

A. A Symbolic Seal that Differentiates

Revelation employs much symbolism, such as the seal of God for His people—a seal that differentiates the genuine from the counterfeit:

1. Rev. 7:1-3: an angel from the east puts God's seal on His people's forehead. This seal **Protects** them from the last plagues.
2. Rev. 7:4-8: John hears those who are sealed: 144,000.
3. Rev. 9:4: those without God's seal will be **Afflicted** by plagues.
4. Rev. 14:1: the Lamb and God's name is written on the forehead of God's people.
5. Ezek. 9:4: Ezekiel's vision about a mark on the foreheads of those distressed by in-house, pervasive sinfulness implies that these marked people have a penitent heart, sensitive consciences, and a compelling **Contrast** between them and the wicked.

- Refer to supplement for more info about this seal -

B. Solemn Times Merit a Solemn Message

The end of history will be dark; but God will light the world with power:

1. Rev. 13: the false trinity (the Dragon-Sea Beast-Earth Beast) will dispute and even assail God's people because the crux of the issue has always centered on **Worship**. (mentioned in Rev. 13 & 14 8 times: 13:4 [twice], 8, 12, 15; 14:7, 9, 11).
2. Two opposing messages will be broadcast:
 - The eternal Gospel preached to all peoples (Rev. 14:6, 7)
 - The "wine" of Babylon offered to all peoples (Rev. 14:8)

God's last-day, sealed people will receive power (the "latter rain" of the Spirit) to declare God's mercy, salvation, and His message of final warning, symbolized by three angels in Revelation 14:6-11 (see supplement).



"Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads."

Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 216



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Scripture quotes taken from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated

WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT & WITH FIRE SERMON SERIES

STUDY GUIDE 8

THE HOLY SPIRIT & SEALING

TEACHER

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The Holy Spirit is God's All Strength, All Weather, All Time, Full-Proof Seal. He is undeniably engaged now in the lives of God's faithful people, but will be so in a very significant way just before Christ's return.

I. What Is A Seal?

A. The Meaning of the Word

The New Testament Greek word for seal is *sphragizo*, which means to stamp with a signet or private mark for security or preservation (literally or figuratively). It meant to attest or keep something secret. It also signified ownership and/or authenticity.

B. Documents

Documents would be sealed with witnesses' identity markers, and containers of merchandise with those of owners, certifying no one had tampered with their contents. The stamp of the owner or the person(s) witnessing a document would be pressed into hot wax, which dried over the string tied around a scroll. Important documents often had six seals; to open the document one had to break them all. Seals were intended to vouchsafe the integrity of the contents and warned against tampering and, if intact, attested to the authenticity of the document.

C. The Bible and Ancient Culture

Understanding Biblical culture enlarges our understanding of the world and peoples of the Bible, ergo seals. Under inspiration, Paul used a cultural reference when he wrote, "you were *sealed* in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). The Ephesians picked up on the allusion: God was *authenticating* their belief in the gospel by giving them the Spirit as a *secure/sealed* down payment for heaven (vs. 14). In our modern culture, personal info is protected by passwords or pins. Perhaps Paul would say to us, "having believed, you were given a password through the Holy Spirit of promise who is your guarantee that, when the time comes, your password will authenticate you as a citizen of heaven."

II. God's People Sealed

In Scripture, an outward seal (literal or symbolic) was designed by God to be a sign of an inward reality: faith and trust in God.

1. The seal of circumcision (Rom. 4:11; 2:28, 29; Deut. 30:6)
2. The seal of God's firm foundation (2 Tim. 2:19)
3. The seal of the Holy Spirit as a pledge of our inheritance when

we first believed (1 Cor. 2:22; Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30)

4. The seal of God that the angel from the east brings (Rev. 7:2):
 - 144,000 will be sealed (7:4-8)
 - This seal protects from harm (Rev. 7:3; 9:4; Ezek. 9:4)

III. The Holy Spirit Seals Now

All genuine followers of Jesus are currently sealed in the Spirit:

1. Ephesians 1:13, 14: "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."
2. Ephesians 4:30: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were **Sealed** for the day of **Redemption**."
3. 1 Cor. 1:22: "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also **Sealed** us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a **Pledge**." (Note: "pledge" in the Greek means *down payment*.)
4. Rom. 4:11: Abraham "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised." (Note: circumcision's real value is not physical. It is "that which is of the **Heart**, by the **Spirit**, not by the letter", Rom. 2:29.)



God seals us when we receive new hearts (born again) by the Holy Spirit. He gives His Spirit as a down payment to guarantee our inheritance—heaven. Our part is to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16) as long as we live: to grow in godliness from start ("early rain") to finish ("latter rain").

IV. The Apocalyptic, Last-Day Seal

In the Spirit's sealing power, we are faithfully and daily united with Jesus, progressing in Christlikeness. But the book of Revelation reveals that a special "sealing" will be needed because of the cataclysmic nature of the end-time war between the Lamb and the Dragon.