

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – July 18, 2021

Theme: The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit **Topic:** The Holy Spirit Seals the Believer

Main Text: Ephesians 1:1-14

Key verse: Ephesians 1:13: *“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”(NKJV)*

INTRODUCTION: The figure of a roaring lion stretches across the little jasper seal. The inscription on it, written in ancient Hebrew letters is, *“Belonging to Shema, servant of Jeroboam.”* Recovered from the biblical site of Megiddo, the stamp seal was once the property of an official of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, 785–743 B.C. (2 Kings 14:23– 29). Shema may have been proud of his lion-seal, but for him it was not a decorative gemstone. Rather, he put it to daily use. Pressed on clay or wax it marked his ownership and authority. He could seal a deed of purchase or a marriage contract; his stamp could serve as his signature. Seals and sealing are often spoken of in the Old Testament: Queen Jezebel used Ahab’s seal to order a conspiracy against the life of Naboth (1 Kings 21:8); Queen Esther delivered the Jews when she was permitted to prepare a royal decree and seal it with the king’s ring — *“for no document written in the king’s name and sealed with his ring can be revoked”* (Esther 8:8). The apostle Paul grasped this image to describe the sealing of the Lord: *“Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of His glory”* (Ephesians 1:13b–14).

1. **Read Romans 8:9,15-16; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30. (a) What do the verses highlight about the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer? (b) At what point is the believer given the Holy Spirit as a seal? (c) Read Ezekiel 9:4–6; Romans 4:11; Revelation 7:1–8; 9:4 What other notions of sealing do these passages highlight?**

An age-old practice among herders is the placing of seal on cows and goats. Slaves were known to have been branded by their owners. As Galatians 4:4-6 (NLT) puts it, *“But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent Him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that He could adopt us as His very own children. And because we are His children, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, “Abba, Father.”* Through the Holy Spirit, God seals or stamps us as His own at our conversion. But that is not all that the seal of the Holy Spirit does for the believer. The sealing of the Holy Spirit also guarantees the benefits of our salvation, as a person might seal an envelope to guarantee its enclosures. So, the Holy Spirit is God’s “down payment” assuring us of His commitment to someday give us all that He promised us in Christ.

2. **Read 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14. (a) In what ways do the words and characteristics used in these passages help you appreciate the sealing of the Holy Spirit as a guarantee (down payment) from God? (b) How would you explain this idea of the Holy Spirit as “down payment” to a young believer?**

Apart from the seal of ownership the Holy Spirit confers on the believer, and the assurance of our inheritance, the seal of the Holy Spirit plays yet another important role in the consummation of God’s redemptive purposes. In Acts 11, when the Apostles and other Jewish believers heard that the Gentiles had also received salvation, they were infuriated and took Apostle Peter to task. What put paid to the argument was when Apostle Peter said: *“As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ So, if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?”* When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, *“So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”*

3. **Read Acts 11:15-18; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:11-15, 18. (a) How significant do you see the sealing of the Holy Spirit in the fulfilment of God’s command to make disciples of all nations? (b) How should that affect the way we profile and relate with believers who do not ‘worship’ or look like we do? (c) In what ways should all these impact our day-to-day routines?**

Prayer: *Father, we thank You for the privilege and grace to receive the seal of the Holy Spirit which guarantees our eternal inheritance in Christ Jesus to the praise, glory and honor of your Holy name. Amen.*