

THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE

Eph.1:13,14

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The two Corinthian passages (2Cor.1:21,22; 5:5) and the Ephesian passage (Eph.1:13,14) contain the expression using the word “earnest” which is the focus of our study in this lesson
2. The word “earnest” in all three passages is the same, is from the same Greek term, having the same meaning in all three passages.
3. While the word “earnest” is the same in all three passages, the expressions containing it are not the same. Take note of this.
4. Note the evident, significant difference between the expression containing the word “earnest” in the two Corinthian passages and the one in the Ephesian passage.
 - a. The Corinthian passages speak of Paul and his apostleship who had been “established,” “anointed,” “sealed,” and “given the earnest of the Spirit” *in his heart.*
 - b. Whereas the Ephesian passage speaks of the Ephesian believers, or the Ephesian converts to Christ, and “the earnest of our inheritance.”
 - c. There is an evident, distinct and significant difference in the two expressions and their applications.
 - (1) One speaks of “the earnest of the Spirit,” which has been or will be studied in another lesson.
 - (2) The other speaks of “the earnest of our inheritance”
 - (a) Notice that the latter doesn’t say “the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”
 - (b) It says, “the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession”
 - d. In this lesson we shall be studying “the earnest of our inheritance” given the Ephesians, not “the earnest of the Spirit” given to Paul.
5. Eph.1:13,14 says:
 - a. Believers have an “inheritance” awaiting them.
 - b. Something is “the earnest of our (the believer’s) inheritance.” But what is that something which is the “earnest” of it?

6. What that something is, is the burden of our present study.

II. DISCUSSION

A. WHAT MEN SAY THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE IN EPH.1:13,14 IS, BUT WHICH CAN'T BE –TRUTH WILL NOT ALLOW IT.

1. Some say the Holy Spirit himself, a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or some other form of his indwelling, is that something.
 - a. At first, this may seem to be the truth of the matter.
 - b. But is that necessarily the case? This we need to know.
2. What Clem Thurman says it is in his sermon: “The Earnest of the Spirit In Our Hearts,” published in “WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT?” pp.159-163. The Third Annual “Fort Worth Lecture,” edited by Wendell Winkler, Winkler Publications, 340 Mayfair Drive, Hurst, Texas.
 - a. “The giving of the Holy Spirit is God’s seal of ownership, that we belong to him, and our receiving the Holy Spirit is ‘the earnest of our inheritance,’ (Eph.1:14).”
 - b. “Eternity in heaven is the ‘inheritance’ of the children of God, but the Holy Spirit is the ‘earnest of our inheritance.’”
 - c. “That fact that God has given us the Holy Spirit, sealed us as his sons, gives the strongest assurance that ‘he is faithful that promised.’ Heb.10:23”
 - d. “Thus the hope we have is ‘an anchor of the soul’ (Heb.6:19) because God has given us the Holy Spirit as ‘the earnest of our inheritance.’” – p.161.
 - e. “Conclusion: The assurance of God is that we can live with him eternally. And, the Holy Spirit is given as ‘the earnest of our inheritance’ (Eph.1:14), that we can have assurance in the promises of God (Heb.10:22,23.” – 163.
 - f. “How do we know the Spirit dwell in us? The Bible tells us so (Ac.2:38; 5:32; 1Cor.6:19; Eph.1:13,14).” – p.163.
 - (1) But may I point out: It is not simply a matter of, Does the Holy Spirit dwell in us.
 - (2) It is, **How** does he dwell in us?
 - (3) Is it the Holy Spirit himself by a direct, literal, personal indwelling? Or is it by an indirect,

representative indwelling by means of the inspired word?

