

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 22, 2025 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

T H E B O O K O F

EPHESIANS

How to live the Christian life

EPHESIANS: HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE – PART 2
“Secure in Him” - Ephesians 1:13-14

“¹Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. ⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. ¹¹In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹²that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. ¹³In 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, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” – Ephesians 1:13-14 (NKJV)

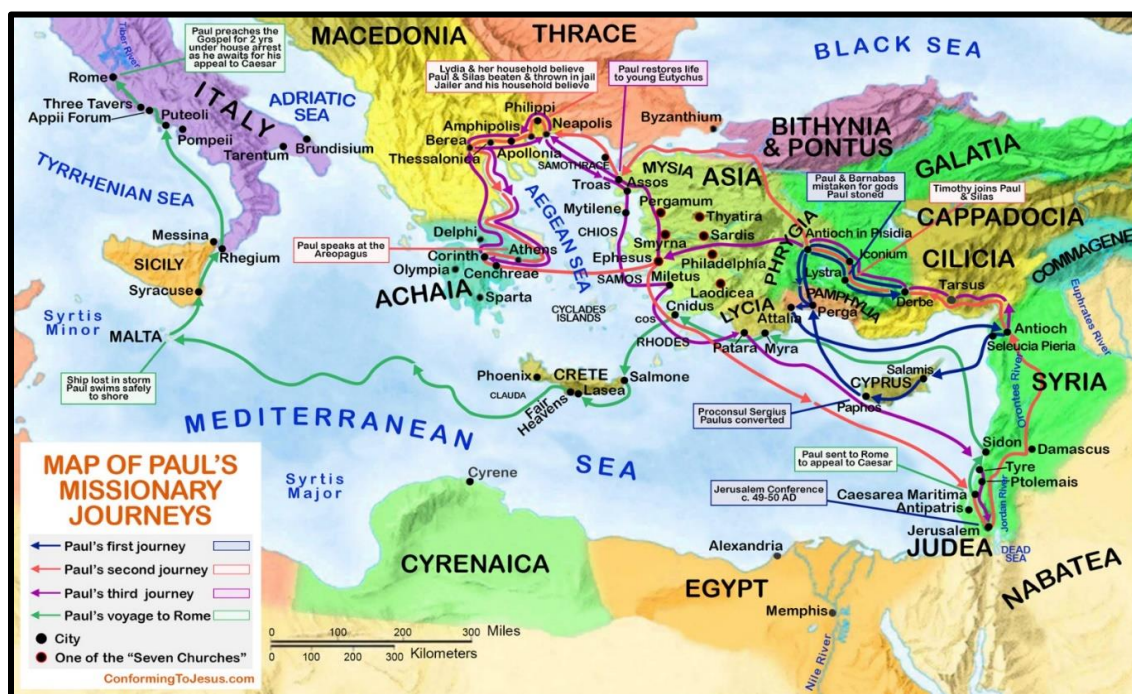
If you could buy a book that contained a concentration of a lifetime of thinking and experience on spiritual matters by one of the greatest Christian leaders of all time, would you do it? Would you read it and study it and try to plumb the depths of its wisdom? What

about if you could read aloud all six chapters of the book in only 19 minutes? I'm speaking about Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

- Even though Ephesians is so short, **Martyn Lloyd-Jones'** exposition of it takes eight volumes! He has 37 messages on chapter 1 alone!
- **John Calvin's** 48 sermons on Ephesians take up 705 pages.
- The **Puritan William Gurnall** in *The Christian in Complete Armor* takes almost 1,200 pages to expound on Ephesians 6:10-20!

So there is far more depth in this short epistle than I can begin to understand or apply to my own life, much less to expound on. So as we come to it, we must pray with the apostle Paul (Ephesians 1:17-19), ... *"¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power."*

- The English poet, **Samuel Coleridge**, said that *"Ephesians is the divinest composition of man."*
- Another writer refers to it as, *"Ephesians is the Grand Canyon of Scripture, because it is breathtakingly beautiful and apparently inexhaustible to the one who wants to take it in"* (cited by, James Boice, *Ephesians* [Baker], p. 1).
- **Martyn Lloyd-Jones** calls Ephesians *"Ephesians is the sublimest and the most majestic expression of the gospel."* (*God's Ultimate Purpose* [Baker], p. 12).



