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“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16).

God's Pledge

Central Truth: The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit assures the believer of full salvation.

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Text: II Corinthians 1:21, 22; 5:4-8; Ephesians 1:13, 14; Romans 8:14-17.

Topic: Holy Spirit: Sealing of; Security: Of Believers.

Your full salvation in Jesus Christ is as sure as if you had already experienced it. What is to be is as certain as what has been. God guarantees it!

The salvation God has provided in Jesus Christ includes the whole of the human frame: body, soul, and spirit. The spirit is saved the moment one trusts Jesus Christ. The soul (life) is saved day by day as one lives for Christ. The body will be saved in the resurrection at the return of Christ. The last is as certain as the first.

God wants each believer in Jesus to have assurance. He has given a clear description of salvation in the Bible. He has made repeated promises to keep those who trust Him. He has even taken an oath by which assurance might be made doubly sure. And He has given the “*earnest*” and the “*anointing*” and the “*seal*” to each one whom He has “*established*” in Christ. An understanding of those four concepts will insure assurance. They are each related to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the human spirit of the believer.

God has made a pledge which should give you full assurance. Look what He has done for you in Jesus Christ.

I. YOU ARE ESTABLISHED IN CHRIST

“Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Corinthians 1:21, 22).

A. You are established by the Father. *“Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ...is God”* (II Corinthians 1:21). *“The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil”* (II Thessalonians 3:3). It is God only *“that is of power to stablish you”* (Romans 16:25).

Conversion is not a mere change of ways or reformation of lifestyle. It is something God does within the spirit of the believer. It is such a radical change that *“if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”* (II Corinthians 5:17). Salvation is the work of God in the heart of man.

B. You are established in Jesus Christ. That means you are “in Christ” (a term Paul uses 164 times to describe what it means to be saved). You are made one with Christ. You are joined to Christ. *“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones”* (Ephesians 5:30). That relationship is such that *“your bodies are the members of Christ”* (I Corinthians 6:15). Just like Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30), so you become one with Him (John 17:21-23). Salvation is not a blessing God gives apart from Jesus Christ; it is *“Christ in you”* (Colossians 1:27). You are saved because of your union with Jesus Christ in which you become a member of His body and His Holy Spirit lives in you.

C. You are established by the Holy Spirit. You have been *“born of the Spirit”* (John 3:5, 6), are indwelt by the Spirit (John 4:14; Romans 8:9), and thus are united with God in Jesus Christ. It is the Holy Spirit in you which makes you saved and established as a member (limb) of Christ (I Corinthians 6:15).

The very term establish means to be settled, united, joined as a part of Christ. God will never condemn himself — a member of the body of Christ. You are secure!

II. YOU ARE ANOINTED BY GOD

“Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Corinthians 1:21, 22).

“Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God” (II Corinthians 1:21).

Anointing was commonly practiced in ancient times. The parts of the skin exposed to the weather were anointed with animal fat or vegetable oil,

and later with perfumed ointments.

Anointing was practiced for health (Revelation 3:18), hospitality (Luke 7:46), social occasions (Ruth 3:3), and as a sign of honor (John 12:3). Sacred anointings were common when a person was set apart to serve God as a prophet (I Kings 19:16; Isaiah 61:1), priest (Exodus 29:7), or king (I Samuel 9:16; 10:1).

God promised the Savior would be “The Anointed One.” He is called “*Messiah*” (from the Hebrew word *mashah*, to anoint) and “*Christ*” (from the Greek word *chrīo*, to anoint).

Every Christian has been anointed of God the Father as II Corinthians 1:21 states. The anointing of Christians is with the Holy Spirit, just as “*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power*” (Acts 10:38).

The anointing with the Holy Spirit is the personal presence of God living in the believer by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 17; I John 2:20, 27; 3:24). One is anointed when he receives the Holy Spirit; therefore, anointing for a Christian comes at his conversion.

The purpose of spiritual anointing is to qualify one for spiritual service. Jesus followed His anointing with the Holy Spirit as He “*went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil*” (Acts 10:38). So the anointing of each Christian is to qualify him to “*go about doing good*” by serving people in Jesus' name. Spiritual wisdom and spiritual service are possible only to one who is anointed with the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:9-16).

A review of Bible teachings concerning anointing, as it relates to Christians, reveals these truths. (1) Every Christian has been anointed with the Holy Spirit, since the anointing is received by the coming of the Holy Spirit at conversion. (2) Every reference to spiritual anointing of Christians is past tense; it has already occurred, as in II Corinthians 1:21. (3) There is no promise of future anointings for Christians. The one anointing received at salvation is all there is. God promises filling with the Spirit — but not anointing with the Spirit — as an experience for Christians today. (4) There is no command for a Christian to seek an anointing with the Spirit. Not one! The Christian is commanded to be filled with the Spirit, because it is repeated and continual, but not to be anointed with the Spirit because it is once for all. (5) There is no example of any “special anointing” for a specific act of service. No one is given a special anointing to preach a sermon, witness to a sinner, heal the sick, or any other ministry. The one anointing received at conversion abides throughout life; therefore, special anointings are not needed. (6) The meaning of anointing is to transfer the Spirit of God

in whose name the anointing is done (I Samuel 16:13). Emphasis is on the Spirit's presence, not upon special feats of power in service.