- (4) Remember, Concerning the “signs” in Mk.16:17,18, Jesus said what, but not how!
 - (5) Likewise, Peter, operating under the commission of Mk.16:15,16, in Ac.2:38 on “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” said what, but not how.
 - (6) We must go to Ac.8:14-19 to learn the how. Cf. Ac.19:5,6; 2Tim.1:6.
 - (7) Furthermore, Eph.1:13,14 doesn’t teach nor say anything about the Holy Spirit dwelling in anyone!
3. Bro. Thurman’s position on Eph.1:13,14 is typical of so many brethren on “the earnest of our inheritance” mentioned therein.
 4. My own view of what “the earnest of our inheritance” is this as it is stated in VV.13,14: “...*the word of truth, the gospel of your (our) salvation (is)...Which is the earnest (the pledge, the assurance, the surety, the guarantee) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession...*”
 - a. How I arrive at that conclusion is as follows.

B. THERE ARE TWO ABSOLUTELY VITAL KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING THIS PASSAGE AND DETERMINING WHAT IT ACTUALLY SAYS “THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE” IS.

1. The first key is a correct understanding or a proper definition of the term “earnest.”
 - a. It has been said repeatedly that the term “earnest” of Eph.1:14:
 - (1) Means the down payment or partial payment (like earnest money) until the (final) redemption of the purchased possession, and that that partial payment is the Holy Spirit himself in his direct, literal, personal, but non-miraculous indwelling of the believer, received as a direct result of believing and being baptized for the remission of sins.
 - (2) Williams translation reflects this concept of the Holy Spirit being a down payment or partial payment on our eternal inheritance: “...stamped with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit, who is

the first installment of our inheritance, so that we may finally come into full possession of the prize of redemption...”

(a) If this is the true explanation for “the earnest of our inheritance” of Eph.1:13,14, then the Samaritan Christians did not receive an earnest or assurance of their inheritance when they believed and were baptized for the remission of sins because they didn’t have, didn’t receive, the Holy Spirit at the point of the faith and baptism. Cf. Ac.8:12-16.

(b) They did not receive the Holy Spirit in any form until the apostles laid hands on them, Ac.8:14-19.

(3) Guy N. Woods said: It “Applied to the gifts (spiritual gifts, ejd) bestowed on Christians generally upon whom, after baptism, the apostles laid hands, and which were to them an earnest of obtaining a heavenly habitation and inheritance, upon the supposition of their fidelity.” (Commenting upon his chart#20 used in his debate with Given O. Blakely on the subject of Holy Spirit, as quoted by Earl Trimble in his article, “The Seal And Earnest of The Spirit,” Firm Foundation, Dec. 1992, p.25.

(a) If Woods position be true, then the gospel of Christ which the Samaritans believed and obeyed, before they received the spiritual gifts through the laying on of the apostles hands, gave them no assurance of obtaining an eternal inheritance!

(b) Who can believe it?!

2. The Scriptural, Biblical meaning of “earnest,” from arrabon, must be recognized if we are to arrive at the proper understanding and interpretation of Eph.1:13,14.

a. KJV: “earnest”; RSV; NIV: “guarantee”; NEB; JB: “pledge”.

b. Gen.38:17,18 establish its Biblical meaning.

- (1) When Judah sought the services of one he thought was a harlot, he promised her “a kid from the flock,” V.17a.
 - (2) Since he didn’t have the kid with him to give her, the woman asked for a “pledge,” or an assurance or guarantee, that he would fulfill his promise, V.17b.
 - (a) In lieu of placing the “money” on the table for her services (in this case, “a kid from the flock”), she asked for assurance of some kind (a pledge) that it would be delivered.
 - (3) Then Judah asked, “What pledge shall I give thee?” V.18a.
 - (4) The woman answered, “Thy signet and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thy hand,” V.18b.
 - (a) She would hold these until he produced the kid from the flock as promised. At which time his pledge would be returned to him.
 - (b) Cf. Vv.19,20; Vv.21-23; Vv.24,25.
 - (5) As anyone can see, this was not a down-payment, nor a partial payment, but a pledge, or something to assure or guarantee her that what he promised would be forthcoming.
 - (6) Its usage in Gen.38:17,18 cannot be harmonized with the idea of “a down payment” or “partial payment”.
 - (a) Cf. Gen.42:15-24, 29-37 – Simeon kept as a pledge, earnest, assurance that they would bring Benjamin.
- c. The same word in the N.T. Greek is defined by leading lexicographers to mean what it meant in the Greek translation of the O.T., which Christ and the apostles often quoted.
- (1) Vine, II, p.11, “In general usage it came to mean a pledge or earnest of any sort; in the N.T. it is used only of that which is assured by God to believers...”
 - (a) This is Vine’s definition, not his comments or commentary on the definition.