KEY BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR EPHESIANS

To gain a better understanding of the Book of Ephesians, consider the following background information:

1. **Authorship: The Apostle Paul** - Traditionally attributed to the Apostle Paul.
 2. **Date of Writing: A.D. 60-63** - Likely written around A.D. 60-63 during Paul's Roman imprisonment.
 3. **Place of writing: Rome** – Paul wrote the book/letter of Ephesians from a Roman prison
 4. **Audience: Ephesian Christians at Ephesus and surrounding area** Addressed to the Christian community in Ephesus, a major city in Asia Minor. Ephesians is considered a “circular letter” meant to be circulated to church in the area of Ephesus... possibly the same 7 churches
 5. **Purpose: How to live the Christian life** To strengthen the faith of believers and address issues of unity and spiritual maturity.
 6. **Themes: Grace, the church, and holy living** - Key themes include grace, the church as the body of Christ, and the importance of living a holy life.
 7. **Structure: Ephesus is divided into two main sections** - Divided into two main sections: doctrinal teachings (chapters 1-3) and practical applications (chapters 4-6).
 8. **Cultural Context: Ephesus was center of commerce and religion** - Ephesus was a center of commerce and religion, known for the Temple of Artemis.
 9. **Significance: Mystery of the gospel and inclusion of Gentiles** - Emphasizes the mystery of the Gospel and the inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan.
 10. **Spiritual Warfare: Ephesians’ emphasis on the spiritual battle** Concludes with a call to spiritual readiness and the armor of God (chapter 6).
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Application Questions

1. *Why is it important to distinguish between the sealing of the Spirit, the baptism of the Spirit, and the filling of the Spirit?*
2. *What dangers are inherent in the view that we receive the Holy Spirit (or the baptism of the Spirit) as a “second” blessing, subsequent to salvation? Are there dangers in the view that these blessings are received once and for all at salvation?*
3. *When a professing believer is living in sin and justifying himself, should we give him assurance of salvation? Why/why not?*
4. *When a believer is grieving over his sin, should you help him regain his assurance of salvation? If so, how?*

“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, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” – Ephesians 1:13-14 (NKJV)

One of the joys of childhood (and maybe adulthood, too) is to receive presents/gifts at Christmas or your birthday. Sometimes you can guess what is underneath the wrapping paper, but it's still fun to open the present and find out what gifts you have been given.

That's what we've been doing in Ephesians 1. In verse 3, Paul says that if you are in Christ, all of the gifts under the tree have your name on them! God has blessed us with *every* spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Then Paul begins unwrapping the gifts for us. He shows that we have been chosen by the Father (1:4-6); redeemed by the Son, who revealed to us His eternal purpose (1:7-12); and, now, sealed by the Holy Spirit (1:13-14); all, to the praise of His glory (1:6, 12, 14).

In this study we want to unwrap the third gift listed there, the truth that believers have been sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is also called the pledge of our inheritance. God gives us these pictures of the Holy Spirit to make us feel secure in Christ. Many Christians struggle with a lack of assurance of their salvation... the greatest gift we receive as Christians, the gift of salvation. The enemy knows that if he can stir up doubts about your salvation, you will not glorify God as you should.

Why do Christians struggle with a lack of assurance of salvation?

(1) **Some Christians doubt their salvation because of the presence of sin in their lives** - Hebrews 12:1 speaks of "*sin that so easily entangles.*" Many true Christians struggle against what the Bible calls "*besetting sins,*" that is, habitual sins, and this may cause them to doubt their salvation.

