

Guaranteed Security

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Text

“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were *sealed* (*sphragizo*) in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a *guarantee* (*arrabon*) of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.” (Eph 1:13-14; TM)

Arminian Sense of Tense

Eternal securitists consider Eph 1:13 a very strong affirmation of unconditional security for the regenerate believer. Arminians will agree that the promise applies to regenerate believers but insist that if a person stops believing then the promise no longer applies. After all, the promise is not made to unbelievers. So Ashby’s exegetical critique is that it is not the purpose of the passage to affirm the existence of *saved unbelievers*.¹ Surely, the passage knows nothing of *sealed unbelievers*. Therefore, the Arminian will appeal to the fact that we are sealed while we are believers, but then stipulate that we become unsealed if we stop believing.



Protection

Corner rejects Dillow’s statement that the seal denotes ownership or protection, but Corner’s counter is very poorly chosen as a repudiation of **protection**: “That *seal* [in Mt 27:66] didn’t **protect** the tomb from being opened by God’s angel when Jesus rose from the dead!”² But the question is, Was the seal intended to protect the tomb from being tampered with by the disciples? Certainly (Mt 27:64)! This is the reason “Pilate said to them, ‘You have a guard; go, make it as **secure** as you know how. And they went and made the grave **secure**, and along with the guard they set a **seal** on the stone” (Mt 27:65-66). The seal was placed there for security! How did Corner miss this double affirmation concerning the seal in the very text he chose for a proof text? The old adage that a proof text is a text taken out of context certainly seems to be true here.

From Corner’s own illustration, that of the sealed tomb, one should gather that the purpose of the seal was for security! If this is a picture of Eph 1:13, as Corner supposes, then the seal is a beautiful picture of eternal security. The purpose of the seal was to make the tomb as secure as possible by the one placing the seal. The seal was even guarded to make sure it was protected from tampering. If this is what our sealing means, then God has made us as secure as He possibly can in Christ by setting His army as guard over us so that no one can get into Christ to tamper with us; moreover, God has placed a stone over us that we cannot possibly move to get out of Christ. We are tamper resistant to the max!

In *Resurrection Factor*, Josh McDowell quotes Robertson as saying that the seal “could be placed on the stone only in the presence of the Roman guards who were left in charge....The purpose of this procedure was to prevent anyone from tampering with the grave’s contents.”³ Contrary to Corner, the purpose of the seal was not merely “to show that it wasn’t tampered with by Jesus’ disciples.”⁴ Much more, it was intended to **prevent** the disciples from tampering with the tomb. It was to make the tomb tamper proof, to protect it from tampering, to make it as secure as humanly possible. In *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, McDowell quotes Robertson verbatim, “The sealing was done in the presence of the Roman guards who were left in charge to **protect** this stamp of Roman authority and power” (emphasis added).⁵ Since Corner cannot even detect that the purpose of the Matthean seal was for protection, it is little wonder that he cannot see the purpose of the Pauline seal. Corner’s illustration gives his own argument a coronary.

Identification

But rather than dwell on Corner's blunder, let us give credibility to what Corner was awkwardly attempting to do, which is to show that the word *seal* has a semantic range. Some questioning this text from an Arminian perspective have noticed that the Greek dictionaries regard *seal* as referring to identification rather than security in Eph 1:13. So they have questioned the legitimacy of reading the idea of protection into this passage. This question, at least superficially, has more credibility than Corner's objection. After all, BDAG defines the usage of seal in Mt 27:66 as *to provide with a seal as a security measure*. This definition is in harmony with our analysis above concerning the tomb. But the definition BDAG provides for seal in Eph 1:13 is *to mark with a seal as a means of identification*. We will content ourselves with these definitions for *sphragizo* (*seal*) for the moment as making the Arminian position plausible and move our attention to *arrabon* (*pledge, down payment, guarantee*) for consideration as to the significance of this identification.

Pauline Sense of Tense

Arminians, of course, have assumed that we can lose the pledge. But since the pledge is a down payment, this is an unnatural inference. The down payment has been given to us (as the person who has believed) as guarantee that we (the person who has believed) will receive the inheritance. If we (as the person who has believed) do not get the inheritance, the down payment would still be ours. The promise is not made to the person who continues to believe, but to the one who has believed. It is an aorist participle, not a present participle.