- (b) In his commentary he jumps the track and says, “it is used of the Holy Spirit as the Divine pledge of all their future blessedness, 2Cor.1:22; 5:5; in Eph.1:14, particularly of their eternal inheritance.
 - (2) Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, Young’s Analytical Concordance, Wilson’s O.T. Word Studies, and The Theological Word Book of The O.T., Vol.2, p.693, all recognize the word for “pledge” or “earnest” means: “a pawn (given as security), a surety, a pledge, or to give as a pledge,” and all of them quote Gen.38:17,18,20 among the scripture examples given where it is used.
 - (a) Not a one of these sources, in their strict definition of the word “earnest,” give it the meaning of “a down payment” or “partial payment” of the Christian’s inheritance.
 - (b) It is only in their comments where they function as a Commentator, not a lexicographer, that they do that.
 - (3) We dare not go the Webster to define Bible words when the Bible defines them for us. Example: “baptism”.
 - (a) But even Webster so defines “pledge” and “earnest” in their basic meaning.
- 3. Having defined the word “earnest,” we take note of the second key which helps provide an understanding of what Eph.1:13,14 actually says “the earnest of our inheritance” is.
 - a. That second key is the parenthesis in the passage, which we must not ignore!
 - b. This parenthesis is the last part of V.13 and follows the colon in the KJV.
 - c. Other versions designate the parenthesis by a dash (“---“) or by a colon and a dash (“:---“) or other literary marks; such as Berry’s Interlinear Literal Translation of The Greek N.T.; NASV; ASV.
 - d. The parenthesis is “in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”

- e. Temporarily omitting the parenthesis helps us understand the meaning of the passage: V.13: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:---, V.14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession...”
- f. Other examples of the use of parenthesis, which are added to introduce another thought or to explain, before getting back to the thing being discussed or previously introduced: Eph.4:8-11; 5:9; Rom.2:13-15; 5:13-17; Col.2:21,22a; Heb.3:7b-11; 10:23b; 11:38a; 12:20,21; 1Jno.1:2.

C. NOW, FOR EMPHASIS, WE RAISE THE QUESTION: WHO HATH PURCHASED US AND WHAT GIVES US THE EARNEST OR THE ASSURANCE OF OUR INHERITANCE?

- 1. Without a doubt the Word, the Bible, the gospel of our salvation teaches that Jesus Christ, through his death, his blood, his sacrificial, vicarious offering of himself, is the ONE who purchased us, who redeems us, Ac.20:28; 1Cor.6:19,20; Eph.1:7; Col.1:12-14,19-22; Heb.9:11-15,26b; 1Pet.1:18,19.
 - a. He made full payment, not partial payment, for the redemption of the faithful.
 - b. He didn't give or send the Holy Spirit to any one as partial payment for anything.
 - c. No partial payment of any kind was needed for given.
 - d. But assurance of our redemption and of our eternal inheritance was and is needed, was and is given!
- 2. But where or how do we have present-day divine assurance of or divine guarantee of redemption through Jesus Christ, if not in or by the Word, the gospel of our salvation?
 - a. Today we are divinely assured of or guaranteed that Jesus Christ died to purchase us, but where or how do we have it?
 - (1) In the word of God inspired, revealed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit.
 - (2) Not by the Holy Spirit personally indwelling us in either a miraculous or a non-miraculous manner.

