

You Believed, and God Sealed You

The Verse Behind Ephesians 1:13

Ephesians 1:13

"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."

There is a simple order in this verse.

You heard the gospel.

You believed in Christ.

God sealed you with the Holy Spirit.

But many Christians quietly reverse that order.

They believe, then spend years asking God to give them some special feeling, experience, sign, or spiritual moment to prove that they really belong to Him.

They trusted Christ, but they're still wondering whether God has accepted them.

They believed the gospel, but they're waiting to feel sealed.

Ephesians 1:13 doesn't tell us to chase the seal.

It tells us what God did when we believed.

Faith in Christ brings the seal of God's ownership and the promise of what is still to come.

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The Order Paul Gives Us

Let's look carefully at the order in Ephesians 1:13.

Paul says:

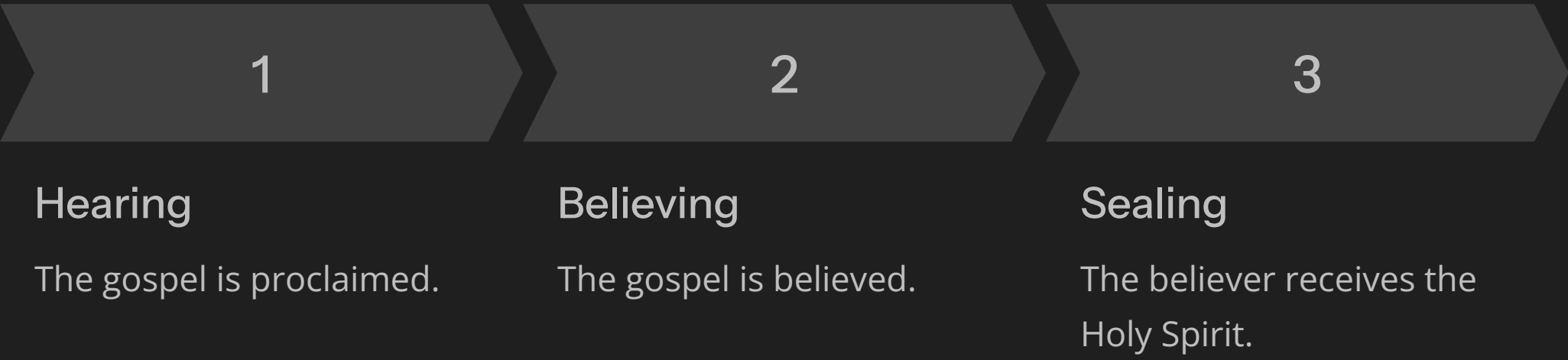
"After that ye heard the word of truth."

Then:

"After that ye believed."

Then:

"Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."



This is important because salvation isn't built upon vague spirituality.

Paul doesn't say they were saved because they felt peaceful.

He doesn't say they were sealed because they became religious.

He doesn't say they received the Spirit because they finally became good enough.

They heard the word of truth.

They believed the gospel of their salvation.

And they were sealed with the Holy Spirit.

The **foundation** is the gospel. The **response** is faith. The **result** is the seal of the Spirit.

"In Whom"

Ephesians 1:13 begins with the words:

"In whom."

Those two words matter.

Paul has repeatedly used phrases such as:

- "In Christ."
- "In him."
- "In whom."

Every spiritual blessing in Ephesians 1 is connected to our **position in Christ**.

Chosen

We are chosen in Him.

Accepted

Accepted in the Beloved.

Redeemed

Redeemed through His blood.

Forgiven

Forgiven according to the riches of His grace.

Sealed

Sealed with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit isn't given because we have earned a spiritual reward.

He is given because we have trusted the Son.

Our security isn't found in our performance.

It is found in our **union with Christ**.

That doesn't make obedience unimportant.

It puts obedience in the right place.

We don't obey to become God's possession.

We obey because we belong to Him.

Hearing the Word of Truth

Paul says:

"After that ye heard the word of truth."

Faith doesn't appear out of nowhere.

It comes through hearing God's Word.

Romans 10:17 says: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

The gospel isn't advice about how to improve ourselves.

It is news about what God has done through Jesus Christ.

Advice tells you what you need to do. The gospel tells you what Christ has done.

