

Sealed With The Spirit

Christians are said to be "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30). In fact this seal is said to be "the earnest of our inheritance." What is this "seal"?

Look At The Word "Seal" As It Is Used In The Bible

It is generally a "mark" imposed by God, by which God recognizes a Christian's authenticity and ownership. In comparison, companies which manufacture things are careful to put their seal on everything they make, but only on that which represents them. The seal with which Christians are sealed is basically a divine identification process, by which God recognizes who are His children. Look how the word "seal" is used in the Bible.

- Ezekiel 9:4: Mark or seal to show ownership of God's people.
- John 3:33: Those who receive, believe and obey the doctrine of God vouch for its truthfulness. They identify something as being true.
- John 6:27: God showed His approval of Christ by miracles He wrought by him. Miracles were to the doctrine of Christ what a seal is to a written instrument, like a deed or a will.
- Romans 4:11: Seal of righteousness. Circumcision became the external authentication of the righteousness Abraham had by faith.
- 2 Timothy 2:19: Seal of righteous living. God positively knows the identity of His own.
- Revelation 7:2-3; 9:4: God assured safety to His saints during plagues because His saints were sealed, marked, or positively identified.

Thus, the "seal" is a process of identification used by God. Those who are sealed by the Holy Spirit receive spiritual blessings through Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14), and stand to inherit everlasting life. Also, they are identified by the Holy Spirit, so as not to be judged among the unbelieving.

How Are The Children Of God Sealed By The Holy Spirit?

As individuals, most of us want recognizable identification. Some do bizarre things to be identified as being extraordinary or unique. It is possible to be mistakenly identified, or basically unidentified. We should not be surprised that others do not properly recognize our Christian identity. The world did not even properly identify God's own Son, Jesus Christ. The Lord Himself said, "Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (John 8:19). Christians can be thankful that God takes care of our identification process. God tells us to seek recognition through Christ, as did the apostle Paul. He said, "From henceforth let no

man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Galatians 6:17). God then comforts us by saying we are "sealed" (marked, identified) with the Holy Spirit. It is not some visible mark (tattoo, imprinted number "777," special clothing, or pious look). It is a spiritual recognition, in that "The Lord knoweth every one that nameth the name of Christ" (2 Timothy 2:19). If we are faithful in Christ, we can be assured we are sealed by the Holy Spirit, and God knows who we are.

God's children are identified by their heart's belief, their confession, their new birth (baptism), and their righteous fruits; and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 10:32-33; John 3:3-8; Galatians 5:22-24; Romans 8:16). It is not always recognized by men, but it is always seen by those who are divine. Those who are counterfeit Christians are easily detected by the Holy Spirit. It is comforting for Christians to know that "the Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Timothy 2:19).

What Being "Sealed" Does Not Mean

In today's language a "seal" can mean different things. We must be careful we are not making the seal of the Holy Spirit something it is not! In today's language a "seal" can be a means of verification; like a sealed envelope, which means the contents have not been tampered with (cp. Matthew 27:66; Revelation 5:1-5). It can also mean that something is contained, or shut off, like vegetables preserved in a canning jar. God's word does not teach these meanings apply to the idea of being sealed with the Spirit. The word "seal" could make us think Christians are tamper proof, and cannot be corrupted, because God has sealed them from the world. This is not true. Christians can be tampered with, and corrupted (Galatians 5:7). We are told to "grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). One can be corrupted, and lose his or her seal of the Spirit.

The seal with which Christians are sealed is basically a divine identification process, by which God recognizes His children. The Holy Spirit seals (marks or identifies) faithful children of God.

Adapted From Carl Lungstrum