

you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, (1:13b)

Once a person repents and believes on Christ, he is “*sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise*” (Ephesians 1:13b). The fact that we are “*sealed*” in the Lord should convey incredible comfort.

In ancient times, individuals sealed objects (such as letters) with wax and stamped the wax with an identifying image—such as a “*signet ring*” (Daniel 6:17). Once the letter or object was sealed, the impression on the wax identified the owner of the letter or the authenticity of the document.

A seal was used for a variety of purposes, such as confirming the completion of a transaction (Jeremiah 32:9-10). Thus, the fact that we are “*sealed in Him*” (in Christ) validates a finished, nonnegotiable transaction.

A seal also validated ownership in situations such as Jeremiah 32:11-12, where a sealed deed confirmed the ownership of property. Because we are God’s “*inheritance*” (Ephesians 1:11a), and “*have been bought with a price*” (1Corinthians 6:20), we belong to Him (2Timothy 2:19). Magnificent!

A seal also pointed to approval. In 1Kings 21:5-16, Jezebel “*wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal*” (1Kings 21:8). The seal indicated that Ahab had approved the letters’ content even though he probably never saw them. Also, in Esther 3:10-13, anything that Haman approved indicated King Ahasuerus’ approval, for Haman was given the king’s signet ring. Therefore, having been sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit, after repenting and believing while depraved, New Testament believers are approved by God. We are welcomed members of God’s family, with all the privileges that Sonship entails—both in the present and throughout eternity. Wow!

To be sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit also means that New Testament believers are secure in Christ. Once Haman’s evil decree was sealed with King Ahasuerus’ signet ring (Esther 3:10-15), revocation was impossible (Esther 8:8). An additional decree was required, sealed with the same ring, allowing the Jews to defend themselves (Esther 8:9-14) against the decree of Esther 3:10-15. Daniel 6:17 and Matthew 27:66 also confirm that a sealed object is not to be disturbed. New Testament believers are “*sealed*” in Christ (2Corinthians 1:21-22), “*sealed for the day of redemption*” (Ephesians 4:30)—“*sealed*” for that day when they will receive their glorified bodies. God sees to it that we are “*kept*” (Jude 1) secure in Him (John 10:28-29). As a result, we are in Christ, and Christ is in the Father (John 14:20), Who will finish the work He has begun in us (Philippians 1:6).

Paul mentions both “*truth*” and “*the Holy Spirit*” in Ephesians 1:13. We received the Holy Spirit the moment we accepted Christ (Romans 8:9), but we can’t live on truth alone or the Holy Spirit alone once we become believers. A combination of both is necessary. Those who learn truth as an end in itself, without seeking the revelation of the Holy Spirit, become intellectually stagnant. Those who seek the Holy Spirit’s revelation, void of a steady diet of truth, end up deceived. Only truth revealed through the Holy Spirit results in positive change (read 1Corinthians 2:4-5; 4:19). When the Spirit reveals truth, we know it (read Luke 24:32)!

Ephesians 1:14—who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.

who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, (1:14a)

The Spirit of God is “*given as a pledge* [earnest, or down payment] *of our inheritance,*” meaning that He

(among other things) serves as a guarantee that the remainder is sure to come. Hence, the Holy Spirit is given to Christ's future bride, the church, for the purpose of assuring her of His eternal acceptance (2Corinthians 1:22; 5:5). Some theologians even perceive the Holy Spirit as a divine engagement ring, sealing the bride's relationship with her Husband, Jesus.

The Holy Spirit serves several different functions as the New Testament believer walks with God. So not only are we sealed in Christ by means of the Spirit, but having Him as a down payment confirms that more is to come—part of which is addressed in the next phrase of Ephesians 1:14:

with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, (1:14b)

The Holy Spirit “*is given as a pledge of our inheritance*” (Ephesians 1:14a) “*with a view to the redemption of God's own possession*” (Ephesians 1:14b). Because the Father created all things through Christ (Colossians 1:15-16), He desires to rescue what is rightfully His (that which came under the control of Satan, “*the god of this world,*” when Adam sinned—2Corinthians 4:4). This restoration will come to fruition when our bodies are resurrected (1Thessalonians 4:13-18) and we later return with Christ (Revelation 19:11-20:3; Romans 8:19-23).

to the praise of His glory. (1:14c)

After our bodies are resurrected, we later (at the Second Coming) return with Christ “*to the praise of God's glory.*” What could bring more “*glory*” to the Father than to have many sons (church saints), conformed to Christ's image (Romans 8:29), who reflect His glory? When we return with Christ (Revelation 19), as Christ's body (Romans 12:5; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18), the creation will be released from its bondage into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God (Romans 8:19-21).