



EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT

A *pledge* or *surety* (*'erabon*) is an article(s) of value given by a buyer to a seller to guarantee a future payment in full. Judah gave Tamar his cylinder seal, its cord, and his staff as a pledge for the kid he owed her (Gen. 38:12–19); she was expected to return his pledge when full payment was made (Gen. 38:20–23). A pledge is distinct from the object of contract and is never used of earnest money in the Old Testament (the word may have had this technical meaning but we have no example of it in Hebrew literature). *'erabon* is a legal/commercial loanword from Phoenician (*'rbn*): *'rbn* in Ugaritic; *arrabon* in Greek; *arrabo* in Latin, *les arrhes* in French. It comes from the root *'rb* which means *to guarantee with a pledge*, e.g., to offer surety for the debts of another (Prov. 6:1; 20:16).

The word *arrabon* is used in Greek of both a pledge to be returned upon full payment (Menander, *Fragmenta*; Gen. 38:17, 18, 20 LXX) and earnest money applied to the purchase price (Isaeus, *Oration 8, De Circo*; Aristotle, *Politics* I.11; Menander, *Fragmenta*; papyri). An earnest is goods or money given in advance by a buyer to a seller as a down-payment to guarantee a future payment in full. An earnest is a partial payment of what will be fully paid later—a promise of more (goods or money) to come. An earnest may be small or large: a woman paid 14 drachmae earnest money for a house in Egypt that sold for 21 drachmae—she owed 7 more drachmae to complete the purchase (P. Lond. 334, a receipt for earnest money written in A.D. 166). An earnest is usually forfeited if the buyer backs out or is unable to complete the purchase; and the seller pays double for reneging: (1) "If a man gives an earnest to his neighbor and says, If I retract, my earnest shall be forfeit to thee; and the neighbor says, If I retract, I shall double thy earnest to thee" (Talmud, *Baba Metzia*); (2) "if they fail to make the conveyance, they shall forfeit double the earnest-money with an additional one half and interest...We...acknowledge that we have received... the 14 drachmae of silver as irrepudiable earnest-money" (P. Lond. 334).

1. The earnest is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
2. This earnest is one of the many blessings of the New Covenant (Ezek. 36:27).
3. The earnest includes all present ministries of the Spirit to Church Age believers: indwelling—the fountainhead (Ezek. 36:27; John 14:16–17), baptizing (Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13), filling (Eph. 5:18), producing fruit (Gal. 5:22–23), giving spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:11), helping (John 14:16–17, 26; 15:26; 16:7), empowering to witness (Acts 1:8), interceding (Rom. 8:26–27), guiding (Rom. 8:14), defending (Matt. 10:17–20; Mark 13:9–11; Luke 12:11–12), and teaching (John 16:13).
4. The earnest is given by God the Father as a pledge or promise of our future inheritance (2 Cor. 1:21–22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14).
5. This earnest belongs to us and is payment in advance of a part of our inheritance contributing to and insuring full payment in the Millennial Kingdom.
6. We get to own, use, and enjoy a portion of our inheritance now!
7. The earnest or indwelling of the Spirit is a small (large?) part of our future inheritance.
8. Our earnest guarantees more inheritance to come: praise ("well done"), rewards, treasures in heaven, position (rank) and privilege (access to the King), crowns, cities to rule with Christ.
9. We will receive the rest of our inheritance because the Holy Spirit is too much of a down-payment for the Father to forfeit.
10. As a seller keeps both the earnest and future payments, so a believer keeps the Holy Spirit forever (Isa. 59:21; John 14:16–17) and his future inheritance forever (2 Cor. 4:17–18).
11. Our earnest is working capital to increase the value of our future inheritance—by doing good works and using our spiritual gifts.
12. We will receive the rest of our inheritance at the Judgment Seat of Christ.