

EPHESIANS: LIVING IN ALIGNMENT WITH OUR HIGH CALLING

Part I: Our High Calling In Christ, Ephesians 1:1-3:21

C. God's Gracious Salvation Security To Preserve Us Forever (Ephesians 1:13b-14)

I. Introduction

- A. After describing the process by which God qualifies us believers for His Messianic Kingdom in Ephesians 1:7-13a, Paul explained God's gracious salvation security that preserves us for eternity in Ephesians 1:13b-14 so that we can be assured of participating in His Millennial Kingdom and in heaven with Him.
- B. We then view this passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. God's Gracious Salvation Security To Preserve Us Forever, Ephesians 1:13b-14.

- A. Having clarified in Ephesians 1:7-13a how God has marvelously qualified us believers in Christ to participate in Christ's future Millennial Kingdom of Revelation 20:1-6, Paul addressed God's gracious work to **preserve** us believers in our salvation status so we will assuredly be able to enter that Millennial Kingdom.
- B. The need for such salvation security is seen in viewing the theological problems of sin we still face:
 - 1. We believers still possess sin natures. (1 John 1:8; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 1 John 1:8).
 - 2. Thus, all believers have committed acts of sin since trusting in Christ, 1 John 1:10; *Ibid.*, ftn. to 1 Jn. 1:10.
 - 3. If we then confess our acts of sin performed as believers, God forgives us our sins and cleanses us from all the unrighteousness we in our level of immaturity may not even realize at the time are wrongs, 1 John 1:9.
 - 4. However, one may wonder if the rapture occurs just after he has committed an act of sin but before he has had a chance to confess it to the Lord if will cause him to miss out on the rapture and so end up in hell!
- C. Thus, to provide **unconditional** salvation security, God has provided the ministry of the sealing of the believer with the Person of God the Holy Spirit at justification described in Ephesians 1:13b-14 (as follows):
 - 1. The teaching of this passages uses an illustration of a business practice Paul's Ephesian readers knew well:
 - a. Timber workers would transport logs they had cut from the forests around Ephesus, tugging them as floats in the water to the harbor of Ephesus to be sold to traveling buyers there. (Wm. Edward Biederwolf, Help to the Study of the Holy Spirit, 1904, p. 40 cited in Donald Ray Shell, "The Doctrine of the Seal of the Spirit and Its Implications," Master's Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1976, p. 9-10)
 - b. When the timber workers sold the log floats, the buyers would seal these floats with their personal seals, demonstrating their ownership of the floats they had purchased, *Ibid.*
 - c. These buyers would then leave their sealed log floats in the harbor and return to their home ports to acquire shipping so they could return on the day of redemption to tow their floats back to home ports, *Ibid.*
 - 2. Accordingly, Paul taught that when his readers had believed the Gospel of Christ, they were sealed with God's seal of ownership, the Person of God the Holy Spirit Himself, declaring His divine ownership of these believers much as the buyers of the log floats in the Ephesian harbor would affix their personal seals of ownership to the log floats they had purchased, Ephesians 1:13.
 - 3. Note: though the KJV claims this sealing occurred "after" Paul's readers had believed, which translation can be understood to be a time period later than one's being justified by faith (as in Charismatic theology), the word "after" does not occur in the Greek text, but the KJV translates the aorist participle *pisteusantes*, that **may** reflect a temporal relationship ("after that you believed") but more likely a logical one ("having believed"), *Ibid.*, Shell, p. 13-15. Since in Paul's allusion to the business transaction in Ephesus presents the log floats as having nothing to do with their sealing, only the buyers doing that, we should view the participle as bearing a logical relationship, meaning one is sealed by God the instant he trusts in Christ!
 - 4. The sealing is unto the day of redemption, what Ephesians 4:30 with Romans 8:23 indicate is the rapture of the Church when Christ returns to take the believer home to heaven! (Ephesians 1:14)
 - 5. Furthermore, John 14:16 indicates that seal lasts "forever," that it will never cease throughout eternity!
 - 6. The seal is also the earnest of our inheritance, an evidential foretaste of the blessings of eternity, v. 14a.

Lesson: *Having determined that we believers in Christ will participate in His future Millennial Kingdom, God has graciously unconditionally sealed us with the God the Holy Spirit, marking us as His possession until the rapture and giving us a foretaste of eternal blessings, that God might take us to heaven and prepare us for His Kingdom!*

Application: *May we realize that God has unconditionally secured us in our salvation status by the sealing of the Holy Spirit the instant we trust in Christ that we might surely stay saved for the Millennial Kingdom and forever.*