

of the Father - “unto the praise of His glory” (V-14). Yet at each stage of the plan of salvation a certain member of the Trinity is particularly involved. This sealing is in a special way connected with the Holy Spirit. Notice carefully that the Holy Spirit is not the One who seals. God the Father does the sealing (Cf. II Cor 1:21-22). You are sealed in Christ, “with that Holy Spirit of promise,” by God the Father. The Holy Spirit Himself is the seal! The Spirit’s presence within you, as a believer, is the seal of your eternal inheritance. There is no need of an intensive search for a so-called “Second Blessing.” If you have the Spirit, you are already sealed. He is the seal.

YOU ARE SEALED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AT THE MOMENT YOU BELIEVE

The words of V-13 may more literally be translated, “having believed ye were sealed.” Faith in Jesus Christ is required before you can claim to be sealed. The sealing of the Holy Spirit is a privilege for believers only. Paul assumes that all believers in Christ are sealed with the Spirit. The pronoun, “Ye,” refers to the “saints which are at Ephesus” (Eph 1:1). Paul never contemplated a true believer who has not been sealed. It should be noted that the word “after” is not in the Greek. Thus, no doctrine of a second work of grace years after one believes can be based on this text. There is no believer in the world who isn’t sealed with the Holy Spirit. Your very belief is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit within you! The Spirit brings the new birth for you are “born of the Spirit” (Jn 3:6). You cannot embrace Christ as Lord without the Holy Spirit working within you (I Cor 12:3). So the weak, babe in Christ, young in the faith, is just as “sealed” as the strongest, oldest, and wisest Christian. Is there such a thing as a believer without an eternal inheritance? Of course not! Paul has just stated that all those in Christ “have obtained an inheritance” (Eph 1:11). This is why Paul says that believers have the “earnest,” the guarantee, of their inheritance (V-14) - i.e. they are all “sealed with the Holy Spirit.” If you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of Christ, and believed this message concerning salvation, then you are sealed and will enjoy heaven.

2. YOUR ETERNAL INHERITANCE IS PRESERVED THROUGH THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT

YOUR SEALING IS A MARK OF SECURITY - “until the redemption of the purchased possession” (Cf. Eph 4:30 - “until the day of redemption”)

Have you ever purchased something at a food market that was sealed? You will find a piece of plastic around the lid of the peanut butter or ketchup bottle. When you buy medicine or vitamins the caps of the bottles are sealed. Sometimes there is an inner pull-tag seal. Why is this done? To make the product tamper-proof. Perverted people have poisoned others by tampering with foods and medicines. When you buy a product you want to know that it is safe to use. You want assurance that no one has tampered with it in any way. Thus, a seal is a sign of security. In ancient times the “seal” of a king, prince, or noble represented security. Nothing could be altered without the king’s permission. When Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den, king Darius affixed his seal on the stone placed over the entrance of the den. Why did he do this? The Bible says, “That the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel” (Dan 6:17). Any person, except the king, who broke or disturbed the seal would likely have forfeited his life. It was a royal guard

against tampering. Now you, as a believer, are sealed in an infinitely greater way with the Spirit. His seal cannot be violated or broken. The Holy Spirit’s presence guards against tampering. He is a protective seal! The world, the flesh, and the Devil cannot snatch away your eternal inheritance because the Spirit keeps secure your salvation.

“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6).

The Spirit will never stop His work of sanctification in your life as a believer. He will keep on performing it until the day of your final redemption when you receive a sinless, resurrected body. He will “keep you from falling” into apostasy (Jude 24a). One day He will “present you faultless before the presence” of God the Father (Jude 24b). The Holy Spirit’s presence means that God isn’t going to change His purpose with regard to your soul.

“Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Rom 8:30).

No link in that golden chain will ever be broken. The Spirit thwarts all attempts to tamper with the eternal destiny of your soul.