You were anointed when you were saved. The Holy Spirit came to indwell you and make available to you all the resources of God. That anointing abides in you (I John 2:27), and you can live in His blessing. Praise the Lord!

III. YOU ARE SEALED BY THE SPIRIT

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

The God who *“stablished”* you and *“anointed”* you has *“sealed”* you (II Corinthians 1:22). Here is how it occurred: *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise”* (Ephesians 1:13). *“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption”* (Ephesians 4:30). God has *“sealed”* you by the Holy Spirit.

A. What is the seal? It is not an external mark. It is internal, for it is spiritual. God has *“sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”* (II Corinthians 1:22). Where is the seal? It is *“in our hearts.”*

Do not think of seal in the sense of a can of fruit being sealed so as to be kept pure. That is not the meaning of the word as used in the text. The seal means a mark, an emblem, a stamp that identifies a person or thing. Think of the *seal* set on the sepulchre where Jesus was buried (Matthew 27:66) or the *seal* set on the 144,000 in Revelation 7:3-8. In ranching country, the *seal* would be the *brand* by which cattle were identified as belonging to a certain rancher. The *seal* is God's mark which identifies a person as His child.

B. Who are sealed? Those who believe *“the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation”* are *“sealed with that holy Spirit of promise”* (Ephesians 1:13). They are the ones who receive the indwelling Holy Spirit. His presence within is the proof that one is saved (Romans 8:9).

C. When is one sealed? Each believer is sealed the moment he receives the Holy Spirit. That means he is sealed at the time of his conversion to Christ. The sealing (presence of the Spirit) is proof of salvation past, present, and future.

D. What does the seal signify? (1) The seal signifies authority (Daniel 6:16, 17; Matthew 27:62-66). A seal can be broken only by the one who set the seal or by a power greater than he. There is no power greater than God, so those whom He seals are eternally secure (Ephesians 4:30).

(2) The seal signifies identification (John 10:14, 27; II Timothy 2:19). It testifies that the one so marked belongs to the one who sealed him. That is how a Christian is identified as belonging to God.

(3) The seal signifies completed transaction (Jeremiah 32:10-15). Official documents are signed and sealed when a transaction is completed. God's seal of the Spirit indicates that salvation is completed in His divine purpose.

(4) The seal indicates continuing interest and commitment to pursue (Nehemiah 9:38). God seals us with His Spirit because He intends to see our salvation on to its conclusion in glory!

IV. YOU ARE GUARANTEED SALVATION

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:14-17).

The *“earnest”* of the Spirit is mentioned three times in the Bible (II Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14). Originally the term meant money deposited by the purchaser and forfeited if the purchase was not completed. The term is used today to mean money given as part payment and pledge in binding a bargain. It is an indication, promise, or assurance of more to follow. The term is used in the New Testament only of that which is assured of God to believers.

The Holy Spirit is God's “down payment” and “guarantee” to each Christian that God will save him totally and eternally. The witness is *“the Spirit itself”* which bears witness with our human spirits that we are the children of God (Romans 8:16). God is committed to complete His perfect plan of redemption. All future blessings — our resurrection, inheritance, likeness to Christ, fellowship with God, freedom from the presence of sin and its evils, and inheritance in glory — are assured to us in the token payment of the person of the Holy Spirit of God.

The down payment of the earnest is the same-in-kind as the full

payment. The Christian receives the Spirit of God now as guarantee that we will know the fullness of God then.

The indwelling Holy Spirit of God is *“the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory”* (Ephesians 1:14).

What a wonderful basis for Christian assurance. God has established us in Christ, anointed us with His Spirit, sealed us as His own, and guaranteed our full salvation by the presence of His Spirit. His purpose is that *“we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast”* (Hebrews 6:18, 19).

Questions

1. How are body, soul, and spirit involved in salvation?
2. How is the Christian established in Christ?
3. What is the anointing by God?
4. What does Acts 10:38 say about Jesus' anointing?
5. What does the Bible teach about Christian anointing today?
6. What does I John 2:27 teach you?
7. What does it mean to be “sealed” with the Holy Spirit?
8. What is your part in the sealing with the Spirit?
9. What does the “earnest” of the Spirit mean to you?
10. How does this study give you Christian assurance?