- b. Today we are divinely assured of or guaranteed that we can have the remission of our past sins on the basis of our meeting certain conditions of salvation, but where or how do we have it?
 - (1) In the word of God inspired, revealed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit.
 - (2) Not by the Holy Spirit personally indwelling us in either a miraculous or a non-miraculous manner.
- c. Today we are divinely assured of or guaranteed that we can have eternal life, or an eternal inheritance, in heaven at the end of a life of faith, but where or how do we have it?
 - (1) In the Holy Spirit inspired, revealed, confirmed word of God.
 - (2) Not by the Holy Spirit personally indwelling us in either a miraculous or a non-miraculous manner.
- d. Today we are divinely assured of or guaranteed that we can be, and that we are, the children of God accepted of Him, but where or how do we have it?
 - (1) In the inspired word of God revealed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit.
 - (2) Not by the Holy Spirit personally indwelling us either in a miraculous or non-miraculous manner.
 - (3) Rom.8:16; Heb.10:15-18; Ac.1:15-20; 1Tim.4:1; Gal.3:26-29; 1Jno.5:1-5.
- e. Today we are divinely assured or guaranteed that we can have “the full assurance of hope unto the end,” but where or how do we have it?
 - (1) But the word of God, Heb.6:11-20; 2Pet.3:9; Tit.1:2. Cf. Mt.7:21-27; 2Tim.3:14-4:8
 - (2) Not by the Holy Spirit personally indwelling us in either a miraculous or non-miraculous manner.

D. WE ARE NOW READY TO DISCUSS EPH.1:7-14 IN CONTEXT.

- 1. Ephesians is designed, at least in part, to combat the erroneous ideas the Judaizers were propagating, that even the believers in Christ, in order to enter into covenant relationship with God,

had to be circumcised and keep other parts of the law of Moses. Cf. Ac.15:1-5; Gal.1:6-9; 2:2-5,11-16; 3:1-29; 4:1-11.

2. Paul declared the Law of Moses was a wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles which had to be broken down and taken out of the way in order that both Jew and Gentile might be one in Christ, Eph.2:11-19; Col.2:12-17; Heb.8:6-10:18.
3. In Ephesians the Gentiles are assured, guaranteed, the same heritage of salvation that the Jews have, that had been stamped on the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, through the Spirit-filled, Spirit-guided apostles, by the faith of Christ, not by the Law of Moses. Cf. Ac.10,11,15; Gal.1:6-12; 2:2-16; Eph.1,2,3.
4. In the New Covenant, which was of God by and through Jesus Christ, with (or by) the seal of the Holy Spirit upon it, both Jews and Gentiles, the Jews and the Gentiles together, had the “earnest,” the assurance, the guarantee, of their salvation from past sins and the hope of eternal life on the same bases – through their faith in Christ, their baptism in water in the name of Christ for the remission of their sins, and their continued life and service in the faith of Christ.
5. Here again the function of the Holy Spirit through the word is presented in the dispensational connection.
 - a. All the parts of the former dispensation had been gathered together in one whole fulfillment in the new dispensation, Eph.1:3-10.
 - b. The salvation of the Ephesian Gentiles by the word of truth, the gospel of your (their) salvation, was a part of that predestined and fulfilled plan, V.11.
 - (1) It was the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal and seal and guarantee or give assurance by this divine plan.
 - (2) Through this revelation salvation came, in order “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek,” as the apostle said to the Romans (Rom.2:10); and “that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs,” as he said to the Ephesians, Eph.3:1-7,8-11. Cf. Gal.3:1-5.
6. Following the order of this development, Paul:
 - a. First said in Eph.1:12: “That we (apostles and Jews) should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.”

- (1) The apostles themselves were the first in the order, then the Jews on Pentecost.
- (2) Who were the first to fix their hope on Christ, or to rest their hopes on the Christ.
- b. Then he said in Eph.1:13a:”In whom (in Christ) ye (ye Gentiles) also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:--“
 - (1) “In whom ye also trusted;” that is, in Christ.
 - (a) Here Paul links together the thoughts:
 - (1) Of v.7, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”
 - (2) Of V.11, “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance...”
 - (3) Of V.13, “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:--“
 - (b) Paul here links all of these thoughts to the fact that all spiritual blessings are in Christ in V.3: “...God...who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”
 - (2) “After that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:” (or, “salvation,--“)
 - (a) That is, after having heard the word of truth.
 - (b) The word of truth is equated (made equal) to the gospel of your salvation.
 - (c) The word of truth or the gospel is, of course, that by which men (both Jew and Gentile) are saved in this dispensation; it is not by the Law of Moses. – By the faith of Christ, not by the Law. Cf. Gal.2:16.
- c. Then, momentarily leaving out the parenthesis of V.13b, and going directly to V.14, Paul said: “Which is the earnest (pledge) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (or to his praise and glory).”
 - (1) Here he completes the thought introduced in V.13, which was interrupted by the parenthesis, and

identifies “the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” as “the earnest of our inheritance,” or as the pledge, assurance, surety, or guarantee of our inheritance. Cf. Rom.2:13-15; 5:13-17.

