

Ephesians

1:13-14

Introduction

Paul says some remarkable things about God the Holy Spirit in these two verses. There is, unfortunately, wide disagreement among scholars about exactly what he intended to teach. Anytime the Holy Spirit is the subject you are going to have a variety of opinions.

The best way to get a handle on Paul's teaching about the Holy Spirit in these two verses is by recalling the details of his first experience in Ephesus – *an experience that very much involved the Holy Spirit*.

Turn with me to the Book of Acts, chapter nineteen, and let's read verses one through six.

Acts 19:1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples

Acts 19:2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

Acts 19:3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?"

So they said, "Into John's baptism."

Acts 19:4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

Acts 19:5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Paul arrived in Ephesus and found some people who called themselves "disciples." He could immediately tell that there was something missing in their relationship with God. **He could tell that they had not received the Holy Spirit.**

Paul went on to minister the Gospel to these disciples of John. They were born-again, baptized in water, then baptized with the Holy Spirit as Paul laid his hands upon them. They believed, and it was evidenced by their receiving the Holy Spirit.

Keep this experience in mind as we return to our verses in Ephesians. Like the initial twelve disciples, the Ephesians believed, and it was evidenced by their receiving the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus. He comes to dwell *within* and *upon* all those who believe. It is by His Holy Spirit that God accomplishes His work in His beloved children. The Holy Spirit is continually at work to bring to completion and consummation everything God has promised for those who trust Him.

There were two evidences they had received the promised Holy Spirit when they believed:

1. In verse thirteen, Paul says that when they believed they were “sealed with the Holy Spirit.”
2. In verse fourteen, Paul says that when they believed the Holy Spirit became the “guarantee” of their “inheritance.”

We’ll talk about these two evidences as we organize our thoughts around two points: #1 The Promised Holy Spirit Is Pressed Upon Your Heart As God’s Seal To Conform You Into The Likeness Of Jesus, and #2 The Promised Holy Spirit Is Pledged To Your Heart As God’s Surety To Confirm In You The Love Of Jesus.

#1 The Promised Holy Spirit Is Pressed Upon Your Heart As God’s Seal To Conform You Into The Likeness Of Jesus (v13)

We’ve already seen, in Acts chapter nineteen, Paul’s initial encounter with the twelve disciples who lacked the Holy Spirit. As you continue to read about Paul’s ministry in Ephesus, you see that evidences of the Holy Spirit *within* and *upon* the lives of those who believed are a dominant feature.

After ministering to the twelve disciples, Paul went to the Jewish synagogue and shared the Gospel. Some Jews believed; most opposed. After a while Paul moved his ministry to a rented hall and continued preaching the Gospel for two more years. God “worked unusual miracles by the hand of Paul” (Acts 19:11). People who had dabbled in the occult brought their books of magic and burned them in a public bonfire. The Gospel was so successful that it affected the local economy. The silversmiths, who made idols of the goddess Diana, could no longer earn a living. One of them, Demetrius, incited

a city-wide riot against the Christians. The riot died down, but Paul was forced to leave Ephesus for Macedonia.

This is the context for these two verses about the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13 In Him you 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,

The Gospel is called “the word of truth.” When you share God’s Word, you’re sharing the truth – the absolute, accurate truth. We are not interested in opinions and philosophies; we are interested in the truth that can lead lost people to salvation. We are not interested in religion; we are interested in the truth which can lead saved people to wholeness.

They “heard” the truth; they heard it with understanding. It penetrated their hearts. They “believed.” By faith they trusted the word of truth and were saved.

The English text says this happened “after” they heard. The better translation is “in whom you also trusted **upon** hearing the word of truth.” The same is true later in the verse: “**upon** believing” they were sealed with the Holy Spirit. Upon believing, they – and all who believe – receive the Holy Spirit.

“Of promise” simply means that the Holy Spirit was previously promised to all those who would believe. I want to talk about the promise of the Holy Spirit for just a moment.

Jesus promised His disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit. He promised that the Holy Spirit would be *with* us, then *in* us, then come *upon* us.

Prior to salvation God the Holy Spirit is with you as an unbeliever, seeking to lead you to saving faith in Jesus:

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

John 14:17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

“He dwells with you **and will be in you.**” When you heard the word of truth and believed, He came "in you." After the resurrection of Jesus the Spirit came into the disciples and they were born again:

John 20:21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

The word "receive" is in the present tense. They were at this time receiving the indwelling Spirit of God. The obvious and correct meaning of these words is that the disciples received the Holy Spirit at this point - He came into them.

Yet it wasn't until *after* this event that Jesus promised His disciples the baptism with the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1:4-5, Jesus told those who were born of the Spirit to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism with the Spirit. They were baptized with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. That means the baptism with the Holy Spirit occurred *after* their being born again.

The Holy Spirit is **with** you before you are a believer, seeking to lead you to Jesus; He comes **in** you at the moment of salvation, and you are born of the Spirit. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is His coming **upon** you. The Holy Spirit comes upon you to empower you for your witness and service.

Paul had all of this in mind as he writes “you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” He was remembering the effect of the Gospel. The promised Holy Spirit had come to dwell *within* them, and He had come *upon* them.

They were “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” “Sealed” means *to put a seal upon, or to mark with a seal*. The kind of seal we’re talking about was a mark fixed upon something by means of heating sealing wax and impressing an insignia upon it. When Paul says that believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit, he’s saying that when you look upon them or listen to them there is evidence that the image of Jesus is pressed upon their lives by the Holy Spirit. He didn’t observe it when he first encountered the twelve disciples of John the

Baptist. But after they believed and received the Holy Spirit, the impress of the Holy Spirit was most definitely evident.

