

# Ephesians 1:12-14: Hitting the Sealing

...to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. 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, 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.

## Study Notes

### **We Who were the First to Hope in Christ**

Paul writes about himself and the first fruits of Christianity, the early believers. The Greek word for "first to hope" may possibly translated to "before hoppers". This gives the lengthy sentence here a sense of generational responsibility when taken in context of the next several verses. Paul and the first church did not keep the message of the gospel to themselves, but instead took the truth of the gospel and shared it, spread it, and built on it.

### **To the Praise of His Glory**

The response to the gospel of believers brings praise to the Glory of God. God's glory is the radiant essence of His being. The response of the first believers was consequently the praise of God's very essence. God's character was shown and people responded. God is the only one who could cause anything to praise His glory. When the believer responds to the gospel, grace is poured out (as in verse 6) and God is glorified. The praising comes from both the angels in heaven (principle shown in Luke 15:10), and the saints on earth.

### **...You Also, After Listening to The Message of Truth, the Gospel of Your Salvation**

I have often heard that the gospel must be presented to be believed, but that is only half the truth. The other half is that it must be heard to be believed. When we present the gospel it is often good to quickly assess the listener so that we can present it in a clear and understandable way. This isn't an embracing of psychology, but instead listening to the Holy Spirit for direction as to be spoken through. A devout atheist, Penn Jillette of Penn & Teller fame, posted a video on the <sup>1</sup> site explaining how believers should present the gospel if they really believe it. If you believe that non-believers will go to hell, you need to present the gospel because their souls should matter to you.

We need to present the gospel because we love the lost person. We present the gospel because it is salvation!

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JHS8adO3hM>

**You were Sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of Promise**

Being sealed is an amazingly explicit description of God's mark on our lives as believers. Charismatic theology leads some to believe that they can lose their salvation, or that the Holy Spirit comes & goes in their lives. This verse blows that concept out of the water (along with chapter 5:18). A seal was a mark denoting authority, authenticity and often authorship. With the Holy Spirit as our seal what does that mean for us in regards to our source of authority, authenticity and authorship?

On top of that the Holy Spirit is also an agent of intercession (Eph. 2:18), and indwelling part of the Trinity (I Cor. 2:12-14), and our source of power for daily living (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:18; Gal. 5:22-25).

**Who is Given as a Pledge of Our Inheritance**

The seal of the Holy Spirit is given as a pledge - it is a down payment for a full payment to be made later. This should be seen as a 'tip of the iceberg' sort of statement. The Holy Spirit is intimately important to our daily lives, and yet the fullness of God's life will not come until we have physically departed from this condition and our heavenly position and heavenly condition become one. Our inheritance, as discussed in verse 11, is Christ and our relationship with Him. A new life, a new body and a taking on of the physical form of the new creation that we are in Christ.

**With a View to the Redemption of God's Own Possession**

Part of being redeemed is that we've been redeemed unto God. Being God's possession is easy to overlook as small and maybe even belittling in some vernacular. Being possessed by God means not being rejected by God. Understanding who we are in Christ, as God's possession, means understanding that a benevolent (agape) God possesses us as a cherished possession. God would not redeem something He didn't see value in, and because He replaced our life with His Son's life He knew the infinite value we would have.

The inheritance is our collection of what He will bless us with, and our being a redeemable possession means we will also be the collection of His purchase. Astonishing! A redeemed possession being given the eternal blessing of adopted inheritance.

**To the Praise of His Glory**

Paul wraps around and continues on encouraging that the first fruit had been to the praise of God's glory, and that this pattern had not changed in later believers. When we respond to the gospel God's glory is praised!