spirit's control.

Floyd Barackman, in his very fine theology, writes: "To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be under His control, not in an absolute sense so that we are passive and our personal faculties cease to function, but in a relative sense in which we cooperate with Him by doing our part and depending upon Him to do His work" (*Practical Christian Theology*, p. 159).

To be filled with the Spirit means we allow the Spirit to fulfill and accomplish in us all that God intended when He gave us His Spirit. It means we continually and habitually allow the Spirit to dominate our lives.

**(Spirit Filling Question #2)** - Where are we commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

We are commanded to be "filled with the Spirit" in Eph. 5:18. It is very significant to see that the verb "be filled" is a present tense, passive voice and imperative mood verb. What this means is that it is a command (imperative mood), it is something that is to be continual (present tense) and it is conditional (passive voice)—certain conditions, which we will examine later, must be met if the Spirit of God is to fill a person. Filling is not something a person can do in and of himself, it is something the outside agent, the Holy Spirit must do and He will only fill a believer when that believer is meeting certain conditional prerequisites.

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It is also important to observe from this verse that the concept of “being filled” is contrasted with the concept of “being drunk.” To become drunk with wine, one must make a conscious choice to drink it to the point that the wine totally controls him or her. To be filled with the Spirit, one must make a conscious choice to meet the prerequisites to the point in which the Spirit totally controls him. When one is drunk one is not controlled by himself, but is controlled by the wine. When one is Spirit-filled, one is not controlled by himself, but is controlled by the Spirit of God.

Being filled **does not** mean that we get more of the Spirit; it **does** mean that the Spirit gets more of us.

**(Spirit Filling Question #3)** - Why is being filled with the Spirit so important?

There are several reasons why being filled with the Holy Spirit is so essential:

**Reason #1** - It determines whether or not one is obedient to God’s commands. Eph. 5:18

As we have already discussed, “being filled” is not a nice suggestion, it is a command of God. If we are not filled, we are not obedient to God’s command. Any moment we **are not** filled, we **are** being disobedient to God’s Word.

**Reason #2** - It determines whether or not one is spiritual or carnal. I Cor. 3:1

Carnal believers are believers who are controlled by their flesh. Spiritual believers are believers who are controlled by God’s Spirit.

When a believer is worldly, what that really means is that the believer is not filled with the Spirit. If a believer is filled with the Spirit, he cannot be dominated by the flesh or the world. If a believer is dominated by the flesh and the world, he cannot be filled with the Spirit.

**Reason #3** - It determines whether or not one is spiritual or mature. Heb. 5:13-14

It is possible for one to be spiritual and not mature. Maturity is determined by one’s relationship to the Word of God, to the Spirit of God and to time!

Dr. John Walvoord so accurately observed:

“While it is impossible for any Christian to attain spiritual maturity apart from the gradual process which it entails, any Christian upon meeting the conditions may enter at once into all the blessedness of the fullness of the Spirit. The correspondence of spirituality and maturity to the health and growth of the physical body is obvious. A child may be immature as to the stage of growth, but at the same time be perfectly healthy. Growth of the body requires time and development, while health is an immediate state of the body which determines its present enjoyment and growth. Likewise in the spiritual realm, a new born saint may have the fullness of the Spirit, while being nevertheless quite immature; and in contrast a mature saint may lack the fullness of the Spirit” (cited from Mr. John Miles, *Pneumatology*, pp. 22-23).

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A believer cannot become mature at the moment of salvation, but he may become spiritual from this moment on. Maturity **only** comes through time and testing, whereas spirituality comes through obedience. One cannot become mature without being spiritual over a long period of time. There are no shortcuts to maturity. One who carefully focuses on understanding and applying God's Word over a long period of time is not only one who is spiritual, but one who is also mature.

**Reason #4** - It determines whether or not one is useful or useless .

There is an intimate connection to being filled with God's Spirit and being used for God's glory. If one wants to serve God and minister for God, one must be filled with God's Spirit. If one wants God to reveal, develop and use one's spiritual gift, one must be filled with God's Spirit. Frankly, this explains why many believers never seem to exist in the same spiritual rut—they do not allow God's Spirit to control them, they allow their flesh to control them.

Several texts speak of the importance of the Spirit in one's ministry and usability:

- 1) Acts 4:31 – Spirit filling precedes bold and powerful communication of God's Word.
- 2) Acts 6:3 - Spirit filling precedes selection of leadership.
- 3) Acts 9:17, 20 - Spirit filling precedes an impacting preaching ministry.
- 4) Acts 11:24 - Spirit filling precedes additions to God's church.

We may safely and accurately conclude from these passages that if we are to fulfill our responsibilities for God at the ultimate level of usefulness, then we must be those who are being filled with the Spirit of God. Those who live in rebellion to the Word of God will not ever be filled with the Spirit of God. They may go through all the religious motions they want, but they will not be filled with the Spirit of God and therefore will not ever be powerfully used by God.

**(Spirit Filling Question #4)** - What are the prerequisites for being filled with the Spirit?

As we have previously studied and stated, God's Word **commands** that the believer be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). We have also observed that it is not within our power to fill ourselves. God must cause the Spirit of God to fill us. The question arises what must we do or what is our part? What are the conditional prerequisites we must meet in order to be filled with the Spirit of God?

Contrary to popular opinion and belief, there is **no place** in the Bible where believers are urged to pray for the filling of the Spirit. This opinion is based upon a misinterpretation of Luke 11:13, in which receiving of the Spirit is equated with filling of the Spirit, a belief which cannot be biblically supported. The danger of thinking that prayer is a prerequisite for filling is that instead of making proper biblical choices which actively enables one to be filled, one prays about it and then passively waits for something to happen.