

Ephesians 1:11-14

Ephesians 1:3-14 is one long sentence in the Greek but broken down in translations into 12 verses and multiple sentences in English to help us better understand it. Paul began this sentence by noting that God has **“blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing”** He went on in verses 4-6 to tell us that a major spiritual blessing is having been adopted by the Father. He went on in verses 7-10 to tell us that this adoption and all of the other spiritual blessings that are ours was made possible by Jesus. See Ephesians 1:7.

That brings us to Paul’s description of the role of the third member of Trinity, the Holy Spirit, in providing the spiritual blessings that God wishes to shower upon us. Read Ephesians 1:13-14.

The Holy Spirit is God in every way and, therefore, an equal member of the Trinity. That means that everything we can say about the Father or the Son we can say about Him. He is all knowing, all powerful, everywhere present, totally holy and totally loving and totally merciful etc.

The Holy Spirit should always be addressed as a person, not a force. That does not mean He is a person in the same way we are, but He has the characteristics of personhood. Although a Spirit He is described in Scripture as being able to think, love, be grieved etc. all of which are associated with personhood or personality.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit is He, not it.

The Holy Spirit was responsible for just about every aspect of our redemption except the sacrificial death of Jesus on the Cross. The Holy Spirit is the one who challenged each of us to become a Christian. He convicted us of our sin and prodded us where necessary to make a commitment to Jesus. When we began to move that way, He gave us the faith to trust in Jesus and when we finally said yes to God, the Holy Spirit cleansed us from our sin and immediately took up residence in us. Since we made that decision for Jesus, He has been totally responsible for our Christian growth as we have allowed Him to work in us. The Holy Spirit is our conscience and the one who gives us the desire and the strength to overcome temptation. He is responsible for the transformation within, so we are less and less tempted to sin.

Still further, the Holy Spirit is the one who takes all our prayers to the Father. Part of that task is to take those prayers of our hearts that we cannot find the words to express and properly presenting them at the throne.

And the Holy Spirit is the one through whom the Father sends us His comfort when we are sorrowful. In fact, one of the names given to Him in John 14:16 is the Comforter. As God’s comforter Holy Spirit brings God’s peace that passes understanding. It is the Holy Spirit who walks with us when a loved one walks through the valley of the shadow of death and He is the one who will walk with us when our time comes to walk through that valley.

When we pick up the Bible to study it the Holy Spirit teaches us its meaning and when we need to recall it the Holy Spirit brings it to our minds.

Throw into all of that His ministry of guiding us into the way we should go and His giving spiritual gifts to every believer so we can serve the church. He also takes our words when we share a testimony or teach a lesson and blesses them so that they accomplish their intended purpose. In addition, in the world today there are many false spirits that seek to lead us astray. We are called upon as Christians to test the spirits and that is possible only because the Spirit, who is truth, instructs us.

As an additional word on the Holy Spirit, He gives us what the Bible calls Spiritual Gifts so we can have the joy of serving God. Every believer has been given at least one spiritual gift to be used in the church. It is imperative that each of us discover our gifts, develop our gifts and use our gifts in love for God's glory. Read I Timothy 4:13 and read again Ephesians 1:13-14.

Two critical truths are seen in those verses. *First*, the Holy Spirit dwells within every believer to bear witness with our spirit via a seal that we belong to God. If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit within. You do not have to ask Him to come into your life. He is God's free gift to all who believe, and He is complete within you. You will never have more of the Holy Spirit than you have the moment you believe.

God has given the Holy Spirit to every believer and the Holy Spirit assures us that we are God's even when Satan would like to bring doubt to our hearts and minds. Over and over Satan wants us to question our faith. Every time we sin, Satan tells us that is proof we are not really a Christian. The Holy Spirit reminds us that we are and that because we are, if we confess our sins, God will forgive them. When we think of death and heaven Satan whispers things in our ears like *"Heaven is just an escape tool to give you hope but do you really know?"* The Holy Spirit whispers, *"You know Jesus was raised from the dead, there is so much evidence of that you cannot doubt it and if He did, you can know you will also."*

One cannot have the Holy Spirit unless one has made a personal commitment to Jesus. But one cannot be a Christian and not have the Holy Spirit within.

The imagery of being sealed with the Holy Spirit is perhaps a bit foreign to us but was not to the first century Christians. The imagery was taken from the practice of individuals who wanted to send a message. They would fold the message up and then close it with wax. To ensure that it was not tampered with and that the recipient knew it was legitimate, the sender then used his distinctive signet ring to seal it with an impression that said to all, *"This comes from me."* Paul used that picture to tell us that when we make a commitment to Jesus, God sends His Spirit to dwell within us as a way of declaring to Satan in particular that we belong to God. We are His.

The Holy Spirit is the one through whom God works to prepare us to spend the rest of eternity with Him, which is our inheritance. Read Philippians 2:13. In Galatians 5:22 and 23 Paul listed

the Fruit of the Spirit. That fruit is the work of the Holy Spirit within us. The Holy Spirit gives us the desire to grow spiritually and when we respond favorably, He enables us to grow. Christian growth is not turning over a new leaf or sticking to a New Year's resolution but the transforming ministry of the Holy Spirit within. The Holy Spirit wants to empower us to be Christlike in our living. That characteristic is called in the Bible the Fruit of the Spirit.

A *second* aspect of the ministry of the Holy Spirit that Paul mentions here is that the presence of the Holy Spirit within a believer not only declares that he belongs to God, but He is God's way of assuring us that all of the promises He has made and were purchased for us by Jesus on the Cross will be ours. Paul calls Him a deposit guaranteeing that the rest will come. What Paul is saying here is that while we have been fully redeemed by Jesus, we need an assurance that God intends to complete the deal and usher us into heaven. The down payment is our assurance that God will not abandon us. Ephesians 1:14 specifically mentions that the Holy Spirit **"is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance."** Read I Peter 1:3-4. Which describes our inheritance.

We have been promised rich spiritual blessings. Jesus redeemed us from slavery to sin by paying the price of our sins. Then God sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within as proof that we are His. The Holy Spirit invites us to see that because He is within us, He is a sign of God's intent to fulfill every promise made. Knowing that, we can have faith and can determine to allow the Holy Spirit to work within so we will become more like the Master.