Even though the Holy Spirit is received in the heart, in secret places as it were, His presence and power have such an effect that to look upon or listen to someone who has received Him is to see them as if pressed with the seal of God. You see upon them the image of their Savior. You see God at work to bring to completion and consummation everything God has promised for those who trust Him. In the Book of Romans Paul calls this being “conformed” into the image of Jesus (Romans 8:29). The promised Holy Spirit is within and upon you to conform you into the image of Jesus.

In verse fourteen, Paul will call believers God’s “purchased possession.” Businessmen would purchase merchandise in Ephesus that had to be shipped elsewhere. To prepare the merchandise for shipping, they would affix their seal to it in sealing wax – usually by impressing the sealing wax with their signet ring. As their merchandise made its way to their home, you could tell that it belonged to them by the unique seal of their signet ring.

Just as a businessman bought merchandise and then sealed it for transport to its ultimate destination, so believers are God’s “purchased possession” and are sealed with the Holy Spirit until we reach our ultimate destination! Along our journey people can tell we belong to Jesus by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives as we conform to the image that the Holy Spirit presses upon us.

What is our ultimate destination? It’s heaven – but only because Jesus will be there. Our ultimate destination is not a *place*, it is a *Person*. To be with Jesus is our destination.

As the Holy Spirit presses upon our hearts, we become more-and-more like Jesus as we journey homeward to be with Jesus. F.B. Meyer wrote with insight into this process when he said:

“Only melted gold is minted; only moistened clay is molded; only softened wax receives the [signet]; only broken and contrite hearts can take and keep the impress of [the Holy Spirit].”

Melted, moistened, softened, broken... These are the properties that can best receive an impression. The Holy Spirit is Himself God's seal upon your life. As you yield yourself to His presence and power, you become more-and-more like Jesus, more-and-more "conformed" by His pressure upon you, until you reach your ultimate destination – which is both to be with Jesus and to be like Jesus.

The phrase "purchased possession" suggests another illustration. You see it in verse fourteen.

#2 The Promised Holy Spirit Is Pledged To Your Heart
As God's Surety To Confirm In You The Love Of Jesus
(v14)

Ephesians 1:14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

We discussed redemption in our last study. "Redemption" is a word borrowed from the Roman slave market. It was the process by which someone could be released from slavery by the paying of the required ransom. We showed how all men are comprehended by God as being spiritual slaves. They are slaves to sin. But we also showed how all men everywhere and for all time can be released from their slavery to sin because Jesus paid the required ransom – His "blood," signifying His death on the Cross.

The word "redemption" in verse fourteen speaks of a future aspect to your redemption. You've been redeemed, but you still are on the earth in a body of flesh. There will, however, be a future, final, full redemption when you are freed from this body of sin and death and given a glorified body to inhabit eternity.

You are the "purchased possession" and will one day be fully redeemed. In the mean time God has given you the Holy Spirit as His "guarantee" that He has an "inheritance" for you in heaven.

The word "guarantee" can be translated *earnest* or *pledge*. We still today use the phrase "earnest money" to describe a deposit we put down on property. The deposit is evidence we are earnest about completing the transaction.

Now as wonderful as it might be to think of the Holy Spirit as a down payment from God guaranteeing that you have an inheritance in heaven, there is something even more wonderful about Paul's use of this word. The word also means "engagement ring" (Wiersbe). An engagement ring is the tangible gift from the bridegroom to the bride pledging His surety that He has every intention of consummating the relationship in marriage.

The Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ's gift to believers. He is in a sense tangible in that He radically changes and dramatically transforms your life. He is Jesus Christ's pledge of surety that He has every intention of returning for you to consummate His relationship with you.

Your "inheritance" is much more than a treasure-chest full of rewards and riches; it is the Lord Himself – your heavenly Bridegroom. You are not just redeemed property that God has put a down payment on. You are Jesus Christ's bride Whom He has pledged to return for to bring home for a wedding. The Holy Spirit indwelling you is the pledge that confirms Jesus Christ's everlasting love for you.

I prefer to read this romantically for another reason. Jesus Himself would later write a letter to the Church at Ephesus. (You can read it in Revelation, chapter two). There He describes Himself to the Ephesians as their Bridegroom, and they as His bride, when He says that they had "left their first love." They – **and you** – are not just redeemed property. They – **and you** – are the cherished bride.

Jesus is wanting more than a *business* transaction. He wants a *bridal* transaction! The presence and power of the Holy Spirit in your life is a gift of His passionate love for you. His presence and power, though hidden in your heart, affects everything you think and do. Just as it is obvious when an engaged couple is in love as they anxiously await their wedding, so it is observable that Jesus is in love with you. It may be more of an internal evidence, but it is there nonetheless – every bit as real as an engagement ring worn on your finger for all to see.

Conclusion

If you are a believer, the Holy Spirit is *pressed* on your heart and *pledged* to your heart:

1. He is pressed as a seal and you therefore can become more-and-more Christlike every day as you yield to Him.
2. He is pledged as surety to you that you are the beloved bride of Jesus and you therefore can becoming more-and-more captivated by His love as you await His return to consummate the wedding.

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to all who believe. If the Holy Spirit is not observable in your life, you can receive Him by faith.

1. If you are not a believer, you can receive Him for the first time as you believe the Gospel and are saved.
2. If you are a believer, you can receive the Holy Spirit for a fresh time as He comes upon you to empower you to serve.