

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

God's Engagement Ring

Ephesians 1:1-14

1 An engagement ring given by a man to a woman has been the symbol of his pledge to marry her at a later date. She wears it proudly to show her new connection with her man.

Wedding and engagement rings were thought to be originated in ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman cultures.

In the Middle Ages the Visigothic Code said this, “when the ceremony of betrothal has been performed . . . and the ring shall have been given or accepted as a pledge, though nothing may have been committed to writing, the promise shall, under no circumstances, be broken”.

In 860 AD, Pope Nicholas I, in distinguishing a difference between the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church, said that in the Western Church the man gives his betrothed an engagement ring.

So engagement rings have been an important part of history for a very long time.

Did you know that God has provided an engagement ring, of sorts, to all His children? Ephesians, chapter 1, verses 1 through 14, explains this. ²

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ¹ ₃

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have

¹ Ephesians 1: 1-3.

redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.^{2 4}

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.^{3 5}

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing

² Ephesians 1: 4-8.

³ Ephesians 1: 9-12.

our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.⁴ ⁶

I. What's a Seal?

Verse 14, underlined above, says believers (you and me) were marked with a seal. What's a seal? ⁷

What was a seal in ancient times? ⁸



It was a symbol impressed on a wax base; usually by a ring, representing authority.

⁴ Ephesians 1: 13-14.



How was it used? ⁹ A document was written on and then rolled up. Melted wax was poured on the edge of the rolled-up sheet acting as a fastener to keep the sheet rolled. As the wax began to harden a symbol was impressed on the wax using a stamp or a ring. This wax seal not only held the the roll together but also identified the sender. If the sheet were unrolled before it reached its destination the seal would be broken so the receiver knew it had been tampered with. ¹⁰

In the Bible it was used to bind and identify scrolls, packages and merchandise. ¹¹ In the Book of Esther, Mordecai's official order allowing the Jews to defend

themselves was sealed with the king's signet ring. ⁵ ₁₂
Pontius Pilate saw to it that his seal was placed on the
stone at Jesus' tomb. ⁶ ₁₃

What was the purpose of a seal? ¹⁴ It was to identify
who the sender was giving authority to the document
or package. ¹⁵ The wax fastened the scroll or package
together like glue. ¹⁶

But it had an additional meaning during Jesus' day. ¹⁷
The word "deposit" ⁷ in verse 13 was earnest money
deposited by the purchaser to be forfeited if the
purchase was not completed. It was like a down
payment. ¹⁸

Here is an example of this word in ancient documents.
In one document a woman sells her cow and gets a
deposit (this word) insuring the rest of the money will

⁵ Esther 8:8 - Now write another decree in the king's name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king's signet ring — for no document written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be revoked."

⁶ Matthew 27:65-66 - "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

⁷ ἀρραβών.

be paid later. In another document some dancing girls engaged for public entertainment were given a deposit (also this same word), the rest to be paid after a satisfactory performance. So, like an engagement ring is a pledge that the suiter wants to marry his lover, the Holy Spirit becomes God's promise to us that we are His possession. ¹⁹

II. How Does the Holy Spirit Become God's Seal?

How does the Holy Spirit become God's seal? ²⁰

First, the Holy Spirit begins to work in your life to make a difference. ²¹

You receive power in your life to live the Christian life. ²² In First John, chapter 3, verse 24, ⁸ He helps you to obey the Lord's commands. ²³ In First John, chapter 4,

⁸ I John 3:4 - Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

verse 13, ⁹ He helps you to identify with the Lord's holy life. ²⁴

You also receive direction to live the Christian life. ²⁵ In First John, chapter 5, verse 6, it says, **And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth**. The Holy Spirit is truth! ²⁶

Galatians, chapter 4, verse 6, says, **Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."** He assures you, here, that you are God's child. The Holy Spirit does this, primarily, through the word of God! ²⁷ See also, Romans, chapter 8, verse 16, **The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children**. ²⁸

Second, the Holy Spirit becomes the first installment to a joyous everlasting life. ²⁹ Remember verse 13 and 14 in our scripture today said, . . . **the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance**

⁹ I John 4:13 - We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory. ³⁰

A couple of passages in Second Corinthians nail down this promise. Chapter 1, verses 21 and 22, He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. And, again, in chapter 5, verse 5, Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

So far we have discovered what God's seal on us is and how the Holy Spirit became that seal. ³¹ So, then

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III. When are You Sealed with God's Holy Spirit?

When are you sealed with God's Holy Spirit? ³²

He is given to everyone who surrenders to the Lord's authority, repents of their sins ¹⁰ and is baptized. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter answered the question, "What shall we do?" with Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ^{11 33}

Lord Jesus promised His Holy Spirit to any of His disciples who would ask Him. Luke, chapter 11, verse 13, If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" ³⁴

¹⁰ Makes the decision to change from their former lifestyle to a godly "Christ focused" one.

¹¹ Acts 2:38.

When you are ready to surrender to the Lord's authority - He will give you His Holy Spirit as a down payment on the eternal life He has promised. So - surrender now!

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