The Arminian sense of the tense is nonsense. Had Paul meant to say that we are sealed *as long as* we believe (as in classical Arminianism), he could have easily have done so with *chronos*. He certainly uses this word elsewhere when he wishes to express temporal duration:

- The law has jurisdiction over a person *as long as* he lives (Rom 7:1).
- A wife is bound *as long as* her husband lives (1Cor 7:39).
- *As long as* the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave (Gal 4:1).

Or if he had meant that we are sealed *as often as* we believe (as in contemporary Arminianism), he certainly could have said so with *hosakis*.

- *As often as* you drink it, in remembrance of Me (1Cor 11:25).
- *As often as* you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death (1Cor 11:26).

But the Arminian argument in Eph 1:13 puts words in Paul's mouth that are not there. Paul simply uses an aorist participle to show punctiliar, antecedent action. Such participles are normally translated as some form of *having*, *after*, or *when*. For example, the first verb in the verse is also an aorist participle and is typically translated as *after listening* (NAS) or *after you heard* (KJV, NKJ, DRA, ERV, NJB, RWB, TNT, WEB). But it is also just as easily translated as *having heard* (ASV, DBY, RSV, YLT) or *when you heard* (CSB, NET, NIB, NIV, NRS). Likewise, although the second verb is most frequently translated as *having believed*, it could be just as well translated as *after you believed* (KJV, RWB, WEB) or *when you believed* (CSB, NET, NLT).

So let us not think that the translation of *having believed* is a perfect tense denoting faith that continues to the present. Likewise, Lenski's comment that hearing and believing are ingressive aorists makes no sense. Even Lenski has to admit: "The moment we come to faith the sealing occurs" (*Ephesians*, 382). Our sealing is not conditioned on our continuous believing anymore than it is on our continuous hearing. Paul is not saying that *as long as* or *as often as* we hear the gospel we are sealed. He is simply using a series of three aorist participles to give a sequential chain of punctiliar events:

you heard → *you believed* → *you were sealed*

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Lenski acknowledges “the aorist ‘were sealed’ fits one act of sealing” (Ephesians, 383). It is not protracted hearing or believing that results in sealing. Since the sealing occurs instantaneously, the very moment we first believe, it is conditioned on punctiliar faith, not linear believing. In other words, Paul does not say, “He who continuously hears and continuously believes is continuously sealed.”

Paul uses this aoristic chain to show his *ordo salutis*: hearing proceeds believing and believing proceeds sealing. (Incidentally, the Calvinistic notion that faith is a gift that comes after regeneration in Eph 2:8-9 is proven false by the Pauline sequence of events here in Eph 1:13.) What Paul is saying, therefore, is: “When you heard and subsequently believed, you were consequently sealed.” The sealing was the consequence of punctiliar hearing. Although these events are temporally simultaneous, they are logically sequential.

Guarantee

Whether or not the believing is impermanent, the sealing is permanent. How do we know this? Well, in addition to the sense of the tense and the absence of such words such as *chronos* and *hosakis*, we can make this affirmation because of Paul’s addition of *arrabon* (*pledge, down payment, guarantee*) in the next verse. Its commercial usage as a down payment is easy to understand.

I made a down payment on my house to the mortgage company to guarantee that I would finish paying off my house. If I do not finish paying off my house, I lose the down payment and the mortgage company gets to keep it. The giver of the down payment loses the down payment to the recipient of the transaction if the giver of the down payment fails to complete the transaction. In this case, God loses the Holy Spirit to us if He does not make good on His promise. God is the one making the promise in this context, not us.

Non-returnable

But the Arminian will immediately respond that we might return the down payment. But according to the Bible, God’s gifts are not so easily returned. In fact, they are non-returnable (Rom 11:29). To return the down payment to the owner, the owner would have to receive it. To receive it, He must take it. To take it, He must renege on His promise that the reception and retention of the down payment was conditioned on our initial acceptance. The down payment is ours to keep, not ours to return.

