

**HIGHER GROUND:
SIGNED, SEALED, AND DELIVERED
Ephesians 1:13-14**

Stevie Wonder released the hit song *Signed, Sealed, and Delivered* in 1970. Though appearing to be a song celebrating permanence, it is an ode to impermanence.

Paul concluded this powerful prayer with thanksgiving for the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. Higher ground living is life with a sense of security and a powerful hope.

I. EVERY BELIEVER RECEIVES THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A. Paul continued this great prayer of thanksgiving with the acknowledgement that those who have come in faith to Jesus Christ receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ¹³ *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.* Ephesians 1:13 (NASB95) Consistent with his assertion in Romans 10, Paul described the path to salvation.

1. Salvation does not come apart from the hearing of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Salvation does not come apart from the exercise of the gift of faith. ⁸ *But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and*

with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; ¹³ for "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!"

Romans 10:8–15 (NASB95)

- B. In the moment of one's salvation, they are sealed with the Holy Spirit of God. The third person of the trinity comes to inhabit the person of the believer. We do not receive a portion of the Holy Spirit. We receive all of the Holy Spirit. The question is not how much of the Holy Spirit we have received. The question is how much of ourselves have we yielded to the power and control of the Holy Spirit?

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS INDISPUTABLE EVIDENCE OF OUR SALVATION.

- A. Paul dealt with the questions of security and authenticity by using the idea of the seal. ¹³ *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.* Ephesians 1:13 (NASB95)
- In ancient times a wax seal was used as a means of securing important documents. A lump of soft wax was placed over the flap on the document and the sender's insignia or mark was

pressed into the wax. The seal accomplished at least two purposes.

1. The seal distinguished an authentic document from a spurious one. This kept a counterfeit document from being regarded as authentic.
 2. The seal kept the document or item intact to its intended destination. A seal that was intact indicated that the item had not been disturbed.
- B. Paul, no doubt, seized both of these ideas as being important to believers. They needed a sense of security and a sense of authenticity in Christ. The Holy Spirit is the believer's seal. In ancient times, some pagan religions used tattoos of the cult's emblem to seal its devotees. The Jews thought of circumcision as a seal or sign of the covenant. For Christians, the Holy Spirit is our seal.
1. The Holy Spirit is the believer's undeniable mark of God's work in them.
 - a. Guides us into truth.
 - b. Convicts us concerning sin and righteousness.
 - c. Comforts us.
 - d. Empowers us.
 - e. Equips/gifts us.
 2. The Holy Spirit is God's seal on us reminding us that we are kept by him. Nothing in this world or beneath this world has the power or authority to tamper with the seal of God's Holy Spirit.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT AFFORDS US A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN.

- A. Paul concluded the passage by declaring that the Holy Spirit is our down payment on heaven. ¹³ *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.* Ephesians 1:13–14 (NASB95) The pledge was a partial payment that guaranteed the full payment would be made.
- B. God's Holy Spirit affords us a sampling of what heaven is going to be like.
1. Worship
 2. Fellowship
 3. Work/Ministry
- C. Our minds cannot begin to comprehend the splendor/awesomeness of heaven. ¹² *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.* 1 Corinthians 13:12 (NASB95)