YOUR SEALING IS A MARK OF OWNERSHIP - “purchased possession”

The “purchased possession” is the believer, as Paul has previously related:

“In Whom [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph 1:7).

As the apostle once told the Ephesian elders, “feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

Having been “purchased” by Christ, you are His “possession” (Cf. I Cor 6:19-20). He has paid a precious price for you. Do you think somehow or other Jesus is going to have His blood-bought people snatched away from Him? Did He die in vain for your soul?

“This is the Father’s will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (Jn 6:39).

The Chief Shepherd never loses any of the sheep for which He laid down His life:

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand” (Jn 10:27-28).

During a time when false doctrine is prevalent, many people turn away from the true faith and believe damnable lies. Paul wrote to Timothy about this very situation and assured him that no true child of God will have his faith overthrown:

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His” (II Tim 2:19).

“That faith, which is the faith of God’s elect, is of the operation of God, and is the gift of his grace, and of which Christ is the Author and Finisher, is firm and immovable as a foundation; it is solid and substantial; it is the substance of things hoped for; and it is permanent and abiding; it stands sure, being supported by the power of God, and prevalent mediation of Jesus Christ; and so cannot be overthrown by false teachers...” (John Gill).

The Lord will tell the wicked on the Day of Judgment that He has never known them (Matt 7:23). But the Lord, by virtue of His sovereign electing grace, has eternally acknowledged those who are His own. On this basis He made them recipients of His special love, redeemed them by Jesus Christ, and brought them into fellowship with Him by the Holy Spirit. Hence, they are perfectly safe (“having this seal”) even when wicked men promote the most soul-destroying heresies.

Cattle ranches engage in the practice of branding cattle. Now a brand is a mark of possession. The animal is identified by the brand as belonging to the Lazy L or Big W ranch. No one else can touch that animal. It is distinguished from all the other animals by that mark. Various herds can graze together and yet the owner of the cattle can be clearly known. So, when God seals you with the Holy Spirit, He is saying, “I own you. You’re my purchased possession.” The presence of the Spirit in your life distinguishes you from the world around you. You are living in the midst of the masses of mankind, but you are not of the world. You have been purchased by Christ’s shed blood and branded by the Spirit’s presence as one of the Lord’s.

YOUR SEALING IS A GUARANTEE OF A FUTURE INHERITANCE IN HEAVEN - “earnest”

After World War I, an American lived in a home in the Quartier Louise in Brussels, Belgium. Each day he spent 80 minutes on the streetcar going to and from his office. This made for a very long day so he decided to move closer to work. There were some nice residential streets near the office and the American rang the bell at a house that exhibited a room-for-rent sign. It was just what he wanted regarding size, location, and price. He told the landlady that he would take the room. He asked if he might move in in about 10 days, as his rent was already paid in the house where he was presently staying. She consented and then asked a question in a hesitant manner. The conversation was all in French and there was a phrase used which the American didn’t understand. He showed his incomprehension and repeated the line questioningly, “Verser des arrhes?” She replied, in French, that she was sure that he was honest and that he intended to return in 10 days. However, if she took the sign out of the window and he did not return after 10 days, she would lose 10 days of advertising. The American immediately grasped the situation when she said, “If you would be willing to pay something down on account, I will agree.” He gave her a handful of francs as a “down payment.” He went back to his office and asked one of his fellow-workers about that strange French phrase the landlord had used. His co-worker replied, “Oh, it is in the first chapter of Ephesians.” The man looked it up and sure enough he found it in V-14. It was the word translated in English as “earnest.”

When God saved you, as a believer, He gave you the Holy Spirit, sealing you into Christ by Him, as an earnest, pledge, or down payment of your eternal inheritance. If you desire

to buy a house, you don’t merely ask the owner to hold it for you because you promise to buy it. No, you plunk down cold, hard cash and give him a down payment. This is his guarantee that you are serious about buying the home. In the same manner the Holy Spirit is God’s down payment, so to speak, on your heavenly inheritance. He doesn’t merely promise it, the Spirit’s presence provides assurance of it.

