

## Intro

Have you ever gone through a stage of some sort of difficulty that led you to doubt your salvation? I think there are three reasons people doubt their salvation. The first is that they may be genuinely born again, but they just cannot seem to overcome that one sin that they so wrestle with. And through exhaustion and condemnation from the devil, they start to doubt. The second reason is due to a false theology. They either believe you cannot know whether you are saved or not, or they simply believe you can lose your salvation. And third, people may doubt their salvation because they have never been saved to begin with.

When I was about 17, I can remember on multiple occasions where I lay awake at night, terrified of going to hell because I was still living a double life. A few years before that, I went to a youth retreat where I went forward after chapel to pray with the preacher to get saved. And in doing so, I had an emotional experience that I hung on to for years as the assurance of my salvation. So, any time I was having a difficult time believing I was actually saved, I thought of that time I went forth to pray with the preacher. I must have been saved then, I prayed with the preacher. I ended up living a life that was seven times worse than it was before going to the altar to pray because I proved by the life I lived that the Spirit of God had never taken residence in me. I had never been saved in the first place.

Let me start by posing a thought-provoking question:

If Christ died to save those whom the Father elected and thereby accomplished their salvation, what then is the purpose of the Holy Spirit? Is He even necessary in that case? If Christ's work accomplished our salvation, then why do we need the Spirit to further our security in Christ?

Preposition: If you could lose your salvation, then God ceases to be God.

Outline:

All Things According to His Will v. 11

Sealed For Eternity v. 13

To The Praise of His Glory v.14

Text: Ephesians 1:11b–14 The Work in Salvation by The Spirit (Sealed for Eternity)

### 1. All Things According to His Will

From this passage of Scripture, we saw the Father's role in the work of salvation: He predestines those for whom Christ died. The Son accomplished His predetermined work of redemption by dying a substitutionary death for those whom the Father elected. And as we will see in a moment, the Holy Spirit not only applies the work of salvation, but also secures our salvation for all eternity.

**A). God's "promised inheritance."** Maybe you'll remember from our last session that we mentioned that Paul is writing to the Christians as stated in verse 1, but when he gets to verses 11

and 12, he changes his audience for a moment, but goes right back to the Christians in verse 14. I'll read the passage and point out the pronouns used for emphasis.

👍 [Ephesians 1:11-14](#) “In him we have obtained an inheritance (Here, Paul includes himself with the rest of the Jews), having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we (the first Jewish Christians) who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also (now he's shifting to the Gentiles), when you [Gentiles] heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation [Gentile believers], and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance (now Paul is including Jews and Gentiles as one people in Christ) until we [Jew and Gentile Christians] acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”

From our last time together, we saw that the promised inheritance Paul speaks of in this passage is actually the promise that Israel received in the OT already. However, now we see that—through the accomplished work of Jesus Christ, as we saw in our last session—this promise has been extended to the Gentiles as well. This promise (in that it has been extended to the Gentiles) is tied into the “mystery of His will” (which speaks of the salvation of the Gentiles). For the Jews, this promise meant not only that God would bless them with the “Promised Land,” but also that God would give Himself as their inheritance. For one, meaning they would be inwardly indwelt by God, which is, in part, fulfilled by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of any believer today, but the fullness of that promise is yet to come for every believer.

And from our text and some OT passages, we saw that it's not only the Jews who have God as their promised inheritance, but also the Gentiles. The promise has been extended to the Gentiles also. But let me make a clarification on this. This promise of God is conditional. This does not mean that every Jew and every Gentile receives God as their inheritance when they die, because then that would simply lead to a universal salvation. After all, the inheritance is only something the justified sinner receives in Christ. This means that the promise is extended to both Jew and Gentile. Meaning, only if/when you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of your soul, for the forgiveness of your sins, is this promise extended to you. And yet, simultaneously, we have been predestined for the outcome. What a glorious mystery! In the same way that through the work of Christ there is no longer “Jew” or “Gentile,” we are all one in Christ Jesus.

👍 [Galatians 3:28](#) “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” In Christ, we are all sinners saved by grace.

God works all things according to the counsel of his will, verses 12, “So that” we [the Jewish Christians] who were the first to hope in him and might be to the praise of his glory. The message of the Gospel was first preached to the Jews, so the first fruits were the Jewish Christians. But you say most of the Jews rejected the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Yes, that is right. But only because God planned it that way. That's right. In the same way God predestined that Jesus would die a violent death, He predestined that a vast number of the Jews would reject the Messiah, so that salvation would be extended to the Gentiles, and once the number of the saved Gentiles has reached its limit, Israel will be saved.

