

## EXPOSITION OF EPHESIANS

### Message #5

### Ephesians 1:13-14

There are many people who actually think that if you put too much stress on the fact that it is the Sovereign God who elects and saves it will somehow diminish the work of evangelism. But when you look at Ephesians 1 it is very clear that the Apostle Paul, who was the one who evangelized the world with the Gospel of God's grace, did not agree with that. When he opens Ephesians, he drives home the fact that it was God who sovereignly saved them by His will. In fact, without some perspective of this theological reality our evangelism will be depressing. If the salvation of someone's soul is left up to us or rests upon us, not only are we in trouble, but so is the lost person. God is the one who saves, and as we present the Gospel we have the honor of being a co-worker with the Lord.

**As we have been saying, Ephesians 1:3-14 is one long sentence which is designed to get us to praise God for the riches of His grace.** It is probably the most powerful sentence that has ever been written because in this one sentence we have a series of clauses that truly exalt God. **In this one sentence we are shown the work of God the Father, the work of God the Son and the work of God the Holy Spirit.**

The work of God the Father is seen in His salvific work of election (1:3-6). The work of God the Son is seen in His salvific work of redemption (1:7-13), and now we come to the work of God the Spirit in the application and appropriation of both election and redemption (1:13-14).

The plan of God to sovereignly save people was made possible by the work of Jesus Christ. That phrase "in Christ" or its equivalent shows up nine times in just this one sentence (1:3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13). **Everything in God's grace is contingent upon us being "in Christ" and it is the Holy Spirit that puts us "in Christ" and gives us our "in Christ" positional status.**

When Paul opened up this book of Ephesians, he opened it up by presenting deep doctrine and deep theology. What we see in these verses is this:

**GOD IS TO BE PRAISED BECAUSE THE WORK OF GOD THE SPIRIT APPLIES AND APPROPRIATES THE ELECTION OF GOD AND THE REDEMPTION OF GOD'S SON TO EVERY SINGLE BELIEVER.**

**It is interesting to observe that each Trinitarian section emphasizes the fact that we should praise God.** In data pertaining to God the Father, we should praise God for His grace (1:6). In data pertaining to God the Son, we should praise Christ for His glory (1:12). In data pertaining to the Holy Spirit, we should praise God for His glory (1:14).

God wants His people praising Him for the amazing grace package He has given them in electing them to salvation. He wants His people praising and glorifying Jesus Christ for His tremendous work in working out all details of redemption. He wants His people praising Him for the work of the Holy Spirit who practically carries out the election and redemption.

## **HOLY SPIRIT WORK #1** – Believers are sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit. **1:13**

The sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit is only found in the N.T. and it is only found in three passages:

- 1) II Cor. 1:22 – “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.”
- 2) Eph. **1:13** – “you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”
- 3) Eph. 4:30 – “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

This sealing work is a very peculiar work of the Holy Spirit in this New Testament dispensation of grace.

According to Dr. C.I. Scofield, there are at least three significant symbolisms expressed by the picture of a seal:

- 1) A seal signifies a finished transaction. Jer. 32:9-10
- 2) A seal signifies ownership. Jer. 32:11-12
- 3) A seal signifies forever security. Esther 8:8; Dan. 6:17

Now in **verse 13** there are three important parts to the process of salvation in which the Holy Spirit is actively involved:

**Part #1** – The Holy Spirit is involved in the process of hearing the Gospel.

It is important to observe that the thing God uses to save people is a preaching of the “message of the truth” so people can listen to it. In other words, the Holy Spirit works as the truth of God is preached.

There is only one true message of grace and all the rest of religious messages are lies. In fact, the word “truth” (αληθειας) is that which means it is not a lie. The message of truth is that faith in Jesus Christ is the only thing that can and will save a person. You cannot be saved by works or by merit. The true grace message proclaims that it is faith alone in Christ alone that saves.

It is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ that you are saved. **Any other message other than that is a lie.** If you are going to have a relationship with God, you must believe the truth. There is only one true good news Gospel that will save you, and any message other than that is a false lie.

Now this immediately should drive us to not only accurately know truth, but accurately communicate truth. As we do, God’s Spirit can do His work.

All a person has to do to be saved is hear the message one time. H.A. Ironside said he knew of a Chinese woman who had lived all her life in paganism, and a missionary came and presented the doctrine of the grace of God and she said I have never heard anything like that before, but I do believe it. She asked if the missionary would be there the next day and he said no I am leaving. Then she said well do you think just hearing this once and believing it is enough to save my soul? That missionary said yes, once is enough (*In The Heavens*, p. 75).