It is incumbent upon God to make the payments. If He does not, He loses His down payment—His security deposit. The purpose of the verse is not to entertain the hypothetical possibility that we can lose the deposit, but that God hypothetically would if He did not follow through on the completion of what He has started. It is His deposit, not ours. He is the one who stands to lose the deposit, not us. In making the assertion that we can return the down payment, the Arminian is standing the verse on its head by suggesting that we can lose the deposit. This is not the point of the verse. The only hypothetical loss that the verse entertains is the possibility that God might lose the deposit. The point of the verse is that the deposit is ours to keep if God does not fulfill the promise. If God fails to deliver, for whatever reason, even if it is because of some moral failure on our part such as not wanting the deposit anymore, He is not at liberty to take the deposit from us. It is ours to keep.

What is guaranteed

There can be no room for reasonable doubt as to the fact that the Holy Spirit is the *down payment* (i.e., *earnest*) in the NT passages. In addition to describing the Spirit as our down payment in Eph 1:14, Paul also repeats this illustration in 2Cor 5:5, where he uses *arrabon* to say, “Now He who has prepared us for this very thing [i.e., for having an immortal body] is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a *guarantee*” (NKJ). Is the guarantee that we will always want what God has prepared for us? No. The guarantee is that we will get what God has prepared for us. His fidelity, not ours, is

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guaranteed. Therefore, it is He “who guarantees our inheritance until we come into possession” (Eph 1:14; CJB). Even in the case of this translation, which might be taken as suggesting that it is *our* possession which awaits relation, the guarantee is that God will do what is necessary for us to come into possession of this inheritance. If we fail to inherit it, then it is because God has failed. He is the one who made the guarantee, not us. He is the guarantor; we are the guaranteed. God has given us the Holy Spirit as His security deposit to guarantee our security. The Lord “put His seal on us and gave us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee for the future” (2Cor 1:22; TM).

LN defines *arrabon* as “the first or initial payment of money or assets, as a guarantee for the completion of a transaction.” Friberg and the UBS also define it as a guarantee. But I still appreciate the way Strong defines it: “*earnest* (a part payment in advance for *security*).” The seal is a down payment which guarantees our security. But Paul conjoins the *seal* with *pledge* in both 1Cor 1:22 and Eph 1:13-14. Consequently, the seal must convey a guarantee of security in Paul’s mind. Now, to be sure, the word *seal* does not mean down payment, but there must be an overlapping somewhere of their semantic domain for the parallelism to make sense. Could it be that both words denote *protection* in the way he is using them? Perhaps we should reconsider whether or not the Arminian restriction of the word *seal* to mean *identification* has overlooked a link that Paul believes exists with *protection*.

Security

As we have already noted, BDAG does not define the usage of *seal* in Mt 27:66 as falling in the same section as that of Eph 1:14. The former verse is defined in the first section of BDAG’s definition as meaning *to provide with a seal as a security measure* but the latter is defined in the third section as *to mark with a seal as a means of identification*. So according to the standard biblical Greek dictionary of our day, the sealing of the tomb denotes *security* but the sealing of the believer refers to *identification*.

But now it is time for the rest of the story. BDAG goes on to say that the purpose of the seal in this latter section pertaining to the believer is *to mark with a seal as a means of identification...so that the mark denoting ownership also carries with it the protection of the owner* (bold mine). BDAG gives the sealing of believers in Rev 7:3 as the reference. But there is no reason to suppose that John’s imagery of believers being sealed on their foreheads is significantly different than Paul’s statement that believers are sealed in their hearts (2Cor 1:22). Therefore, in contrast to Corner, BDAG regards the third category in which it places Eph 1:13 as denoting both ownership and protection. Dillow was right all along in regarding this as a picture of OSAS.

Now, as to Corner, who likes to pit one proponent of OSAS against another, he should realize that this procedure is a two-edged sword. We can do the same with NOSAS. Corner says that the seal in Eph 1:13 does not denote ownership; Lenski says that it does. Which NOSAS proponent is correct? Lenski obviously. It denotes *the protection by the owner*.

As for the Arminians who point to the Greek lexicons and claim that Eph 1:14 is listed under identification rather than security, they are making a false dichotomy. There is no such sharp distinction between sealed for identification versus security. The identification shows ownership. We belong to God. We are under the protection of our owner. We are under God’s protection. This is identification that results in protection. It is an identification that results in a guarantee of security.

