

# THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BELIEVER

## *Sealed by the Spirit*

Do you expect to go to heaven when you die? Many people would say, “I hope so” or “I think so.” Others would say, “**Yes!**” Those who answer, yes, understand the biblical doctrine called “Assurance of Salvation.” This doctrine or belief is based on scriptural knowledge which tells us we are saved by grace through faith not works. Many Christians used the term “saved” frequently; however, not everyone understands what being “saved” actually means. “Saved from what?” might be the first question, a nonbeliever would retort. **Romans 6:23 (ESV)** <sup>23</sup> *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* “What does it all matter?” might be the next question of the nonbeliever. **Hebrews 9:27-28** explains just how much salvation does matter: <sup>27</sup> *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,* <sup>28</sup> *so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

### What Being Sealed by the Spirit Means

Seals are frequently mentioned in Jewish history. In biblical times a seal or signet contained a distinctive mark which stood for its owner. The earliest seals found so far date to before 3000 B.C. Seals varied in shapes and sizes. Some were round and were worn around the neck. Others were rings worn on the finger. The owner’s mark was made by stamping the seal into soft clay. Many cylinder seals have been found which contain scenes that communicate a message. These were rolled in the clay to form the impression. Tamar asked for Judah’s signet as collateral on a pledge he made. Joseph was given pharaoh’s ring when he was placed in command of the country, symbolizing Joseph’s right to act with the ruler’s authority. Jezebel used Ahab’s seal to sign letters asking that Naboth be tried and stoned to death.

In the New Testament, the tomb of Jesus was sealed by the Pharisees and chief priests for the purpose of making sure that the disciples would not come and steal the body away. This was probably done by stretching a cord across the stone and sealing it at both ends with sealing clay. God Himself broke this human seal to reveal to mankind that Jesus was resurrected to life and the empty tomb.

‘Saved’ people are members of the family of God. God the Father places His mark or seal upon each individual who professes Christ as Savior and Lord. This seal indicating our membership within the Kingdom of God is the Presence of the Holy Spirit of God within us..

Location - location - location!!! We are all concerned with location - home, school, work, church. When you ask Jesus into your heart, God gives you a part of Himself. The Holy Spirit is **located** within you. God is **in** us. Does this suddenly mean that we are smarter, better or holier than everyone else? Of course, not! The significance of the Holy Spirit in us means we possess the **down payment** or deposit on something yet to come – that is eternal life in heaven!

We live in desperate times and most Christians fear things in this world will get worse before they get better. And even in the best of times we still realize that the finality of physical death awaits us all. However, Christians who are sealed by the Spirit need not despair. *1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 (ESV)*<sup>13</sup> *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.*<sup>14</sup> *For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.*

Let's read one of the key verses related to our being sealed by the Holy Spirit.

*Read Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV)*<sup>13</sup> *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,*<sup>14</sup> *who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

The entire process of salvation is found in verse 13. It tells how the sinner becomes a saint. First, the sinner hears the gospel of salvation. This gospel is the good news that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again. After hearing and believing, the next step is sealing. The seal is not a mark made out of clay or wax with human hand. The seal is a Person – the third Person of the Trinity who is placed within us as **the guarantee** of our inheritance! The Holy Spirit is God's seal upon us.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in us demonstrates the genuineness of our faith, proves that we are God's children, and secures eternal life for us. His power works in us to transform us now, and what we experience now is only a taste of the total change we will experience in eternity.

The ESV uses the word "guarantee" to translate the Greek word *arrabon*. However, in our day a guarantee is not always what it is advertised to be. The KJV translates *arrabon* as "earnest of the Spirit." This reminds us of how we put up "earnest money" when we propose to buy a home showing that our intentions are genuine. I like the NIV's translation of *arrabon* as a deposit because the meaning of deposit in our time is easily understood. We often put up a deposit in order to rent a house or apartment. We deposit money in our bank accounts. The monetary concept of earnest money or a deposit is given a spiritual definition when applied to God placing the Holy Spirit within the believer as an assurance or godly guarantee.

**The Presence of the Seal of the Holy Spirit within us holds great significance in this life and the life yet to come.**

When we believe the gospel message and accept Christ as Savior, we are immediately saved from sin and death. It is not necessary to go through a long period of soul searching after hearing the gospel before we are converted and sealed by God Himself. Someone who hears the message for the first time and believes is preserved for everlasting life on the spot! H.A. Ironside tells of a Chinese woman who had lived in the darkness of paganism her entire life. Some traveling missionaries came to her village, and for the first time, she heard the message of grace. She came trembling and said, "It is a wonderful story. I have never heard it before, and you are leaving us tomorrow. I may never hear it again, but I believe it. Do you think once is enough to make my soul secure?" Yes, once is enough! And even if we

wait until the bitter end of life to accept Christ as an old man or old woman, we are just as saved and just as secure when we sealed by the Holy Spirit. But, don't take the chance of waiting.

Next, there is the significance that the Seal of the Holy Spirit plays in our life yet to come.

**Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (ESV)** <sup>16</sup> *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* <sup>17</sup> *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*

'Saved' folks (dead and living) will be the ones who recognize the sound of the trumpet of God. How do we do that? It is because of the seal of the Holy Spirit within our spirits. The Holy Spirit connects us to God and we will hear the trumpet call clearer than any Bluetooth transmission ever on this planet.

### **Guaranteed Deposit**

**Read 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (ESV)** <sup>21</sup> *And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us,* <sup>22</sup> *and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

Many banks failed during the Great Depression in 1929 causing investors to lose their life savings. In 1934, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) was established, and since that time, not one depositor has lost insured funds. I am not completely sure that I can put my faith and trust in the FDIC. But, this I know – my faith and trust is secure in God Almighty and the guarantee that He provided through the seal of the Holy Spirit.

Paul explained to the Corinthians that God set His seal of ownership upon those who believe in Him by giving us the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:30 (ESV)** <sup>30</sup> *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* We can identify with a human father's grief. The words of King David come to my mind when he discovered that his son, Absalom, had been killed. This son had warred against his own father but the father still wept: The king covered his face and cried aloud, "*O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!*" (**2 Samuel 19:4**) Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God - do not grieve your heavenly Father. How do we keep from grieving the Holy Spirit of God? Paul explained: <sup>31</sup> *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.* <sup>32</sup> *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.* **Ephesians 4:31-32**