**Part #2** – The Holy Spirit is involved in the process of believing the Gospel.

I love what one old commentator said, the Gospel of God's grace is not good advice to be obeyed, it is good news to be believed (*Ibid.*, p. 76). Jesus taught that when He left the Holy Spirit would have a special ministry on earth, and one of the special ministries He would have would be that of conviction of sin (John 16:7-11). Jesus taught that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin and that would lead to sinners believing on Him. When the truth of God is proclaimed, God's Spirit tracks down those who have been chosen before the foundation of the world and He brings them under conviction and He draws them to faith in Jesus Christ. They believe and are saved.

**Part #3** – The Holy Spirit is involved in the process of sealing the believer.

Notice the Holy Spirit is called the "Holy Spirit of Promise." Well who promised there would be the unique ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Grace Age? Who made that promise? Jesus Christ did – John 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-14. We didn't get the Holy Spirit by chance or coincidence, we got it as a promise from Jesus Christ. He promised the Spirit would take up permanent residency in every believer and the moment we believed we were sealed by that Holy Spirit.

The "believing" and "sealing" grammatically occurs at the same moment contemporaneously. The King James Bible does not quite do justice to the Greek grammar ("in whom also after you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise"), but the New American Standard translates it accurately ("having also believed, you were sealed").

When a person hears the Gospel and believes, he is immediately sealed with the Holy Spirit. In fact, it is Jesus Christ, Himself, who authorizes the Holy Spirit to seal the believer (John 6:27). The very moment a person hears the Gospel and believes on Jesus Christ, that person is forever sealed with the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). This means the transaction is final. This is not something we feel or even sense. We are not aware this is even happening, but this is a theological reality.

The participles "hearing" and "believing" are active; however, the participle "sealing" is passive. What this means is that as a person actively listens to the Gospel and believes in Jesus Christ, God causes the Holy Spirit to seal them and they had nothing whatsoever to do with this action. The only action in which they played some part was in hearing truth and believing truth and the fact is it was the Holy Spirit that convicted them to even do that.

**Now this sealing of the Holy Spirit is that which means the believer is a genuine identifiable member of the family of God and is the property owned by God.** This sealing guarantees that the believer is secure. The sealing ministry marks off God's people as His own possession.

**HOLY SPIRIT WORK #2** – Believers are given the Holy Spirit as a pledge. **1:14**

This word "pledge" is exactly the same word used by Paul in II Corinthians 1:22. The Greek word "pledge" (ἀρραβών) is a word that refers to a partial payment or first installment which guarantees the future security of something (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 60). A pledge is a down payment that guarantees the final purchase of something.

It is customary when purchasing a home to put down some earnest money or pledge money, which guarantees that this is the home the person will own in the future. That is precisely what the Holy Spirit is to the believer. He is the divine down payment guarantee that the believer will own an eternal inheritance. The Holy Spirit is our partial down payment guarantee of our full eternal inheritance.

**Now we may notice that the pledge is with a view toward our redemption.** There are two phases to our redemption in this context. First, in **verse 7** there is the past redemption that gives us the forgiveness of sins spiritually, and second, in **verse 14** there is the future redemption in which Christ comes to take us physically. We may understand it this way. **Verse 7 is redemption emphasizing the release from sin's penalty and verse 14 is redemption emphasizing release from sin's presence.** **Verse 7 concerns justification and verse 14 concerns glorification.** The Holy Spirit guarantees that we have this redemption.

Now Dr. S. Lewis Johnson presents a sobering thought about this that is worthy of careful thought. Many of our children said that when they were younger they believed in Jesus Christ and yet today there is not much evidence that they truly did. They have turned away from the faith, they have turned away from the church, they are not interested in actually knowing God's Word or listening to the admonitions of their parents. In fact, some of them go out and live lives that are totally contrary to everything in Scripture. Dr. Johnson said he felt it was a mistake for parents to assume that a decision the child says he made years ago was a real decision. Here is why. When a person believes on Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is given as a pledge of our eternal inheritance. He said that when a parent has a wayward child, instead of saying "you are a Christian" he should ask "are you a Christian." Dr. Johnson said if a child shows no evidence at all that God's presence really is in their life, it is possible that they did believe on Christ, but the Bible gives no assurance at all that one should think he truly belongs to the Lord (*Ephesians* 1:13-14, p. 7).

We should praise God for this salvation that we have.

Now let us consider the riches of grace that have been mentioned in this one sentence:

Election

Predestination

Adoption

Redemption

Forgiveness

Wisdom

Inheritance

Sealing

What an amazing grace package is ours.

To the praise and the glory of God, we, who know the Lord, have been chosen by God the Father (1:3-6); we have been redeemed by God the Son (1:7-12); and we have been sealed by God the Spirit (**1:13-14**).