Thayer also puts Eph 1:13 in the third section of his definition. Like BDAG, he starts off this section by pointing out that seal is used in Rev 7:3 *to stamp his servants on their foreheads as destined for eternal salvation, and by this means to confirm their hopes*. Naturally, Thayer places Eph 1:13 into this same section as *respecting God, who by the gift of the Holy Spirit indicates who are his*. Ownership and the completion of our salvation and confirmation of our expectations of living with Christ in heaven are being affirmed.

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Constable summarizes: “God sealed them in Christ. This provided a guarantee of their eternal security” (Ephesians, 15). He defers fuller discussion to Woodcock who spends an entire article defending this thesis.⁶ Concerning the seal, Woodcock concludes, “What He owns, He also protects” (p. 147). “Since believers are God’s inviolable property, He will protect them. As a result, believers can enjoy complete security in their relationship with Him” (p. 150). This relational security is guaranteed by the seal.

Sphere

There is yet another confirmation of our security in this passage. Paul affirms that we are sealed **in Christ**. Translations vary, but even those translations which place the second *in Him* (*en ho*) as the object of believe (so that it is translated as *believe in Him*) are almost uniform in acknowledging that we are sealed in Him by virtue of the first *en ho*.

For example, the ESV reads: “*In him* (*en ho*) you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed *in him* (*en ho*), were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit” (Eph 1:13). In other words, when you believed *in Him*, you were sealed *in Him*. The RSV likewise reads, “*In him* you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed *in him*, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.” You not only believe in Christ; you are sealed **in Christ**.

Conversely we could also say that we are not only sealed, we are sealed **in Christ**. We are identified as belong to God. That is security. We saw that lexically. Now, we further see contextually that we are identified as being in Christ. This double security is reminiscent of Jn 10:28-29.

Yet Lenski claims, “The idea that the Christ is the container into which we were placed, and that this container is then sealed up, will scarcely find acceptance” (Ephesians, 383). On the contrary, we are not merely sealed *in connection with Christ* as Lenski claims. Christ is not sealed; we are. Taken together, Eph 1:13-14 and 2Cor 1:22 certainly justify the children’s object lesson in which you take a picture of a child, draw a picture of a dove on the back of it, place it in an envelope labeled Christ, and then seal it. There is a double sealing, a sealing of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and of us in Christ. Of course, there are other texts in which Paul talks about our being baptized into Christ (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27) by the Spirit (1Cor 12:13) so that by God’s doing we are in Christ (1Cor 1:30) and new creatures in Christ (2Cor 5:17) created in Christ (Eph 2:10). But for the purpose of our illustration, we will just picture our double sealing. (For our animation of the following illustration, see [Double Seal](#).)



But a variation of this object lesson will allow us to have fun with the Arminian insistence of identification and connection. Take a picture of the child, or a Xerox[®] copy of it, and smear glue all over the back and front of it. Then drop it into a clear Zip Lock[®] container labeled Christ, or better yet, *Our Identification In Christ*. After all, it is a photo ID. Then glue the container shut. The picture will

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not only be in the container, it will be connected to the container. The picture will not only retain its own identity, but also that of the container. Then you can show a picture of your driver's license (or a heated ID badge) and explain that it works something like this procedure. Your picture is permanently part of the container. You cannot remove the picture without doing violence to both the container and the glue keeping it within the container. The glue represents the Holy Spirit of course, and the plastic represents Christ. Explain that the only way to take the picture out of the container would be to cut it out, in which case the picture gets to keep the glue and the plastic. If you cut the picture out to illustrate this point, you could burn the picture to show the dark conclusion to which Arminianism leads if the passage is properly interpreted. The only way for you to burn in hell is for the Holy Spirit and Christ (the glue and plastic) to burn there with you.

Possession

That which is sealed in Eph 1:13 is identified as God's possession by virtue of the lexical meaning of the word *seal*. The sealing denotes ownership in this context. But one does not have to know Greek to deduce this fact. The very next verse says that the pledge "is given as a guarantee of our inheritance, for the redemption of God's own **possession**" (TM). In denying that the seal denotes ownership in v. 13, Corner has ignored v. 14 which says that we are God's *purchased possession* (*peripoiesis*; NKJV). Does this not mean that He owns us? Of course it does! Corner has ripped the seal out of its context in claiming that it does not indicate God's ownership in this context. How can he be so blind as to deny that the seal refers to *ownership* when the very next verse explicitly says that we are God's own *possession* (*peripoiesis*)?