Some things to remember about sin in our lives:

- 1. It is important here to recognize that, despite the Christian's being a new creation in Christ, everyone still sins** – James, the half-brother of Jesus, said in James 3:2, "*We all stumble in many ways*". Paul describes this struggle in his own life and at one point says in Romans 7:20, "*If I do the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me*". That is why Jesus said in Matthew 26:41, "⁴¹*Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*"
- 2. No one reaches a state of sinless perfection in this world** – It's true! There are none of us without sin and from now until the day we reach heaven's shore we will struggle with sin... even as Christians. The only person the Bible describes as sinless is Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22). Every other major character in the Bible is flawed. At times, the Bible seems to go out of its way to point out the sins of significant people in the Bible. One would think that if sinlessness is possible, the Bible would give us an example of someone who achieved it. And then there are verses such as the following...
 - **Ecclesiastes 7:20, "*Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins*"** - Some might be tempted to and possible could perhaps dismiss Ecclesiastes 7:20 since it is Old Testament, old covenant
 - **Romans 3:10, "*... there is none righteous, no not one.*"**

- **Matthew 6:12, “...and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”** - Matthew 6:12, though, is Jesus instructing us how to pray. **If Jesus told us to ask God for forgiveness, it would seem we will always need forgiveness.**
 - **1 John 1:8, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”** - In 1 John 1:8, John, when he says “we” and “us,” is referring to himself and other believers. The apostle whom Jesus loved recognized that he was not sinless, and apparently did not even consider the idea that someone to whom he was writing might be sinless.
- 3. The difference for the believer is the attitude toward sin and the response to it -** As **Adrian Rogers** said, **“Before I got saved I was running to sin; now I am running from it. And if I fail, I turn right around and start running away again”**. And as believers we have been given every resource and help in overcoming and finding victory... resources/helps that an unbeliever doesn't have. One is the Holy Spirit. As believers we walk in the Spirit as we try not to quench the Spirit's promptings (as spoken of in 1 Thessalonians 5:19) and seek instead to be filled with the Spirit—that is, to be fully under the Spirit's control (Ephesians 5:18–21). How is one filled with the Holy Spirit? If sin is what grieves the Spirit and hinders His filling, then obedience to God is how the filling of the Spirit is maintained. We should pray that we be filled with the Spirit, immerse ourselves in God's Word (Colossians 3:16), and walk in obedience to God's commands. This gives the Spirit freedom to work within our thoughts and actions. Another resource for finding victory over sin is the Word of God, the Bible, says that God has given us His Word to equip us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It teaches us how to live and what to believe, it reveals to us when we have chosen wrong paths, it helps us get back on the right path, and it helps us to stay on that path. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that the Word of God is living and powerful, able to penetrate to our hearts to root out and overcome the deepest sins of heart and attitude. The psalmist talks about its life-changing power in-depth in Psalm 119. So the difference for the believer (who still does sin and fall into sin) is that our attitude and response to sin is difference thanks to God's saving work in our lives. He has given us the Holy Spirit and His Word.
- 4. It is also important to know and keep in mind that the presence of sin in one's life can be a sign that you are not saved** - The Bible is clear that willful, unrepentant sin is an indicator of an untransformed heart (see 1 John 3:6, 9; Romans 6:1–2). If you are living a lifestyle that the Bible condemns as sinful, then there is a spiritual problem.

Do Christians sin? Yes. Do they willfully continue in sin? No. **If you doubt your salvation because of sin in your life, then confess the sin to God and ask for His forgiveness for Jesus' sake.** Then take steps to not repeat the sin, **“Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God”** (Luke 3:8, NLT). **The very fact that you recognize sin and struggle against it in your own life is proof that the Holy Spirit is at work. Cooperate with what He is doing.**

(2) **Some Christians doubt their salvation because of the absence of godly works in their lives** - The Christian life involves more than turning from sin; it includes doing good. Jesus said in Matthew 7:17 that “every good tree bears good fruit”, and Paul wrote in Titus 3:14, “Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful”. There are some who inspect the “fruit” of their own lives, find it lacking, and wonder if they’re truly saved. Their mistrust that they are a “good tree” could be because...