Interestingly enough, the Greek Word for “earnest” (arrabon) in modern Greek means an engagement ring. An engagement ring is a very serious symbol. It speaks of an existing love and a future marriage. A man can say, “I love you,” all day long and promise a girl everything life has to offer, but she has no assurance that he is sincere. But when the girl gets a sparkling diamond on her finger, she has confidence that this guy is going to come through on his promise. So the Holy Spirit symbolizes the fact that God loves you. And you can be confident that you will enjoy the marriage feast of heaven (Rev 19:9). Are not God’s people “espoused” to Christ (II Cor 11:2)? After all, you have the diamond of the Holy Spirit!

Summary: God preserves each believer by the seal of the Holy Spirit so that not one of them fails to enjoy an eternal inheritance.

II. AS A BELIEVER GOD ENABLES YOU TO PERSEVERE IN THE FAITH SO THAT YOUR SALVATION IS SECURE - “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph 4:30).

1. YOU CAN GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO SEALS YOU

YOU ARE COMMANDED NOT TO GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

You might be tempted to think that since you are “sealed unto the day of redemption” and heaven is assured, you can live as you please. This is not God’s way of salvation. Jesus died to save His people from their sins, not in their sins.

“The Word of God nowhere teaches that once a man is born again he may give free rein to the lusts of the flesh and be as worldly as he pleases, yet still be sure of getting to heaven. Instead, Scripture says, and the words are addressed to believers, “*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*” (Rom 8:13)” (Arthur W. Pink).

The Spirit’s presence in your life is for the purpose of sanctification. He will guide you into all truth and enable you to obey the Lord. Never think of salvation as simply some kind of “fire insurance” from hell. Something you possess and simply store away until it is needed. No, God makes demands on your life. What you do affects your relationship with God. While no true believer can lose his or her salvation, you are told not to grieve the Holy Spirit.

You must remember that God is eternal and is independent of everything. God cannot be affected by anything outside Himself. God doesn’t have human emotions. He doesn’t feel pain and is incapable of crying or becoming sad. When the God-man, Jesus Christ, wept or became hungry, it was His human nature alone that was affected. So, when you read of the Holy Spirit being “grieved,” you must understand a human expression is being used. The Holy Spirit doesn’t literally “grieve,” as though He suffers

human-like sorrow and sheds tears.

THE WAY YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE GRIEVING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

No one can fully comprehend this concept of the “grieving” of the Spirit. It has something to do with the Person of Spirit indwelling a believer. In some fashion, it is possible to disappoint, grieve, and offend the Spirit because of His residence within you as a believer. Bear in mind that the Holy Spirit is a Person. He is not an influence or a mere force. He is the Third Person of the Trinity. You cannot “grieve” an influence. It is impossible to make the wind happy or sad. But you can offend and disappoint a person. Of course, the Spirit is not the same as a human being. You, as a believer, have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. He directs your mind and actions. Grieving the Spirit must be understood in the sense of affecting the relationship between the Holy Spirit and yourself. The Spirit is like a fire burning within you. He provides light (guidance), heat (affection toward God), and purification (putting away sin). You can add more spiritual wood on the fire and the Spirit will burn brighter and be more influential in your life. You will be “strengthened with might by His Spirit”(Eph 3:16). Or you can douse the flames with cold water and thus “quench” the Holy Spirit’s influence in some degree in your life (I Thess 5:19). Thus, “grieving” the Spirit is closely associated with how you live. Your fellowship with God is either improved or estranged by your thoughts, words, and actions.

2. YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PERSEVERE IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Paul’s warning about “grieving” the Spirit isn’t just a general statement. Paul puts emphasis on the Spirit being most “holy.” This provides an indication as to what might grieve the Third Person of the Trinity. Look at the context (Eph 4:17-32) and you will see there are specifics to consider. The Apostle is addressing the necessity of a holy life. You are not to “walk” (live) as the unsaved people around you do for they are ignorant and blind to spiritual things. Their heart is deceived (V-17-18). Having come to know Jesus Christ and been taught the truth concerning the things of the Lord, you must “put off” all the old, deceitful lusts of the flesh (V-20-22). God expects you to “put on” the “new man” and follow the ways of “righteousness and true holiness” (V-24). You “grieve” the Holy Spirit when you act in an unrighteous and unholy manner. Paul provides specific examples:

1) LASCIVIOUSNESS - “Walk not as other Gentiles...who being past feeling have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (V-17,19). This is speaking of sinful sexual activity - i.e. adultery, incest, premarital sex, etc. God expects His people to be sexually pure. You are to be pure in body, for it is the “temple of God” (I Cor 3:17), and mind, for you are not to have “eyes full of adultery” (II Pet 2:14).

2) LYING - “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour” (V-25). You are not to use your tongue to deceive others in business deals or personal conversation. God expects His people to “speak the truth in love” (V-15). Satan is the father of the lie and it is his children who follow his example. God is a God of truth, who cannot lie, and his children follow His example.

3) STEALING - “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (V-28). You must not take possession of what doesn’t belong to you. This could be the company’s time or the belongings of another. The people of God must do work to gain things in a proper manner. Indeed, you must do honest labor and be willing to share with others rather than to steal from them.

4) CORRUPT COMMUNICATION - “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (V-29). As a believer you must not engage in unwholesome talk such as cursing and swearing, gossip, character assassination, etc. You must use your tongue to produce edifying speech. Your words should be a means of communicating God’s grace to others and of building up the faith of your fellow believers.

5) UNRIGHTEOUS ANGER - “Be angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (V-26). “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” (V-31). Anger expressed without a just cause (Matt 5:22) is sinful. It is such unrighteous seething within which produces heated bitterness toward a husband, wife, another Christian, boss, co-worker, or neighbor. You must learn to control your temper and keep your spirit in check. Deal with the problem as soon as possible so that your anger is directed toward a solution rather than boiling like a steaming pot day after day within you.

6) UNFORGIVING SPIRIT - “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you” (V-32). There must be no unwillingness to forgive the wrongs done to you. No grudge must be held against the one who has wronged you when forgiveness is sought. You must have a tender, forgiving spirit, for you yourself enjoy divine forgiveness through Jesus Christ. If you have been forgiven so much by God surely you can forgive those who seek your forgiveness.

“God preserves His people in this world through their perseverance - their use of means and avoidance of what is destructive. We do not mean for a moment that the everlasting purpose of the Most High is made contingent on the actions of the creature. The saint’s perseverance is a Divine gift, as truly as health and strength of body. The two sides of this truth, the Divine and human, are brought together in *‘work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure’* (Phil 2:12,13)” (Arthur W. Pink).

Summary: You must not “grieve” the Holy Spirit by engaging in unrighteous and unholy acts. You have a responsibility to persevere in the faith.

MAIN CONCLUSION:

1. HOW YOU CAN BE ASSURED OF SALVATION

How can you be assured that you are “sealed” with the Holy Spirit and will enjoy an eternal inheritance in heaven? This is a vital question. The Spirit will make Himself known to you by bringing you to a belief of the truth of the gospel. The gospel provides the way of salvation. Salvation from sin and eternal damnation comes through Jesus Christ alone - i.e. through His perfect righteousness and sacrificial death.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:23). You must repent of your sin and place your faith in Christ. God grants forgiveness “for Christ’s sake” (Eph 4:32) to all those who place their trust in the Savior. The “sealing” of the Spirit coincides with believing the Gospel message. “The Spirit [Himself] bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom 8:16). Have you ever believed on Christ? Are you trusting His work on the cross for the salvation of your soul? Do you have any evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work within you? If you are “sealed” with the Spirit, you will have the “fruit of the Spirit” (See Gal 5:22). If there is no change in your life, no growth in righteousness and holiness, then you have no assurance of the Spirit’s presence and eternal life.