Christ died for our sins.

He was buried.

He rose again.

He is Lord.

Forgiveness and eternal life are offered through Him.

That is why Paul calls it **"the word of truth."**

The gospel isn't one religious opinion among many.

It is God's truth concerning His Son.

We don't create it. We don't adjust it to make it more comfortable. We hear it. We receive it. We believe it.

First Corinthians 15:1 says: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand."

The gospel is proclaimed. It is received. And the believer stands in it.

The Gospel of Your Salvation

Paul doesn't merely call it the gospel.

He calls it:

"The gospel of your salvation."

The gospel is where salvation is announced and received.

Romans 1:16 says: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Notice the connection again.

The gospel. Salvation. Believing.

The power isn't in our ability to believe perfectly.

The power is in **the gospel and the Christ revealed in it.**

Faith doesn't save because faith itself is impressive.

Faith saves because it rests upon Jesus Christ.

Imagine a person drowning.

It doesn't matter whether their hand looks strong while grabbing the rescue rope.

What matters is whether the rope can hold them.

Christ can hold us.

Our faith may sometimes feel weak.

Our emotions may rise and fall.

Our understanding may still be growing.

But salvation rests upon the **strength of Christ**, not the strength of our feelings.

"After That Ye Believed"

Paul says:

"In whom also after that ye believed."

The wording in English can sound as though a long period passed between believing and being sealed.

But Paul's point is that **believing and being sealed belong together**.

When they believed in Christ, God sealed them with the Holy Spirit.

This is consistent with Galatians 3:2: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

Paul's answer is obvious.

They didn't receive the Spirit by performing the works of the law.

They received the Spirit by hearing with faith.

Galatians 3:14 says: "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

The Spirit is received through faith.

Not through religious achievement.

Not through reaching a higher class of Christianity.

Not through proving ourselves worthy.

Through faith in Christ.

The moment a sinner truly believes the gospel, that person belongs to Christ and receives the Spirit of God.

What Does It Mean to Be Sealed?

Paul says:

"Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

In the ancient world, a seal could communicate several things.



Ownership

It could show ownership.



Authenticity

It could confirm authenticity.



Authority

It could mark authority.



Security

It could provide security.

A ruler could place a seal upon something to show that it belonged to him and carried his authority.

Paul uses that picture to describe what God has done for the believer.

The Holy Spirit is God's seal upon us.

We belong to God.

God has placed His own Spirit within us as the mark of His possession.

Second Corinthians 1:21 and 22 says: "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."

God does the sealing.

The believer doesn't seal himself.

A church denomination doesn't seal us.

A religious ceremony doesn't create God's ownership.

God seals those who are in Christ.

The Holy Spirit within the believer is God's declaration: **"This person belongs to Me."**

God's Ownership

First Corinthians 6:19 says: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?"

Then verse 20 says: **"For ye are bought with a price."**

We are sealed because we have been purchased.

What was the price? The blood of Christ.

Ephesians 1:7 has already told us: "In whom we have redemption through his blood."

Redemption means we have been bought out of bondage.

We no longer belong to sin.

We no longer belong to the present evil world.

We don't even belong to ourselves.

We belong to Jesus Christ.

That can sound restrictive until we remember what our previous masters were like.

Sin wasn't a kind master.

Fear wasn't a kind master.

Condemnation wasn't a kind master.

The opinions of people certainly weren't kind masters.

Christ bought us to set us free.

Being God's possession isn't bondage.

It is **freedom from every power that once held us.**

The Seal Shows Authenticity

A seal can also confirm that something is genuine.

Romans 8:9 says: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

The presence of the Spirit identifies those who belong to Christ.

This isn't saying that every believer will have the same personality, emotional response, gift, or outward experience.

Christians don't all look and sound alike.

Thank God for that. One of us is quite enough.

But **every true believer has the Holy Spirit**.

The Spirit produces a real relationship with God.

Romans 8:15 says: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

The Spirit bears witness that we are God's children.

- He leads us toward Christ.
- He opens Scripture to us.
- He convicts us of sin.
- He produces a desire for holiness.
- He helps us pray.
- He forms the character of Christ within us.

These things don't earn salvation.

They flow from the new life God has already given.

The seal creates evidence because God's Spirit is genuinely present.