👍 [Romans 11:1–8, 25, 30](#). “I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has **not** rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? ‘Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.’ But what is God’s reply to him? ‘I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ So too at the present time **there is a remnant, chosen by grace**. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. **The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened**, as it is written, ‘God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.’”

👍 Verse 25 says, “Lest you [Gentiles] be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” That is, once all the elect of the Gentiles are saved, then all the elect of Israel will be saved.

👍 Verse 30: “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!”

**B). God works all things according to the counsel of His will.** That doesn’t just mean that anything that God does is according to His will (it means that), but that anything that ever takes place is according to His will. Now you may say, does God not want all to be saved? But we know not all are saved. Was He not able to save them? Or was it His Will for them to perish? How do I reconcile those two thoughts?

V.11 “In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works [all things] according to the counsel of his will.” Does that sound right? No, “who works ALL THINGS according to His will.” There’s a big difference.

Above using trials for our good is, God uses ALL THINGS...FOR HIS GLORY! It’s never about you or me. It’s always about God and His glory. The same can be said about the security of our salvation in Christ Jesus.

## 2. Sealed for Eternity

But sometimes in all of our trials and difficulties, our discouragement becomes so great that maybe we even begin to lose confidence—or at least start to question our salvation. Maybe we ask questions like, “Does God actually love me? Then why am I going through these immense trials?” Or, the discouragement that may come from a pattern of an ongoing sin that you just can’t seem to kill, and so you begin to ask questions like, “If I am truly a Christian, why do I keep going back to this sin?” And so I wonder, do you ever start to question your salvation when you are faced with the difficulties of life? Do you ever feel like you may have lost your salvation due to difficult circumstances or a pattern of sin in your life? In the midst of this broken and fallen world, **can you be absolutely sure of your salvation?**

Let's read our text: 👍 [Ephesians 1:13-14](#) "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

"In Him"= Jesus

"When you heard... the gospel of your salvation, and believed"= that's by divine intervention. Remember 👍 [Isaiah 6:8-10](#), "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." And he said, "Go, and say to this people: "'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." Most of the Jews have heard of Jesus, but haven't heard because they reject His message, they have heard but didn't/don't believe in Him. Here, the Gentiles heard and believed! Whom did they hear and believe?...

"The word of truth, the gospel of their salvation!"= That's by divine intervention! It's almost like there's someone who is in control of absolutely everything in the universe. They heard the Word of truth and believed because, as we saw in verses 4 and 5, they were predestined to hear and be saved!

Let's look at the next part of the text. 👍 [Ephesians 1:13-14](#) "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

In a few sub-points, we'll look at the words, sealed, guarantee and until.

**a) Sealed:** sphragisō... Seals were used as a guarantee to indicate ownership, and the correctness of the contents (or secured possession).

- What is the nature of this seal? On the one hand, scholars say that Baptism itself is the seal of our salvation. On the other hand, some scholars say that the Spirit is our seal, but only through baptism. In both cases, baptism is at the center. However, I find that both views are incorrect. Because if that were the case, then for any believer who did not get the chance to be baptized, they would have a chance to lose their salvation before they even went through the waters of baptism. And if baptism itself was the seal, then you are no longer kept by grace, but by works. And secondly, if you're only sealed by the Spirit through baptism, that would mean either you're not really saved, or your salvation is not secure until you have been physically baptized. However, baptism signifies that you have already been sealed by the Holy Spirit. That is why only professing Christians should be baptized.
- So, at what point are you sealed as believers? It has nothing to do with physical baptism. A believer is sealed for eternity at the moment of conversion. The only time baptism comes into this picture is if you are talking about spiritual baptism. Take 👍 [Ephesians](#)

[4:3–6](#) for example, where it talks about the unity of the Body of Christ. It says, “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” That is not talking about physical baptism. That is the “spiritual baptism,” if you will, the moment of conversion, the moment you were “re-born.” Simply letting the text speak for itself makes most sense, “...when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance...” You are “sealed” for eternity if/when you hear and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. 🍌 [Ephesians 4:30](#) says, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

So, the Spirit is not received at the waters baptism; rather, the Spirit is received at the spiritual baptism, at the moment of conversion. And at that moment, every believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit. Not when they go through the physical waters of baptism, that is simply a declaration of what has already taken place inside of you.