Reasons some (Christians) mistrust or misjudge their good works/fruit:

1. **They have set a higher standard for themselves than God has, minimizing what God is doing through them** – Some do judge themselves too harshly. Perhaps insecurity or underestimating (or not knowing) how God is using them. God works in simple and sometimes understated ways. He uses us in simple ways. Don’t underestimate God’s use of you as His hand and feet, as His child.
2. **They are foolishly measuring themselves against others and their fruit (see 2 Corinthians 10:12)** – You can’t be me and I can’t be you. God has gifted you in ways that He has not gifted me or the one sitting next to you. There are people you can reach that I will never be able to reach.
3. **They are being lax in their pursuit of good works** – Laziness! Sometimes Christians are lazy. It’s not that we don’t know what to do. It is that we don’t do it!
4. **They are not saved and therefore do not have the motivating love of Christ** –

If you doubt your salvation because of a lack of good works, then confess the sin of omission to God and ask for His forgiveness for Jesus’ sake. Then it is time to “stir up the gift of God which is in you” (2 Timothy 1:6, NKJV). There’s plenty of work to do for the kingdom (Luke 10:2), and the Bible gives plenty of direction about the will of God, generally, for Christians. Be careful not to set up false performance standards or compare your good deeds with others’. Ask God what He would have *you* do, and do that.

(3) **Some Christians doubt their salvation because, especially those who were saved at a very young age, they don’t remember their conversion very well, and they wonder if the decision they made as a child was genuine** - Such feelings are common in adults who were saved as children. In such cases, it is good to review the promises of God and remember that Jesus invites children to come to Him (Mark 10:14). Salvation is based on the grace of God and faith in Christ, not our knowledge, wisdom, or sophistication (Ephesians 2:8–9). In the next chapter of Ephesians 2:8-9, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” Jesus promised that those who are His will “never perish” (John 10:28). If doubts persist about the genuineness of your childhood conversion, make sure of your faith. Regardless of what you did as a child, do you

believe *now* that Jesus died for your sins and rose again? Are you placing your faith in Him alone

(4) **Some Christians doubt their salvation because of *persistent guilt over past sins*** - We all have regrets about past misdeeds, and we all have a spiritual enemy that the Bible calls "*the accuser*" (Revelation 12:10). The combination of regrets and accusations can spur much doubt. Fortunately, "*the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world*" (1 John 4:4).

If you doubt your salvation because of guilty feelings, then ask yourself, "Were those sins over which I feel guilty confessed to God?" If so, then know this: God has removed that sin from you "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12). This promise stands forever: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Imagine a cruel parent, who always threatened his or her child with, "*If you do that again, I'm going to disown you as my child! I'll take you to an orphanage and abandon you!*" The poor child would never praise such a cruel parent for his love. That kind of cruel threat undermines any kind of close relationship. Every loving parent wants his child to feel secure in his love. That assurance of steadfast love undergirds strong parent-child relationships. Even so, the loving heavenly Father wants all of His children to feel secure in His steadfast love. After all, before we even existed, He chose us in Christ and determined that we would be adopted into His family (1:4-5). When He did that, He knew everything about us and yet He still chose us, based on His grace, not on anything in us. To assure us, He gives us the Holy Spirit as the seal and pledge of our future inheritance, guaranteeing that He will complete what He has begun. So, Paul here in our text (Ephesians 1:13-14) Paul says,

KEY CONCEPT: *We should praise God because when we believed, He secured us in Christ with the seal and pledge of the Holy Spirit*

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Sadly, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is one of the most controversial and divisive subjects among Christians today. Many church and denominations split over these divisive differences regarding the Holy Spirit. Here are some of the questions surrounding the controversy over the Holy Spirit...

Controversial Questions Surrounding the Holy Spirit:

(1) **Who / what is the Holy Spirit?** - There are many misconceptions about the identity of the Holy Spirit. Some view the Holy Spirit as a mystical force. Others understand the Holy Spirit as the impersonal power God makes available to followers of Christ. What does the Bible say about the identity of the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit God? Is the Holy Spirit the third person of the Trinity? Or is the Holy Spirit just a force or mystical movement?

Some common misconceptions of the Holy Spirit are...