There is no question that the *preserving* (*peripoiesis*) of our soul requires persevering faith in Heb 10:29. But the salvation of our soul is a misthological concept. The sealing is a soteriological concept regarding the redemption of our body. Still, there is no reason that we could not follow the example of those like Wuest who refer to the general idea of *peripoiesis* as *preserving for one's self* in the Ephesian context. We are God's purchased possession which He preserves for Himself. Unlike Heb 10:29, here in the Ephesian passage God is the preserver. Your identification as God's possession guarantee's God's protection. If an Arminian cannot find security in his identity in Christ in this passage, then he needs to have his exegetical eyes examined.

Metaphysical Union

Paul specifies the location of this sealing pledge as our heart: "Who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge" (2Cor 1:22). In Modern Greek, *arrabon* is used of an engagement ring. But in the Koine Greek in which Paul is expressing our security, he does not locate the seal on our finger but in our hearts. Engagement rings can be returned, sealed hearts cannot. Even in the physical arena, you cannot cut out your own heart. Many might object that someone could climb up on the operating table and let the devil cut out their transformed heart and in this way become separated from Christ. But Paul has ruled out anyone receiving such an assisting hand from the devil in Rom 8:35-39. The devil does not have a license from God to perform this kind of surgery.

Some might respond that Paul is not referring to our physical heart, so this illustration is too literal. To be sure, Paul is metaphysically referring to our heart. As a matter of fact, he refers to it as our spirit on another occasions. For example, in 1Cor 6:17 he says, "But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him." In Rom 8:10 he likewise states, "And if Christ is in you, though the body is [experientially] dead because of sin, yet the spirit is [ontologically] alive because of [imputational] righteousness." As we have shown elsewhere, Rom 8:10 proves that Rom 8:13 is not saying that we can die spiritually. Christ remains in a believer's spirit even if the believer is experientially dead in sin. See [Static Versus Dynamic Life](#).

But the point in our present discussion is that having the Spirit dwelling in us is equated with having the Spirit of Christ in our spirit and belonging to Christ (Rom 8:9). Metaphysically speaking, we

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would have to open up our spirit and take out the Spirit of Christ if we wished to unseal ourselves. But we do not have the tools by which to perform such an operation. We did not give birth to ourselves, and we cannot un-birth ourselves. We can commit physical suicide, but we cannot commit spiritual suicide. We can only kill the body (Lk 12:4). Our literal illustration above well illustrates the metaphysical impossibility facing us if contemplate spiritual suicide.

Paul gives us a very easy means by which to understand the point he is making concerning being spiritually joined to the Lord in 1Cor 6:17 since he compares it to sex: “The one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her” because “the two will become one flesh” (1Cor 6:16). You cannot crawl into bed with a harlot and then claim to be unaffected by it when you crawl out of bed. That experience becomes a part of you (and you will be judged for it). Paul’s indication is that there is something lasting about the experience. He is also informing us through various illustrations, such as seals and pledges, that there is something lasting about our spiritual union with the Lord. You cannot go back and become a spiritual virgin after your spiritual union with the Lord anymore than you can go back and become a physical virgin after your physical union with a harlot.

God’s Glory

Paul concludes Eph 1:14 by saying that this guaranteed redemption is *to the praise of His glory (doxa)*. It is not to the praise of the glory of our perseverance but to the praise of the glory of His preservation. Contrary to Calvinianism, our perseverance cannot be a condition for the retention of our redemption; otherwise, we would get to share the glory for our redemption. The exclusive nature of this doxology rules out our cooperation in retaining this redemption. Sure we may work in coming to saving faith, but this punctiliar response of faith has no meritorious value. But our subsequent faith does have meritorious value and can result in our praise (1Pet 1:7). Therefore, sealing cannot be conditioned on our subsequent faith. Sealing is based on our initial faith, not our persevering in faith. Our possession of life was, and remains, conditioned on our punctiliar response of faith so that God’s grace may be solely glorified in that our redemption was, and is, not conditioned on anything meritorious that we do.

