

Sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise

by Wayne Goff

Ephesians 1:13 speaks of Christians being “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” Some would like to think that this is some kind of “second working of grace” by which we have this feeling, or indwelling of the Spirit that “seals” us. However, look at the **context** and consider what Paul is saying.

Paul says that the Ephesians “trusted” in Christ “after” they heard the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation (1:13). Acts 19:5 records that they were “baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” This is *how* they **trusted** — it was not something done **to** them, but something done **by** them.

This same point is reiterated in the second part of 1:13 — “...in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” Again, “having believed” is something **the Ephesians did themselves** in response to the Gospel preached to them. So now how were they “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise”? The context shows us that it was when they believed and obeyed the Gospel. Just as we see in Acts 2, those who believed, repented and were baptized were promised “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (v. 38), so were the Ephesians blessed with the “seal” of the Holy Spirit’s promise. Simply put, having **believed** and **obeyed** the Gospel, the Holy Spirit *approves* of their obedience and thus *ratifies* their salvation. I like to say that when we have obeyed the Gospel we have a “written guarantee” that we have done what God asked us to do. We have heard (Romans 10:17), believed (John 8:24), repented (Acts 2:38), confessed (Romans 10:9-10), and been baptized (Acts 2:38) = Holy Spirit’s word sealing us as belonging to Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:14 mentions that “the Holy Spirit of promise” (v. 13) is the “guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” The word “guarantee” (**harrabōn**) literally means “down payment.” The eternal Word of God, inspired by the Spirit Himself, is our “down payment” which kept faithfully assures us of receiving the “inheritance” (eternal life). At the end of time, at the Day of Judgment, we can “redeem” our purchased possession. Won’t that be a wonderful event? And it will be “to the praise of His glory” (1:14)!

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