- **That He is not a person, but a force or a power**
- **That He comes and goes, and is not permanent**
- **That He is a feeling, or only present when there are "goosebumps"**
- **That He makes you live right, or exempts you from having struggles in your flesh**
- **That His ministry ends with the rapture of the church**

- (2) **When / How do we receive the Holy Spirit?** This discussion is controversial because the ministries of the Holy Spirit are often confused. The receiving / indwelling of the Spirit occurs at the moment of salvation. The filling of the Spirit is an ongoing process in the Christian life. Although some “Christian” groups (particularly Pentecostals and more Charismatic groups) believe in what is called the “Second Blessing” which is a separate experience of receiving the Holy Spirit after salvation. This is often accompanied and evidenced by sins of speaking in tongues and other more charismatic expressions (slaying of the Spirit, ecstatic utterances, prophesying, etc.)
- (3) **What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?** - The baptism of the Holy Spirit may be defined as that work whereby the Spirit of God places the believer into union with Christ and into union with other believers in the Body of Christ at the moment of salvation. The controversy comes in at the point of when this takes place. Some associate the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” with the “Second Blessing” spoken of above.
- (4) **How can I be filled with the Spirit?** - It is important to distinguish between the indwelling and filling of the Spirit. The permanent indwelling of the Spirit is not for a select few believers, but rather for all believers. This is in contrast to the commanded filling of the Spirit found in Ephesians 5:18.
- (5) **Are the miraculous gifts of the Spirit for today?** This is not a question of can the Holy Spirit give someone a miraculous gift. The question is does the Holy Spirit still dispense the miraculous gifts today. Above all else, we entirely recognize that the Bible does say that the Holy Spirit is free to dispense gifts according to His will (1 Corinthians 12:7-11). Many Christians have an unbiblical perception of the Holy Spirit. Some understand the Holy Spirit as a power or force given to us from God. This is not biblical. Many churches have split over differences regarding the gifts of the Spirit, especially prophetic utterances, speaking in tongues, miracles, and healing. Some argue that all such miraculous gifts ceased with the apostolic era, while others argue that they should be experienced on a normative basis by the church today. My opinion is that we cannot prove biblically that such gifts have ceased. Yet, at the same time, most of what goes under that banner today is not genuine. The enemy is the great counterfeiter. Thus, we need biblical discernment in these matters (1 John 4:1).

I cannot deal with all of those issues today, but I want to ask and answer five questions that stem from our text (Ephesians 1:13-14) regarding the Holy Spirit and His ministry of making us secure in Christ.

5 Questions Regarding the Holy Spirit and His Work in our Security of Salvation:

- (1) How do we get the Holy Spirit?**
- (2) Who gets the Holy Spirit and when?**
- (3) How do we know if we have the Holy Spirit?**
- (4) What does it mean to me to have the Holy Spirit?**
- (5) How should we respond to having the security of God's seal and pledge?**

Some of you may disagree with me on these matters. I would only ask that we treat one another in Christian love and that we allow any differences to drive us to ask God for more understanding from the Scriptures.

HOW DO WE GET THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Answer: We get the Holy Spirit by hearing the gospel and believing in Jesus Christ

Some teach that not all believers have the Holy Spirit, but we must seek God to give us the Spirit. They usually teach that the sign of receiving the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. They also call this experience “being baptized in (or by) the Spirit” that we spoke of earlier and the “Second Blessing” that we talked about. They base this on some texts in Acts, as well as Luke 11:13, where Jesus tells the disciples that the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. The problem with this is that it is clearly in consistent with what Scripture says. As a matter of fact **Romans 8:9** clearly says, ***“⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”***

In seeking to understand these matters, it is crucial to understand that on the Day of Pentecost, God did a new thing with regard to the Holy Spirit. Before Pentecost, only some believers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and even at that it was not necessarily permanent. Thus David, after his sin with Bathsheba, prayed (Psalm 51:11), ***“... do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.”*** While believers today may grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30) or quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19), **they cannot lose the indwelling Spirit.** It is part of God's gift of salvation after Pentecost.

In the Upper Room, Jesus promised the disciples (John 14:16-17) that after He left them, the Father would send ***“another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”*** Later, when Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, He knew their need for the Spirit's presence until they permanently received Him seven weeks later at Pentecost. Thus (John 20:22), ***“He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”*** Just before He ascended, Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for what the Father had promised, namely, the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5).