- (2) It is not a partial payment of, nor a down payment on, our inheritance; neither is the Holy Spirit.
 - (3) The Ephesians, because of Judaistic teachers in their midst, needed assurance they would inherit eternal life in Christ by means of the gospel of Christ, not by keeping the law of Moses.
 - (4) Thus Paul assures them that the Spirit-inspired, Spirit-revealed, Spirit-confirmed word of truth was the gospel of their salvation and the “earnest of our (Jews and Gentiles) inheritance.”
 - (5) Such assurance comes only from and through “the word of truth.”
 - (6) The signs, miracles, powers, and wonders of the Spirit certified the gospel message was from heaven and the power of God unto salvation here and life hereafter, even though delivered by men. Cf. Mk.16:19,20; 2Cor.12:12; Gal.1:11,12; Eph.3:1-5; Heb.2:3,4; Rom.1:16,17.
 - (7) We, too, can rest assured of its authenticity and have the same assurance of our inheritance, since it has been miraculously confirmed by heaven’s stamp of approval. Cf. Jno.20:30,31; Rom.8:16.
 - (8) Do we not believe the word with its promises are sufficient to guarantee or fully assure the Christian’s inheritance in Christ? 2Tim.3:12-4:8.
 - (9) **THINK:** Is it the Holy Spirit himself indwelling the believer that gives the believer that assurance? Or is the Holy Spirit by means of the word of truth that gives it?
- d. In the parenthetical phrase of V.13 Paul introduces another thought – that of their being “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (“The Seal Of The Holy Spirit” either has been or will be discussed in another lesson).
- (1) For now, take note that “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” may be rendered “sealed by,” instead of “sealed with,” and here speaks of and

links the seal of the Holy Spirit with some O.T. background promise now fulfilled in the N.T., and of which they had now been the recipients.

(a) It refers back to the same promise the Holy Spirit had given to the Jews on Pentecost, in fulfillment of the O.T. prophecy of Joel as quoted in Ac.2:14-16,21,38,39, which was a two-fold promise:

(1) A promise of deliverance or salvation, Ac.2:21,36-38a.

(2) A promise of the Holy Spirit or the spiritual gifts of Mk.16:17,18; Ac.2:14-16,38b,39.

(b) And it was that same two-fold promise of the Spirit that Paul assures these Gentiles is made to them “after that ye believed.”

III. CONCLUSION

1. When you recognize the parenthetical part of Eph.1:13, it is easy to see it is the word of God, which the Holy Spirit revealed and confirmed, which cannot be broken (Jno.10:35), which supplies the Christian with his pledge, earnest, surety, assurance or guarantee of his inheritance or his promise of eternal life. Cf. Tit.1:2; Heb.1:1,2; 2:1-4; 12:25; 5:8,9; Mt.7:21-27; 2Th.1:6-10.
2. The following will also help us understand the matter.
 - a. The three persons of the Godhead follow the same pattern in this aria as in other areas of their work: (1) the Father plans, (2) the Son executes, and (3) the Holy Spirit reveals and confirms. Each always stays within his role in the Scheme of Redemption.
 - b. To put it another way:
 - (1) The Father provides the inheritance.
 - (2) The Son purchased the inheritance.
 - (3) The Holy Spirit revealed and confirmed the fact of the inheritance for the Christian.
 - c. This pledge was miraculously delivered in the first century by the Holy Spirit through the apostles of Jesus Christ, but has been preserved in the written word, the Scriptures, for all time by God’s providence!