



Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – December 15, 2022

The Lord be with you.

I just love Advent and Christmas. I mean, I feel like a little boy this time to hear, it's such a wonderful season as we look back and as we look ahead, we look back to Christ's first advent as a tiny, vulnerable, helpless newborn lying in a feeding trough for cattle. And we also are looking ahead, eagerly looking ahead to Christ, second Advent, when he will put right this weary broken world. Many times, in our Christmas carols, we squeeze Jesus' two Advents into one song, you might have in just one Verse. We're singing of Jesus as a little baby in a manger. In Jesus as King of Kings, Lord of the Lords. Who was ruler overall. So that you and I today, we are living in that time between... That time between Christ to advents. So that we are right now, we are in a time of disease, of war, of injustice, of suffering, and for this time, God has given to us a very special gift as we eagerly wait for the day when Christ makes everything right.

Now we learn about this special gift from God in Ephesians Chapter 1, verses 13 and 14. I read, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in Christ, you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit. This is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people to the praise of His glory.

Notice here that the postal is saying, that when you believe in Christ. When you put your trust in him, that at that moment, God the Father seals you with the Holy Spirit, that God puts his very spirit into you in order to seal you, to mark you out as his own, belonging to him. He seals you for safe keeping to keep you forever safe for heaven. And then Paul says that God gives to you the Holy Spirit, as He says, As the pledge of our inheritance. I wonder, does that word inheritance get your attention? We all want an inheritance, but you and I have such an incredible inheritance that is coming to us from God. And God has put His Holy Spirit in you and me as the pledge of our inheritance, we can be sure that we will receive it.

Now, this Greek word, translate it as pledge, it is an interesting word. It is a word that Paul's readers, that they would have immediately understood as, it is the word arrabon, that's A-R-R-A-B- O-N. And it is a word from the world of business and trade, arrabon means simply this. It is an earnest payment, a down payment. Why we know what it is to make an earnest payment on a house or a down payment on a car. That's the idea here, that an arrabon in that world, it was the guarantee that more was coming, it was the pledge that the full amount promised is coming, you



water from rock

can be sure of it, that the Holy Spirit in you and me, it is the arrabon, it is the Pledge of God's inheritance for you and me. Now, here in my notes, I have the use of the word arrabon that was found. Well, it was found written on a piece of papyri in the first century, and here it tells of a woman who was selling the cow, and it says that she has paid an arrabon of 1000 drachma. That is the down payment, the earnest payment, the possession of that 1000 drachma is the guarantee that she will receive the full amount.

Now, if you were to go to modern Greece, this same word arrabon today is use of an engagement ring. As a man slips a ring on his beloved's finger, it is with the promise that they will meet at the altar, it is a pledge, it is a guarantee. And so you get a sense of what Paul is saying here. That the moment that you trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior, God the Father puts in you, His Holy Spirit as his promise, his arrabon, his down payment, his earnest payment of glory coming. So we see the Holy Spirit is the arrabon of God's investment in you. The Holy Spirit in you says that God treasures you. As God gives to you His very self, his spirit, and his Holy Spirit in you. It is the down payment. The earnest payment of blessing to come, it means that you will share with God in His very life and glory.

So today, as you and I are between the two advents, yes, we celebrate Christ's first coming, and we eagerly look for His coming again, but this time in between, it is a time of trouble, of suffering, of disease, of an uncertainty. And the Holy Spirit in you that God's very self in you, as His promise, his sure, guarantee that everything that God has ever promised to you and me, it will be ours. And that's why early Christians were people have such a great hope and joy... Yes, in the midst of persecution, in trouble because they were sealed safe by the Holy Spirit, who's very presence in them, it was God's pledge, his earnest payment of glory to come. I asked my granddaughter the other night, I asked how many days until Christmas... And you know, she didn't have to stop and think about it, she didn't have to count up the days when she knew she just like that how many days until Christmas as she was so eagerly looking forward to it. Well, you and I don't know how many days until we will see Christ. But we do even we look forward to it. Because the Holy Spirit has sealed us safe as belonging to God. And the Holy Spirit in you and me, it's God's arrabon, his earnest payment, his down payment of the glory that is coming. And you know, I can't wait.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.