**b) Guarantee:** *arrabōn*...it means “down-payment.” This is not the payment for salvation. You may remember in our last sermon, we talked about the cost of redemption, that in order for sinners to be freed from their enslavement, they must be bought with a ransom. As you’ll recall, that ransom (payment) was paid by Jesus Christ—His very own life. This “down payment,” however, is completely different. This down-payment is the Holy Spirit Himself. So, if you are lost, then the Spirit is lost as well. God not only gave us His Son, but He also gave us His Spirit. How unfathomable are His mercies.

**c) Until:** For how long is this “down-payment” for? Will God take Him back at some point? The text says, “...who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it...” This does not at all mean that you can do something to lose your salvation, and as a result, God will just take His Spirit back. No, not at all. It says that the Holy Spirit is our guarantee until we receive our inheritance. So, that implies that only when we get to heaven with our glorified bodies, will God take His Spirit back, and what that looks like, we can only wait and see.

So, being “sealed” with the Holy Spirit (which happens at the moment of conversion) means that, 1) you are God’s possession. He owns you. You are His servant. 2) The Spirit of God indwells you; therefore, your salvation is as secure as God absolutely is. Look at 🍌 [2 Corinthians 1:22](#) “and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” And 3) it means that you are sealed forever and ever and ever. You are stamped for eternity.

I don’t think there is a way you can have a genuine assurance of your salvation if you do not believe in predestination, in the sovereignty of God in salvation. Because the doctrines of eternal security and predestination go hand-in-hand, they cannot be separated. In scripture, you can’t have one without the other because that doesn’t logically line up. You may think you can, but you misunderstand your own salvation.

As seen in our text, there are three intrinsically linked reasons that you and I should, and can have assurance of our salvation. 1) We have been predestined for salvation. 2) If we are saved, we are absolutely sealed—It is irreversible (we’ll expand on this in a moment). And 3) As sure as

God absolutely is, He is the guarantee of our salvation. From the portion of scripture we've gone through, we saw first that God the Father gave us Himself as the promised Inheritance ... Second, He gave us His Son as a sacrifice on our behalf, and third, He gave us His Spirit to indwell us! **So, if you could lose your salvation, then God would no longer be God.** You may believe you can lose your salvation, but that's simply not biblical. Here's why: It means that 1) God's eternal plan of salvation failed, 2) He failed to keep His promises, 3) His Son's blood was shed in vain—His attempt to save you failed, His blood wasn't enough, and that means you have to pay for your sins again, and 4) His downpayment—the Holy Spirit—is lost! To believe you can lose the salvation God accomplished is a grievous offence to three Persons of the Trinity! Because then, instead of looking at the wonderful salvation He accomplished, you look to your sinful self to do what you were never created to do. It becomes a system of works because you look to your own works, which will never save you or keep you, instead of what God has accomplished/finished. Paul Tripp says, "You cannot lose by your sin what you did not produce by your faith." In other words, salvation doesn't belong to you! Salvation belongs to the Lord! [Psalm 3:8](#).

**OFFENCE TO THE FATHER:** It is an offence to God the Father, because He planned salvation from beginning to end (remember what predestination means [proorizo]? It denotes God's omniscience. It means salvation is accomplished from beginning to end). That means that God saved you regardless of how many times you would sin. He knew how many times you would go back to that sin, but because of His Grace (that's Jesus), He saved you anyway. But you say that He has failed by believing you can lose His accomplished salvation.

**OFFENCE TO THE SON:** It is an offence to the Son because He descended from the heavenly place, and was born in the likeness of sinful flesh to live a perfect life that you and I could never live, which is transferred to every believer. It is an offence because He sacrificed Himself and drank the wrath of God that you and I deserve. By believing you can lose your salvation, you say the perfect substitutionary life of Jesus was not enough, His perfect sinless blood that was shed is not enough, His propitiatory work was not enough, so you have to add something to it—your own filthy rags.

**OFFENCE TO THE SPIRIT:** It is an offence to the Spirit because you (indirectly) say He is separated from the Godhead as the third Person of the Trinity. Because He is the down payment (security deposit) God gives to each believer. You know what that means? That means that if you have the Spirit and you lose your salvation, the Spirit of God is lost altogether. It is offensive to Him because you say He failed to indwell you and minister to you according to your needs, as Jesus promised He would.

Do you see how dangerous that kind of theology is? It is a great evil to believe a Christian can lose the salvation that was purchased for them as a plan from eternity past! How dare you doubt God!

