

THE SEAL OF THE SPIRIT

Ephesians 1:3-14

Introduction:

- 1. Paul began the Ephesian letter by setting forth the privileged position the saved have in Christ.**
 - a. We have all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ (3).**
 - b. We were chosen by God in Christ before the foundation of the world (4).**
 - c. God predestined us to the adoption of sons (5).**
 - d. He redeemed us by the blood of Christ, forgiving our sins through His grace (7).**
 - e. He has made known to us the mystery of His will (9,10).**
 - f. He has given us an inheritance in Christ (11).**

- 2. In addition to these things, God has given us a guarantee of our inheritance:**

“In Him you all also trusted, after you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory”(13,14).

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).

- 3. What is the meaning of “sealed by the Holy Spirit?”**
 - a. We shall note some erroneous ideas of “sealed with the Spirit.”**
 - b. We shall note the significance of “sealed.”**
 - c. We shall note how Christians are sealed by the Holy Spirit.**

Discussion:

- I. THERE ARE ERRONEOUS IDEAS OF BEING SEALED BY THE SPIRIT.**
 - A. Calvinists teach the Spirit must operate directly upon one’s heart to enable him to believe.**
 - 1. John Calvin was a 16th century reformer who borrowed his theology mostly from Augustine of Hippo (354-430).**
 - 2. His doctrine has been summarized in a five point acrostic:**
 - a. Total hereditary depravity (Ezek. 18:20; 1 Jno. 3:4).**
 - b. Unconditional election (Jno. 3:16; Rom. 2:11).**

- c. Limited atonement (Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:14,15).
- d. Irresistible grace (Matt. 11:28,29; Rev. 22:17).
- e. Perseverance of the saints (1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 5:4).

3. Calvinism says one is born so depraved he cannot believe.

- a. It requires a direct operation of the Spirit upon the sinner's heart to miraculously impart faith.
- b. Faith, however, comes simply by hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17).

B. Sealing with the Spirit is not the early Methodist/Holiness doctrine of "a second work of grace."

- 1. They say the first work of grace is justification - being saved from past sins.
- 2. The second work of grace is sanctification - made pure by the Spirit so that one no longer sins.
- 3. "Rock of Ages" by Augustus Toplady expresses this idea:

"Let the water and the blood from Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure; save from wrath, and make me pure."

C. Sealing with the Spirit is not the baptism of the Spirit which the apostles received on Pentecost (Acts 2).

- 1. Baptism in the Spirit was never a command, but a promise.
- 2. It was prophesied by Joel (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21).
- 3. It was foretold generally by John the baptist (Matt. 3:11).
- 4. It was specifically applied to the apostles by Jesus (Jno. 14:15-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-11, 13,14; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,5).
- 5. It equipped the apostles for their work as ambassadors of the kingdom of Heaven (2 Cor. 5:20).

II. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEING SEALED?

A. The Greek "arrabon" was a pledge, a down payment (earnest), a guarantee (W. E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words).

- 1. It was a partial payment to assure the rest would follow.
- 2. In modern Greek it is the word for an engagement ring.

B. In ancient times the seal was a mark of ownership and authenticity.

- 1. Those in authority wore a signet ring which had their mark.

2. Important documents were sealed with hot wax; the ring was pressed into the wax leaving the mark of the sender.
3. If the seal was intact, the recipient knew the message had not tampered with.

C. There are several examples of such seals/sealing in the Bible.

1. Judah gave his signet, cord and staff to Tamar (Gen. 38:16,17).
2. Jesus' tomb was sealed by the Romans (Matt. 27:62-66).
3. Only the Lamb was worthy to open the book with seven seals (Rev. 5:1-7).
4. The saved on earth (144,000) were sealed by an angel who had the seal of the living God (Rev. 7:1-8).

III. HOW AND WHEN ARE CHRISTIANS SEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT?

A. We must not supplant Christ with the Spirit as Pentecostals do.

1. The Spirit came to testify of Christ (Jno. 15:26).
2. Jesus also said: "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (Jno. 16:14).

B. The Father planned man's salvation, the Son executed the plan, and the Spirit revealed it to man (Eph. 3:8-11; Gal. 4:4,5; 1 Cor. 2:10-16).

C. We become Christians by being born of water and the Spirit (Jno. 3:1-5).

1. We are "born of the Spirit" when we believe the Spirit given Word (Rom. 10:17; Eph. 1:13; 1 Pet. 1:22,23; 1 Cor. 12:13).
2. We are born of water when we are baptized into Christ (Mark 16:15,16; 1 Pet. 3:21).

D. Paul said, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God..." (Rom. 8:16).

1. The Spirit in His Word tells us what to do to be saved.
2. Our spirits responds that we have done what the Spirit has told us to do; thus we are born of water and the Spirit.
3. Having been born again, we "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

Conclusion:

1. We are sealed by the Spirit when we obey the Spirit's message, the Gospel.
2. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit which is the pledge of the future blessings of salvation (Acts 2:38; 3:19).