The Holy Spirit of Promise

Paul calls Him:

"That holy Spirit of promise."

This title connects the Holy Spirit with God's Old Testament promises.

God had promised that a day would come when He would put His Spirit within His people.

Ezekiel 36:26 says: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

Then verse 27 says: "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes."

God's solution wasn't merely to give people more external rules.

The law was holy, but the human heart was sinful.

Humanity needed more than information.

We needed transformation.

God promised to put His Spirit within His people.

Joel 2:28 says: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh."

That promise was fulfilled openly at Pentecost.

Acts 2:33 says that Jesus: "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this."

The risen Christ poured out the promised Spirit.

The Holy Spirit living within believers is proof that the promised new covenant age has begun.

God isn't merely visiting His people from the outside.

He dwells within them.

The Spirit Is Given Through Christ

John the Baptist spoke about the One who would give the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:11 says: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

Jesus is the giver of the Spirit.

In John 14:16, Jesus promised: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."

Notice those final words:

"That he may abide with you for ever."

The Holy Spirit isn't a temporary visitor.

He comes to dwell with the believer.

Jesus continues in John 14:17: "For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

This is part of the blessing of the new covenant.

God lives in His people through His Spirit.

When we believed the gospel, God didn't merely forgive our past.

He came to dwell within us.

The Seal and the Earnest

The next verse explains another part of the Spirit's ministry.

Ephesians 1:14 says: "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."

The Holy Spirit is not only the seal.

He is also the **earnest of our inheritance**.

An earnest is a deposit or first instalment that guarantees the rest will follow.

We might call it a down payment.

When God gave us the Holy Spirit, He gave us the beginning of what He has promised to complete.

Eternal life now We have eternal life now, but we are still waiting for the resurrection of our bodies.	Adopted We have been adopted, but we are waiting for the full public revelation of our sonship.
The kingdom We belong to the kingdom, but we are waiting for Christ's kingdom to be revealed in fullness.	Redemption We have redemption through Christ's blood, but we are waiting for the redemption of our bodies.

The Spirit is God's guarantee that He will finish what He started.

Romans 8:23 says: "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

We are saved, sealed, and filled with hope.

But we still groan.

The presence of struggle doesn't mean God has abandoned us.

Sometimes it means we are feeling the tension between what God has begun and what He has promised to complete.

The Spirit within us points forward to the resurrection.

Sealed Until the Day of Redemption

Ephesians 4:30 says: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

The verse gives us both **security** and **responsibility**.

Assurance

We are sealed unto the day of redemption.

That gives assurance.

Responsibility

But we can grieve the Holy Spirit.

That gives responsibility.

Assurance isn't permission to live carelessly.

Grace isn't permission to sin.

The fact that God has placed His seal upon us should affect the way we live.

Paul's warning assumes that the Holy Spirit is a real Person, not merely a force or spiritual influence.

He can be grieved.

We grieve Him when our behaviour contradicts the new identity God has given us.

The surrounding verses mention lying, uncontrolled anger, stealing, corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, and unforgiveness.

Why are these things so serious?

Because they don't agree with who we now are.

We are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

We belong to God.

Our conduct should reflect our ownership.

The Difference Between Salvation and Experience

This verse also helps us distinguish between **receiving the Holy Spirit** and **experiencing His power** in our daily lives.

Every believer receives the Spirit through faith in Christ.

But believers are still commanded to:

"Be filled with the Spirit."

That command appears in Ephesians 5:18.

Receiving the Spirit

Speaks of becoming God's child.

Being filled with the Spirit

Speaks of yielding to His influence and power.

A believer can have the Spirit while still resisting His leading.

We can be sealed and yet spiritually immature.

We can belong to God and still need our minds renewed.

We can have the Spirit within us and still fail to walk in the Spirit.

This is why Galatians 5:25 says: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Life comes first. Then the walk.

We don't walk in the Spirit to earn spiritual life.

We walk in the Spirit because He has already given us life.

What About Acts?

Some people read the book of Acts and notice that the Holy Spirit was received in different visible ways.



These events show the gospel crossing major covenant and social boundaries.

Jerusalem. Samaria. The Gentiles. Disciples connected with John's ministry.

Acts records the historical spread of the gospel and shows God publicly confirming each new stage.