Back to why the "sealing" of the Spirit is irreversible. I heard an Oxford Professor express it this way: When you went to look for a wife, you did not go scope out an attractive woman and hand her a cookbook and tell her that if she keeps all the laws that pertain to this book for the next 45 years, you will marry her. No, but you accepted her at the beginning of the journey regardless of

how many times she would break those laws. Our salvation in Jesus Christ is no different. God the Father has predestined to eternally save all who will believe in Jesus Christ, regardless of how many times we will sin. In the same way that you did not tell your wife, “If you keep these laws for so long, I will marry you.” But you (and she, you) accepted her at the beginning of the journey regardless of all the shortcomings. In the same way, God has chosen to save a people not based on their righteousness but based on the finished work of Jesus Christ. That’s why salvation can never be lost. Because Jesus said: “It is finished.” and therefore, it is finished indeed! That is not to say there won’t be a sanctification process; there must be.

John MacArthur said this in a way that only he could: “If you could lose your salvation, you would.”

Please don’t hear what I’m not saying. I’m not saying that you cannot be Christian and believe you can lose your salvation. I fully believe you can be a true Christian and somehow believe you can lose your salvation. However, that is a terribly sad state to be in. I strongly believe, and argue from the Scriptures, that you are grievously mistaken and it is a great offence against God Almighty. For the spiritual well-being of your own soul, search the Scriptures, and see the great salvation God has accomplished from beginning to end, and rest in the great assurance that comes along with that. The simple fact that God predestined sinners for salvation implies that He will keep them.

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

In our last session, we briefly looked at each of the sections where Paul attributes praise to each member of the Godhead. We said that in verse 6, it’s praise to the Father, verse 12, it’s praise to the Son, and in verse 14, it’s praise to the Spirit. For clarification, allow me to expand on that a bit. So, according to the opening line of this whole passage (v. 3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”), The overall theme of the passage is God the Father. And when you grammatically analyze this whole passage, you’ll find that most (all except 2, I believe) of the pronouns “his” refer to the Father, and verse 14 is no exception, regardless of the antecedent “who” at the beginning of verse 14. So, technically speaking, the phrase “to the praise of his glory” in verse 14 naturally refers back to God the Father. However, as a member of the Godhead, it is totally correct to give praise to the Spirit for His work in salvation. Paul dedicates a section to explain the Triune work of salvation, and the Spirit is no exception. In fact, you err by failing to give praise to the Son or the Spirit just from reading this passage.

So, with that, there’s a question that is often raised, “Should I pray to the Spirit?” (Now, this may be a bit of a side note.) My answer is this: that is not the role of the Spirit. As a Triune God, they each have different functions. For example, we’ve talked about the Father’s role in salvation, He plans Redemption (that’s called predestination), the Son carries out the Father’s plan of Redemption, He accomplished salvation, and the Spirit applies/seals the work of Redemption. On top of that, He is given as a down payment for salvation. Likewise, prayer functions similarly. **We pray in the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father.** See how the order is reversed? Salvation starts with the Father, and in thankfulness for it, it ends with the Father. It’s always, always about God. So, now you may ask, if I don’t pray to the Spirit directly, can I give praise to the Spirit directly? My answer to that is, yes. As a member of the Godhead, each Person is

equally deserving of praise. Three-in-One, they're all involved in the work of salvation, and therefore each is deserving of praise for His amazing role in salvation. Each member of the Godhead has a peculiar function in everything, and each member's characteristics are needed to function as "GOD." Therefore, each is worthy of praise.

So, to tie verse 11 with verse 14: [Ephesians 1:11](#) "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined **according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,**" [Ephesians 1:14](#) "who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, **to the praise of his glory.**"

What is the purpose of all things? The praise of His glory! Praise the Father, praise the Son, praise the Spirit!

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, remember the question from the beginning?

If Christ died to save those whom the Father elected and thereby accomplished their salvation, what then is the purpose of the Holy Spirit? Is He even necessary in that case? If Christ's work accomplished our salvation, then why do we need the Spirit to further our security in Christ?

We need the Spirit because He is the One who applies to us the accomplished work of Jesus. We need the Spirit because He is the guarantee of our salvation. If all that salvation was; is Christ accomplishing it on our behalf, then we would no doubt lose our salvation very quickly. Yes, Christ did accomplish our salvation. But the Spirit is the guarantee that we will make it to the end; He is our seal. Both Christ's work and the Spirit's work are necessary for us to be saved and endure to the end. As sure as the Spirit will return to God, so will all Christians be united with Him because the Spirit is in all true believers. We need the Spirit because He is our helper in every circumstance. We need the Spirit because He prays for us. We need the Spirit because without Him, there would be no salvation for man.

So, my brother, rest in the assurance that God gives to us.

Closing Prayer.