

PNEUMATOLOGY (17)

Emblem #1 - The emblem of oil.

There can be no doubt that we have a good biblical support for the fact that “oil” somehow depicts or paints a picture of the work of the Holy Spirit. We may legitimately connect “oil” to the Holy Spirit from passages like: 1) I Sam. 10:1, 6, 10 ; 2) I Sam. 16:13 ; 3) Zech. 4:1-14 ; 4) Heb. 1:9 .

As we carefully study the subject of “oil,” we may conclude the following:

1. Oil foreshadowed Christ’s relationship to the Holy Spirit. Lev. 2:1-16

The Levitical offerings contain pictures of the one ultimate offering of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the only sacrifice that is acceptable to God and can accomplish the purposes of God. Prior to His incarnation, a series of sacrifices were required by God that pictured His Son and His work.

The offering of Leviticus 2 is an offering that depicts Christ’s perfect humanity (fine flour as opposed to any leaven), and His empowered deity, which is depicted by the pouring of the oil upon the flour. This pictured the fact that Christ, in His perfect humanity, would be anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Christ would be the sacrifice that would be a sweet savor unto the Lord.

Oil is one picture of Christ’s relationship with the Holy Spirit. It pictures the fact that He would be anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Upon examination of the N.T., this is precisely what happened (Matt. 3:13-17).

2. Oil pictured an anointing of royalty in God’s program. I Sam. 10:1; 16:13

Kings were symbolically anointed with oil. This signaled that they had been chosen by God for their position of royalty. When we examine the N.T., we discover that all N.T. believers are identified as priests (I Peter 2:9-10). If we further study the N.T. record, we will discover that God used the Holy Spirit to anoint us and to single us out for this position (I Cor. 12:13). Those who know Christ have a power far greater than oil upon them; they have God’s Spirit in them.

3. Oil pictured a power of illumination. Ex. 25:6; 27:20-21

It is obvious, from these passages, that oil was used for lighting the sacred things of God in the O.T. tabernacle. Oil enabled the fire to burn so there would be light. In the N.T. we learn that every believer is the “temple of God” (I Cor. 6:19). We may ask the question, what is the oil that enables us to see spiritual and sacred things? The answer is the Holy Spirit. Without the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, no one will see nor understand spiritual truth. The oil was the continual source of light for sacred things in the O.T. and the Spirit was the continual source for sacred things in the N.T.

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Carefully notice that in Exodus 27:20-21, the oil lit lamp was to burn “outside the veil.” This is important imagery, for it demonstrates that without this light, entrance into the Holy Place would be impossible, for one would not see the Holy Place, but would be in total darkness. This picture is doctrinally accurate with what we know of the Holy Spirit in the N.T. Without the Holy Spirit’s illuminating work, all holy things of God will remain unseen and unknown and the individual will remain in total and complete darkness (John 16:7-11).

It is interesting that the word “quench” (I Thess. 5:19), which is clearly related to the Spirit of God in the N.T. age, is a word that literally means to put out a fire. It is possible for a believer to “put out the fire” of the illuminating work of the Spirit of God. In other words, it is a real theological possibility for a believer to remain in ignorance and not be permitted to see or understand spiritual truth and thereby grow. God can shut down a believer’s ability to see and understand His Word and permit that one to spend the rest of his days in spiritual darkness.

Illumination was a critical function of Old Testament oil, and it is clearly a New Testament ministry and work of the Holy Spirit.

4. Oil pictured a consecration of priests for priestly service. Lev. 8:1-5, 30

As we have already observed, all believers are royalty and together they form a priesthood (I Pet. 2:9-10; Rev. 5:10). We have also learned that it is the Spirit of God who sets people aside and gives them special gifts in order that they might minister for God (I Cor. 12:4, 7-11). We may conclude then that the Spirit of God is the being who sets New Testament believers aside and consecrates them for New Testament service. This is precisely the picture of oil in the O.T. It needs to be stated that each believer has been set aside and consecrated to God for special sacred service as a priest. The way the believer comes to understand his or her particular responsibility in the priesthood is by meeting the prerequisites of Romans 12:1-2, a context which clearly explains how one finds God’s perfect will for his or her life when it comes to the spiritual gift given by God, the Holy Spirit.

5. Oil pictures healing. Mark 6:13; James 5:14-16

It is the Holy Spirit who heals people. First and foremost, in a true N.T. application, this refers to spiritual healing.

When Isaiah, led by the Spirit of God, wrote Isaiah 53:5, he clearly predicted that the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ would bring spiritual healing to all sheep that have transgressed and gone astray. When we search the N.T., we discover that the divine being who appropriates this salvation work to an individual is the Spirit of God (John 14:16-17; 16:7-11). Therefore, the one who brings spiritual healing to those sick in sin is none other than the Holy Spirit.

We may also make an application when it comes to physical healing. The N.T. is clear that God does not always physically heal even the most spiritual of believers (II Cor. 12:7-10). However, the N.T. does make it clear that there are times when God does physically heal a believer (Phil. 2:27).

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Undoubtedly, the agent who eventually allows the believer to be healed is the Holy Spirit. Oil, when used as a picture of healing, is a picture of the Holy Spirit. There are certain commentators who believe James 5:14 has an implication of the Holy Spirit. Those who hold to this suggest that when God has judged someone by making them sick because of some sin and the person confesses the sin, then the Holy Spirit cleanses, which is pictured by the anointing with oil and the judgment is lifted.

It seems to me that even when an unsaved person is physically restored to health, it probably is the Holy Spirit who has been involved in the physical healing, just as He is involved in the spiritual healing of an unsaved person. Satan would love nothing more than for all unbelievers to get sick, die and go to hell. If God were not sovereignly overseeing Satan's activity, there undoubtedly would be an early death for both believer and unbeliever. The N.T. makes it very clear that the keys of death are not held by Satan, but by Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:18). We cannot expect the unbeliever to realize how gracious God is on this matter, but there is no doubt that were it not for God, particularly the work of the Holy Spirit, many infirmities from which many have been physically delivered would have sent them to their graves. The gift of life is a gracious grant from God to all who are alive. Although most who are alive do not give God the credit or the glory for their existence, the fact that they have physically recovered from anything is in fact a work of the Spirit of God.

Emblem #2 - The emblem of water .

There can be no doubt that Jesus Christ, Himself, clearly established that the emblem of water is a picture of the Holy Spirit (John 4:14, 23, 24).

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer recognized the significance of this emblem when he wrote: "The Holy Spirit is typified by water and this body of truth is indeed extensive. As water is essential for cleansing, satisfying, reviving and refreshing, so the Holy Spirit is vital to the child of God" (Vol. 6, p. 50).

There are at least three ways in which water pictures the work of the Holy Spirit:

(Way #1) - Water pictures the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit.

The O.T. priests had to be cleansed by water (Ex. 29:4; Lev. 8:6). For the priest, this cleansing meant that he had not only entered into a saved condition, but also a service condition.

In the O.T., it is prescribed that a red heifer was to be offered in a cleansing ceremony because there were certain experiences or contacts with this world that would establish a person as ceremonially unclean. In such instances, a sacrifice and a cleansing with water were to be offered (Numbers 19:7, 8, 9).

Both of these pictures have profound meaning for the N.T. work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit of God who cleanses one into a saved condition and brings one into a service condition (I Cor. 12:11, 13).