Devil’s Glory

God is the obvious sealer in this passage. The Lord’s promise prevents Him from taking the Spirit from us or from unsealing us. And yet the claim is often made that we can unseal ourselves and send the Holy Spirit away by means of our free will. Let us suppose for the moment that everything we have said above is wrong and that we can in fact stand the verse on its head with our perverted minds, find a loop hole that Paul did not anticipate, unseal ourselves, and force the Holy Spirit to leave. Who gets the credit? We do. Right? Yes. But not exclusively. As we burn in hell, we will have to share credit with Satan for our achievement of overpowering the Holy Spirit and breaking God’s unconditional promise. After all, once we meet the condition of punctiliar faith, it was incumbent upon God to keep His promise. There are no more conditions for us to keep. There were no strings attached. So let us assume that we can take this *engagement ring* (a contemporary translation for *arrabon*) and throw it back in God’s face. He does not have the right to take it, but we have the audacity to return it.

Will we be able to take sole responsibility for our action? No. Satan will be able to step up to God and say, “See what I made him do. Throw that ring right back in Your face.” This is not an affirmation of the devil-made-me-do-it philosophy. It is simply an acknowledgement that Satan will be able to at least claim partial credit by influentially (rather than irresistibly) causing us to throw the ring back in God’s face. Satan will be able to say, “I put him up to it. I get partial credit for his rebellion. I had a hand in it.” It does not matter if the stimulus was from our old sin nature. The devil can take considerable credit for that also. We did it with the devil’s helpful influence. We were acting under his influence. If we can squirm out of Christ, then the devil can boast to Christ that he had a part to play in it. Can this happen? Absolutely not!

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We cannot separate ourselves from Christ without giving the devil room to boast. By cutting off any room for the devil to boast in Rom 8:35-39, Paul cuts off any avenue by which we can separate ourselves from Christ. Paul does the same thing in Eph 1:13-14 and its related passages pertaining to the seal and pledge. God has pledged to take the entire responsibility upon Himself to see to it that we bodily reach immortality and arrive safely home. God has a life grip on us that will not let go (2Cor 5:4-8).

Rabbits

Shank and Corner want to chase NOSAS rabbits in an attempt to try to prove that Paul cannot mean what he says.⁷ Sure Christians can be *cut off* in Rom 11:22 and *severed from Christ* in Gal 5:4. Hunting such Calvinian rabbits can be fun. But Dillow has already skinned those rabbits, and we tan their hides in the *Outer Darkness*. Suffice it to say here that being severed experientially and misthologically does not prove that one can be severed ontologically or positionally.

We have basically contented ourselves here with the affirmations that Paul makes concerning our sealing. We will not pull any further OSAS rabbits out of the hat to distract from these texts: such as the affirmation that believers will never perish (Jn 10:28), that the Spirit will abide with us forever (Jn 14:16), and that Christ will never leave us (Heb 13:5). Those texts deserve their own treatment in their contexts.

Nonetheless, there are a couple of NOSAS rabbits worthy of response. Woodcock acknowledges that “Paul’s language in Ephesians 4:30 probably echoes that of Isaiah 63:10,” however, Woodcock goes on to add, “But his context and the point he made are different....Paul was writing in the context of the New Covenant, under which God has saved, sealed, and guaranteed the inheritance of the redeemed” (p. 161). In Is 63:10, God redeemed Israel, but Israel rebelled and grieved the Holy Spirit, so God became their enemy. That possibility still exists in the NT (Jam 4:4). But there is a new dimension in the New Testament. In the NT we are now sealed with the Spirit as a down payment. He cannot leave us. However, the Spirit could leave OT believers (Ps 51:11).

Corner brings up a strawman version of the OSAS as protesting: “God would never give his Spirit to later take it away from a person” (374). Corner brushes away this caricature of OSAS with a reference to 1Sam 16:14 in which “the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul.” First of all, securitists have long acknowledged that in the OT the Spirit could come and go upon a person.⁸ So Corner is deliberately misrepresenting the OSAS position. Second, being sealing by the Spirit (2Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30), being given the Spirit as a down payment (2Cor 1:22; 2Cor 5:5; Eph 1:14), and being given the Spirit as a gift (Acts 2:38; 10:45) are NT phenomena. Such matters are irrevocable (Rom 11:29).