2. PASSAGES WHICH SPEAK OF PERSONS “FALLING AWAY” AND PERISHING

There are Bible verses which speak of persons “falling away” and perishing, even of their faith being “overthrown.” However, the Bible never contradicts itself. There are very few of these passages compared to all those which teach the divine preservation of all believers. The solution to harmonizing these seemingly conflicting passages is to realize that often people are considered with respect to their profession of faith, not the reality of such a profession. All the passages which speak of “falling away” can be answered by a single passage of Scripture.

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for it they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (I Jn 2:19).

Those who “fall away” were never true believers. They professed to believe in Christ but never possessed genuine faith. They spoke with their lips about following the Lord but their hearts were far from Him. This is why the Bible teaches that not only must your lips confess that Jesus is Lord (outward, public expression), but in your heart you must also believe the truth of the Gospel (inward, secret thinking) (Rom 10:9-10). There are hypocrites who seem to be disciples of Christ for a period of time and then “fall away” from the faith. But “they were not of us” for otherwise they would have persevered in their profession and not returned back to the world like a pig to wallow in the mire of sin (II Pet 2:20-22). If you truly believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ you will never perish for you are sealed with the Spirit until the day of redemption. Remember the Parable of the Sower. Some seed falls upon stony or thorny ground and springs up but eventually dies out or withers away. It never produces any fruit. This represents those who profess to believe but in reality are still in their sins. They do not persevere, but when tribulation or persecution comes or the cares and pleasures of this world draw them away, their profession dies. The good ground represents those who have genuine faith and produce spiritual fruit in their lives.

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PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

The Preservation and Perseverance of All Brought to Salvation BY JACK A. WERTH

“In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory...And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” - Eph 1:13-14, 4:30 KJV

A rather poor man receives a wonderful inheritance of a million dollars. He considers himself rich and enters a whole new lifestyle. He never lived in such luxury and splendor in his life. He purchases a stately mansion, hires servants, dines on the finest foods, drives expensive automobiles, and enjoys the lifestyle of the rich and famous. He thinks that he is set for the rest of his days. Sadly, the man eventually loses his vast fortune. Poor judgment, a stock-market crash, fraud, calamity, and wasteful spending all conspire to deplete his once great inheritance. Eventually he ends up just as poor as he was at the beginning. He lost his inheritance.

There are some who think that this is how it is with God’s inheritance. You may be brought to salvation, enjoy its wonderful benefits for a time, and then eventually fall away from the faith and be eternally lost. However, the Bible teaches that once you are brought to faith in Christ you are preserved by God from fatally falling away. The indwelling Holy Spirit enables you to persevere in the faith so that you will finally end up in heaven. This does not mean that once you are saved you will never sin again. No, as a believer, you will struggle with sin the rest of your life. You have a responsibility to continue or persevere in faith and holiness. Yet God eternally secures all those He has chosen from eternity and for whom Christ shed His precious blood.

“The believer, like a man on shipboard, may fall again and again on the deck, but he will never fall overboard” (C.H. Spurgeon).

I AS A BELIEVER YOU ARE PRESERVED BY GOD SO THAT YOUR SALVATION IS SECURE (Eph 1:13-14)

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SEALED WITH THE SPIRIT?

YOU ARE SEALED WITH THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BY GOD THE FATHER

Your salvation involves the work of the whole Godhead. The Holy Trinity is active in each step of salvation. This is true of sealing also. Christ is involved in sealing - “IN WHOM...ye were sealed” (V-13). The sealing of the Spirit comes only in Jesus Christ, and it is the elect alone who are “chosen...in Him” (Eph 1:4) and thus sealed. But it also involves the activity of God the Father. He is the One who initiates and authorizes the plan of salvation (Eph 1:3). And the sealing work of the Holy Spirit results in the glorification

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