On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came powerfully upon the believers, thus fulfilling God's promise. The Book of Acts must be interpreted as a transitional book to the age (or dispensation) of the Spirit. We see the Spirit coming first on believers in Jerusalem, then in Samaria, then on the Gentiles, and then to those in the "remotest part of the earth" (see Acts 1:8; 2:1-21; 8:14-17; 10:1-48; 19:1-7). After the transitional time, all believers in Christ receive the Holy Spirit.

Other Scriptures affirm this interpretation. In Acts 15, during the debate at the Jerusalem Council, Peter refers back to his experience of preaching to the Gentiles (Acts 10). He says (15:7-8) that they heard the word of the gospel and believed, and that God gave them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to the Jews at Pentecost. In Galatians, Paul argues that they received the Spirit at the beginning of their Christian experience by hearing [the gospel] with faith, not by works of the Law (3:2, 3, 5). And here it is again, in **Romans 8:9**, Paul writes, "*However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*" Every believer in Christ has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him.

How do we get the Holy Spirit? *We get the Holy Spirit by hearing the gospel and believing in Jesus Christ*

In our text (Eph. 1:13), Paul gives the same order. "You also" refers to the Gentiles (contrasted with the Jews, 1:12).

How do we get the Holy Spirit? *Same Order Paul Gave:*

- 1. They listened to the message of truth, the gospel of their salvation**
- 2. They believed that message and they were sealed in Christ with the Holy Spirit of promise.**

The gospel is the good news, that God forgives all our sins and gives us eternal life as His free gift through faith in Christ, apart from our good deeds (Eph. 2:8-9). The moment you believe that message and put your trust in Christ, God seals you with the Holy Spirit and gives Him to you as His pledge that you will inherit all the blessings of heaven for all eternity.

WHO GETS THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WHEN?

Answer: All believers receive the Holy Spirit the instant they believe in Christ.

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, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." – Ephesians 1:13-14 (NKJV)

I've already said this, but need to address it further because many teach that there is a time lapse between believing in Christ and receiving the Holy Spirit and that only some experience the sealing of the Spirit. This view was fostered by the old King James translation, which stated, "in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." The word *after* implies a time lapse. Even Charles Spurgeon and Martyn Lloyd-Jones, whom I greatly respect, err in arguing that the sealing of the Spirit is an experience that only some believers receive subsequent to salvation. But that undermines Paul's entire point here, which is to assure all believers that God has sealed them with the Spirit at the moment of faith in Christ.

While the Greek grammar of Ephesians 1:13 allows for the translation, "*after you believed,*" it also may be translated, "*when you believed.*" We must go to the context and to other Scriptures to determine which is correct. In the context here, Paul is enumerating all of the blessings that we received *in Christ*.

And, as we've seen, other Scriptures (Gal. 3:2-5; Rom. 8:9; and the Book of Acts, properly interpreted) show that we receive the Spirit at the moment of salvation. But there are more.

- In 2 Corinthians 1:22, Paul writes, "²² Who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."
- He repeats in 2 Corinthians 5:5, "⁵ Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee." He does not say that this only applied to those in Corinth who were spiritually mature or who had sought this blessing, but he writes it to the entire church.
- To the same church Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:13, "¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."
- In Ephesians 4:30, he commands, "³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." Again, he does not imply that only some had been sealed. It was the blessing of all in the church of Ephesus who had believed in Christ.

Special Notes:

- Also, it is significant that believers are never commanded to be baptized with the Spirit or to be sealed with the Spirit.
- If these were experiences that we need, surely there would be commands to this effect.
- We are commanded to be *filled* with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), which is a repeated and growing experience.
- So while every true believer in Christ has the Holy Spirit indwelling him from the moment of salvation, not every believer experiences the fullness of the Holy Spirit in daily life.
- We should ask God for that and remove every hindrance in our lives so that we increasingly are characterized by being full of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 11:24).

HOW DO WE KNOW IF WE HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Answer: There are many evidences that reveal the Spirit's presence in our lives.