Granted, Corner wants to limit the promise in Rom 11:29 to a nationalistic promise rather than individualistic guarantee (pp. 418-419). But he then turns around and pits Chafer against Pink as OSAS proponents who cannot agree as to whether or not the context is exclusively nationalistic (p. 490-491). Chafer takes the nationalistic route while Pink takes the individualistic alternative. But Pink is a conditional securitist! It is a shame, perhaps even a scam, for Corner to pretend that conditional securitists on the Calvinistic side of the fence are “proponents of OSAS.”⁹ There is no excuse for someone who is familiar with FG writings to act as if the writings of Pink and his ilk are written from the same perspective as those who genuinely believe in eternal security. Pink, whom Corner cites, no less than Corner himself, believes that you must *persevere or perish* (p. 491). Just because a Calvinistic book bears the title *Eternal Security*, this does not mean that it genuinely affirms eternal security. Pink is not a securitist.

But aside from Corner’s mismatch, Corner paints himself into a corner with his inconsistent treatments of Rom 11:22 and 29. If 11:22 teaches that an individual can be *cut off*, as Corner

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repeatedly insists,¹⁰ then how can Corner turn around and claim that 11:29 is not individualistic. If he can use 11:22 individualistically, then how can he criticize OSAS for doing so in 11:29. OSAS claims that the principle of irrevocability in 11:29 applies individualistically as well. Corner wants to limit the irrevocability of v. 29 pluralistically to Israel. But the context pertaining to Israel does not commence in v. 25—the point to which Corner takes his readers.

As every well-informed reader knows, this whole section in Romans is dealing with Israel (Rom 9-11). The natural branches being cut off in this very context (11:17-24) refer to Israel! It is irresponsible for Corner to claim that irrevocability in v. 29 must be limited nationalistically to Israel when he himself insists that the cutting off in the same context has individualistic applicability. We deal with the meaning of these texts in the *Outer Darkness* and need not detain ourselves with such matters here, other than to mention that being cut off in the outer darkness poses no conflict with the soteriological security Paul pictures in Eph 1:13-14.¹¹

Summary

The purpose of this seal in Eph 1:13 in identifying us as belonging to God is to guarantee our redemption as His possession. In identifying us as His possession, the seal guarantees us redemption. We find absolute security in our identity in this passage. The seal identifies us as His. Consequently, there are multiple attestations of security in Eph 1:13-14: the tense of the verbs, the meanings of *seal* and *down payment*, the sphere, the affirmation of our being God's *possession*, and the fact that we do not get any glory. We have aspectual, lexical, spherical, and doxological security in this context. Our soteriological security is completely assured. OSAS is the only logical conclusion. Any doubt which says that we can become unsealed has been found to have no right to exist. There comes a time when you simply have to exegetically grab your doubt by the throat and deny its right to exist. That time is now. To do otherwise is to doubt the integrity of the One who has made the promise. For our animation of the following illustration, see [Choke doubt](#).



For further discussion, see the *GES Chat* at <http://www.faithalone.org/chat.html>.

For further explanation, see my upcoming book *The Outer Darkness*.

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¹ Stephen M. Ashby, *Four Views on Eternal Security*, 167.

² Daniel D. Corner, *The Believer's Conditional Security*, 446. Emphasis his.

³ Josh McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, 59.

⁴ Corner, 446.

⁵ Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, revised edition, 222.

⁶ Eldon Woodcock, "The Seal of the Holy Spirit," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155:618 (April-June 1998):139-63.

⁷ Shank devotes ch. 8 of *Life in the Son* to such conceptual parallels.

⁸ Robert Gromacki, *Is Salvation Forever?*, 160-165.

⁹ Corner, 476. On this page Corner labels the FG view of OSAS as the *extreme view* and the Calvinistic view as the *moderate view* and tells his readers that there is only a slight difference between the two! After providing this slight-of-hand definition, he then goes on to show that there are considerable differences between the two camps after all.

¹⁰ Corner, *Security*, 256, 323, 378, 399, 414, 445, 562-565, 611, 691.

¹¹ This article is less than half the length of the corresponding appendix in the *Outer Darkness* dealing with this subject matter. See that discussion for a more in-depth treatment.