

REVISITING THE BELIEVER'S POSITIONAL RICHES IN CHRIST

Part XXX: Applying The Truth That Believers Are Blessed With The Earnest Or First-Fruits Of The Spirit

I. Introduction

- A. A believer can find himself so impacted by interacting with those of other faiths or by agnostics and critics of the Christian faith that he may wonder if his Christian faith is even **true** or if it is an *errant* belief system!
- B. God was aware of this need, and to address it, He has provided every believer with a positional blessing the instant he trusts in Christ, the truth that the Holy Spirit is the believer's Earnest or First-Fruits of a genuine, blessed future. (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. III, "Soteriology," p. 263-264).
- C. We view this truth to apply if for gaining **assurance** of the *validity* of our Biblical Christian faith (as follows):

II. Applying The Truth That Believers Are Blessed With The Earnest Or First-Fruits Of The Spirit.

- A. The instant one trusts in Christ as Savior, he is sealed by the Holy Spirit, resulting in unconditional salvation security until the day of redemption when the believer is taken to heaven at the rapture of the Church:
 1. 2 Corinthians 1:22 and Ephesians 1:13-14 reveal that the Christian is sealed with the Holy Spirit the instant he trusts in Christ as **logically based** on his act of faith in Christ:
 - a. The phrase, "after that ye believed" in Ephesians 1:13 KJV translates the aorist participle, *pisteusantes* that may mean "having believed," *U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*, p. 665; *The Analyt. Grk. Lex.* (Zon.), 1972, p. 326.
 - b. Since Scripture nowhere else indicates a **post-justification** function is needed for one to be sealed by the Spirit, the participle means one is **instantly** sealed as a *logical consequence* of putting his faith in Christ.
 2. This seal lasts until the "day of redemption," so its purpose is to preserve the believer's salvation until he reaches heaven beyond all possibility of his ever losing his salvation status, Ephesians 1:14.
- B. This sealing **ALSO** acts as God's "Earnest" or promise that the believer's salvation is **true, real and valid**:
 1. Both 2 Corinthians 1:22 and Ephesians 1:13-14 tie the sealing of the Spirit to His function as an Earnest.
 2. Since the purpose of the Holy Spirit's sealing is to preserve the believer's salvation until the rapture when he is taken to heaven beyond all possibility of his losing his salvation status (Eph. 1:14; 4:30), that Holy Spirit also acts as God's "Earnest" or pledge to the believer that what he experiences in his current earthly life with the Holy Spirit is a part of what he will experience in eternity to come, Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:22.
 3. As our Earnest, the Holy Spirit can also be said to be the First-Fruits of what we will later possess, a term used in Romans 8:23 in the context of the believer's future hope of obtaining the resurrection body.
 4. Thus, the evidences of the Holy Spirit in the believer's earthly life act to assure him that his Christian faith is true, real and valid, and that his hope of eternal life and acquiring heaven is also true, real and valid:
 - a. When the believer fellowships with God, the Holy Spirit exerts love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in his demeanor, Galatians 5:16, 22-23; Romans 5:5 ESV. This experience assures a believer that the Holy Spirit and the believer's salvation are true realities.
 - b. The believer who fellowships with God experiences the Holy Spirit's supernatural power for special ministry at work in his service for the Lord, 1 Corinthians 12:11; 2 Timothy 1:6-7.
 - c. The believer who fellowships with God sees the Holy Spirit's supernatural power for righteous living even amid great trials in this life that he would otherwise humanly not be able to handle, 2 Cor. 1:8-10.
 - d. Even if a true believer does not fellowship with God, he sees the Holy Spirit cause him great unrest and conviction of sin until he either repents or he hardens his heart against God, Psalm 32:3-5; Hebrews 6:4-6.
 5. However, even if a believer hardens his heart to where God takes him to heaven in premature physical death (1 John 5:16), his premature death manifests the reality of his salvation, 1 Cor. 5:3-5; 3:13-15.

Lesson: *When one initially trusts in Christ for salvation, he is unconditionally sealed with the Holy Spirit until he reaches heaven, and the Spirit's evidence of His presence in the believer's earthly life reveals that his salvation status and the Christian faith are real versus any doubts to the contrary!*

Application: *(1) If we have never seen evidence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we are NOT saved (Romans 8:9b), and we must trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) If we have seen the Spirit's work in the PAST but NOT NOW, we are out of fellowship with the Lord and must confess our sins to God to be restored to fellowship with Him, 1 John 1:5-10. (3) If we believers are currently suffering internal pain, we need to examine our lives in the light of Scripture to see if God is convicting us of sin, and IF so, to confess it for restoration of fellowship with Him. (4) If we see evidence of the Spirit's blessing in our lives, may we rejoice and keep heeding the Lord!*