Our Pentecostal brethren argue that speaking in tongues is the normative sign or evidence of having the Holy Spirit. But, even if you allow that the gift of tongues is valid for today, Paul is clear (1 Cor. 12:30), **"All do not speak with tongues, do they?"** In the context, he is arguing that we all have differing gifts. What are some evidences of the Holy Spirit in our lives? We could list many more, but here are five:

5 Evidences of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives:

- (1) We **heard** the gospel of salvation and **recognized** it to be the **truth** - In Ephesians 1:13, Paul recounts what had happened to these Gentile believers. First, they heard the good news about salvation and the recognized it to be the truth. For that to happen, the Holy Spirit had to open their blind eyes.
- In Ephesians 4:18, Paul writes that unbelievers are **"darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart."**
 - In 1 Corinthians 2:14, he states, **"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."**
 - So, for anyone to understand the truth of the gospel, the Holy Spirit must open his blind eyes (see John 8:43; 9:39).
- (2) We **believed** the gospel and were **saved** - While no one is able to believe of his own... not really (because the will is enslaved to sin and not free). We don't find God/Christ Jesus. He find, seeks and saves us. **At the same time no one can be saved apart from believing in Jesus Christ.**

Question: So the question how does a person come to believe in Christ?

Answer: the Holy Spirit must open spiritually blind eyes to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ so that the person can believe in Him (2 Corinthians 4:4-6).

So, if you have believed the gospel and God has saved you by His grace through faith in Christ, it is an evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life.

- (3) The Holy Spirit replaced our **despair** with **hope** in God's **promises** - In Ephesians 2:12, Paul describes unbelievers as **"strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."** But when God saves us, His Holy Spirit makes us heirs of God's promises and gives us hope (Rom. 15:13). He is **"the Holy Spirit of promise"** (Eph. 1:13).

- (4) **We began to enjoy the riches of our inheritance in Christ** - Although we will not experience the fullness of the riches of God's grace even throughout eternity, the instant that we trust in Christ we begin to discover and enjoy all that God has prepared for those who love Him. Paul says that God reveals these things to us through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9-10).
- (5) **The Holy Spirit began to produce His fruit in us** - Paul writes (Gal. 5:22-23), "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*" Again, fruit takes time to grow, but if the Spirit of God dwells in us, He begins the process of character transformation. Over time, you will see these qualities developing in your life. He makes you progressively holy (2 Cor. 3:18).

These are just some of the evidences that God's Spirit is at work in your life. But, Paul's main emphasis in our text is the security that we now enjoy because of the seal and pledge of the Spirit.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME TO HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Answer: I have the security of knowing that I belong to Christ forever.

I want each of you that knows Christ to personalize this. **He wants you to feel the security of His unchanging love.** Paul uses two metaphors to drive home this point:

2 Descriptions of the Security of God's Unchanging Love:

- (1) **You can feel secure in Christ because the Holy Spirit is the seal of God's promises to you** - The seal in biblical times was usually made of hot wax, impressed with a signet ring or other official insignia. It represented at least three things:

3 Things the "Seal" Represented:

1. **Security** - The seal made something secure. The Roman guards sealed the tomb of Jesus so that no one could steal His body (Matt. 27:66). They probably put a rope across the stone that blocked the entrance and secured both ends with wax, stamped with the official Roman seal. Also, a letter or legal document was sealed with wax and stamped with a special seal so that the recipient could be sure that it had not been tampered with. When you trusted in Christ, God sealed you with His Holy Spirit, making your salvation secure. No one can break God's seal.
2. **Identification of ownership** - The seal marked out property or documents as belonging to the one who put his seal upon it. Much like a brand on cattle, the seal showed who officially owned something (Jer. 32:10). Even so, God's Spirit is the seal on the believer, showing that you are no longer your own. He bought you with the blood of Christ and you now belong to Him. No one can take you from Him.
3. **Authentication** - A seal makes something official or authentic. If it has the official seal on it, you know that it's genuine. If you've ever had to get an official transcript

from a school or an official copy of your birth certificate, it had to have the official seal on it to be valid. Or, a notary public will authenticate your signature on an important document by stamping it with his seal. Even so, God's Holy Spirit assures us that we are His genuine children. False believers do not have the Holy Spirit.