But the letters written to the churches give the **normal doctrinal pattern**.

Galatians 3:14 says we receive the Spirit through faith.

Romans 8:9 says anyone who doesn't have the Spirit of Christ doesn't belong to Him.

First Corinthians 12:13 says: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

Ephesians 1:13 says that when we believed, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit.

No true Christian is waiting to become God's possession.

If you are in Christ, God has placed His Spirit within you.

Faith Is Not Merely Agreement

What does it mean that they "believed"?

Biblical faith is more than agreeing that certain facts are true.

A person can believe that Jesus existed while never trusting Him.

James tells us that even devils believe certain truths about God.

Saving faith rests upon Christ.

It receives Him as the One God has provided.

John 1:12 says: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

To believe in His name is to trust who He is and what He has done.

He is the Son of God.

He died for our sins.

He rose from the dead.

He is Lord.

Faith stops trying to become acceptable through personal effort and rests in Christ.

That faith isn't a work we perform to impress God.

It is **the empty hand that receives God's gift.**

Stop Looking for Another Foundation

Many believers trust Christ, but then look somewhere else for assurance.

- They look at how emotional they felt during prayer.
- They look at how well they behaved that week.
- They look at whether they felt God's presence during worship.
- They look at whether they had doubts.
- They look at whether they struggled with temptation.

And their assurance rises and falls every few hours.

That is exhausting.

Ephesians 1:13 points us back to the foundation.

Did you hear the gospel of Christ?

Did you believe in Him?

Then God sealed you with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Your feelings may help you enjoy that truth, but they don't create it.

You might feel wonderfully spiritual on Monday and completely flat on Tuesday.

God hasn't spent the night changing His mind.

Our assurance rests upon **God's promise and Christ's finished work.**

First John 5:13 says: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life."

God wants believers to know where they stand.

The Seal Changes How We See Ourselves

Being sealed by the Spirit changes our identity.

We are no longer spiritual outsiders hoping to be noticed.

God's possession.

His children.

His temple.

Members of Christ's body.

We have His Spirit living within us.

That means we don't need to spend our lives trying to prove that we matter.

God placed His own seal upon us.

What greater confirmation could we ask for?

The world may overlook you.

People may misunderstand you.

Your own past may accuse you.

But the Holy Spirit within you declares that you belong to God.

Your value isn't determined by who rejected you.

It is determined by **the One who purchased you.**

The Seal Changes How We Treat Our Bodies

Because the Holy Spirit lives within us, our bodies matter.

First Corinthians 6:19 says our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Christianity isn't only concerned with spiritual thoughts.

- What we do with our bodies matters.
- How we speak matters.
- How we handle sexuality matters.
- How we treat other people matters.
- How we use our time matters.
- How we respond to temptation matters.

We don't say, "It's my body, so I can do whatever I like."

Paul says: "**Ye are not your own.**"

Then he says: "**Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.**"

We belong to God.

That isn't a threat hanging over us.

It is a **calling rising from redemption.**

The Seal Changes How We Face the Future

The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of promise because His presence assures us that **God's promises will be completed.**

We don't know every detail of what tomorrow holds.

Sometimes we don't even know what we're doing next Tuesday.

But we know who holds our future.

God has already given us His Spirit.

He has placed His seal upon us.

He has given us the deposit of our inheritance.

That means our future doesn't depend upon our ability to hold everything together.

God is faithful.

Philippians 1:6 says: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

The One who began the work will finish it.

The Spirit within us is proof that God hasn't forgotten His promise.

Believe What God Says About You

Ephesians 1:13 says: "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

You heard the word of truth.

You believed the gospel of your salvation.

God sealed you with His Spirit.

The seal speaks of
ownership.

You belong to God.

The seal speaks of
authenticity.

You are truly His.

The seal speaks of
security.

God has marked you for
the day of redemption.

The Spirit is the promise that your inheritance is coming.

You don't need to beg God to make you His possession if you have already believed in Christ.

You don't need to wait for a feeling to confirm what God has clearly said.

You don't need to live like a spiritual orphan hoping God might eventually accept you.

Christ purchased you.

The gospel saved you.

The Spirit sealed you.

So **believe what God says about you.**

You belong to Him.