In **Romans 8:16**, Paul says, *"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God."* I believe that He does that mostly by an inner assurance that God's promises in His Word are true and applicable to our lives. In other words, when you read the Scripture and find yourself exclaiming, *"Praise God, this promise is for me!"* it is the Holy Spirit giving you authentication that you are God's child. You belong to Him. So, the Holy Spirit is God's seal, testifying to us that we are His for time and eternity. But, also ...

- (2) You can feel secure in Christ because the Holy Spirit is the pledge of your inheritance in Christ** - The word *pledge* might better be translated as *down payment or earnest money*. A pledge is something valuable that you give as temporary collateral until you complete the agreement. But a down payment or earnest money is the first installment, with more of the same to follow. If you are selling a house, the other party gives you earnest money to show that he is serious and he plans to complete the deal. In modern Greek, the word used here for *pledge* means *an engagement ring*. It is a token of a promise that says, *"Take this for now, but there is more to follow."*

God gives us the Holy Spirit as the down payment or earnest of the full blessing of our future redemption. In one sense, we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ (1:7). But, in another sense, our redemption is not complete until we get to heaven. Right now we can begin to enjoy the inheritance that is ours in Christ. But it's just a foretaste of future glory. We don't get the complete inheritance until we go to heaven.

Scholars are divided over whether "the redemption of the possession" ("God's own" has been added by translators) refers to our receiving the fullness of the redemption that we now partially possess; or, does it refer to God's redeeming His people as His possession? While both ideas are true biblically, most understand it to mean that God has put down the earnest of His Holy Spirit to show that He will take full possession of what is rightfully His (1 Pet. 2:9). The Holy Spirit's indwelling us shows us that God will complete the deal. God uses these two metaphors, the seal and the pledge, so that if you have believed in Christ as your Savior, you will feel secure in His promise of eternal life.

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO HAVING THE SECURITY OF GOD'S SEAL AND PLEDGE?

Answer: We should *praise, glorify and be assured Him.*

Paul especially wants his Gentile readers to know that they now enjoy equal standing in Christ before God with Jewish believers. F. F. Bruce puts it (*The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* [Eerdmans], p. 267), “That such language should now be applied to Gentile believers is a token of the security of their new standing within the community of God’s own people, fully sharing present blessing and future hope with their fellow-believers of Jewish stock.” He goes on to point out that Paul is here echoing the words of Isaiah 43:20-21, where God says, “My chosen people, the people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise.”

For 2,000 years, the Gentiles were for the most part excluded from God’s promises to Israel. But now, as Paul goes on to argue (chapters 2 & 3), “the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (3:8). This should cause us to praise His glory (1:14).

CONCLUSION

Most believers, at one time or another, have doubted their salvation. There can be several causes of doubt, some valid and some not. If you doubt your salvation, there are some steps you can take to find reassurance, dispel the doubts, and rest in the promises of God.

Some Helps to Find Assurance in Him:

- (1) **Be assured it is good to know that whether or not you have doubts is not what determines your salvation** - Some genuine believers struggle with doubt, while some unbelievers who presume to be saved never have a doubting moment (and they will have a rude awakening someday—see Matthew 7:21–23). So it is not automatic that the presence of doubt indicates a lack of salvation, or that the absence of doubt attests to salvation.
- (2) **Be reminded that sometimes doubting is a good thing** - Doubt can, like pain, alert us to a problem that needs addressed. Also, if our doubts drive us further into God’s Word searching for answer and deeper into prayer and communion with God seeking help we will find it.
- (3) **Be sure that you are born again** - We are to test ourselves to be sure that we are “in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5). If you have trusted Christ as your Savior, then you have eternal life, and God wants you to be confident of your salvation (Romans 8:38–39; 1 John 5:13).

If you have trusted in Christ as Savior, God gave you His Holy Spirit as the seal and pledge of your inheritance so that you will praise and glorify Him. In other words, you will not praise and glorify God properly unless you feel secure in His eternal love that saved you from your sin and sealed you for His own possession. Since the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, you need to feel secure in the salvation that He has given you so that you fulfill that purpose. So, unwrap the present and revel in God’s gift of the Holy Spirit, who secures your salvation!