

The Word of God begins with a picture of redemption by Christ in the creation, ruin, and recreation of the world (Genesis 1:1-3). It closes with the revealed consummation of Christ's redemptive work in the Book of Revelation. And everything in the Book of God from Genesis 1:11 to Revelation 22:21 explains this great work of God to us.
Don Fortner

God is sovereign in the exercise of His grace. This of necessity, for grace is favor shown to the undeserving, yes, to the Hell-deserving. Arthur Pink

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

70. Q. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglect of, or doing any thing against the honour and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations (Mt. 15:4-6; Ez. 34:24; Rom. 13:8).

71. Q. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment (Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:2, 3).

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Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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THE SEAL OF THE SPIRIT

Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 2 Corinthians 1:22

Many years ago I heard a preacher dealing with the sealing of the Holy Spirit. He used as an illustration the common canning process wherein food is preserved by sealing in jars. He was quite accurate as to the process and very graphic in his description. He carefully pointed out that if that seal were broken the food would spoil. He made a valid point in that we are indeed kept by the power of the Holy Spirit and thus preserved in salvation. It would seem, however, that he erred in that the terms here are legal ones and have a special application to the claim of God upon His people.

A seal has often been used to indicate several things with respect to a document and official seals are still attached to many documents requiring certification. Darius placed his own seal on the den of lions to assure that there would be no unauthorized opening of it. Typically there are three reasons for a seal being attached to something. The first is to guarantee that the document or property is authentic – a prevention against fraud. A second reason is to identify ownership of the item. A third reason is to prevent tampering. It would seem that any or all of these could be the result of the “sealing” to which Paul here referred. He was about the business of defending both his character and office as an Apostle and so would claim divine authentication by virtue of the Holy Spirit in his heart. A further conclusion could be drawn to the other two of these things in that Paul claimed to be the “prisoner of Jesus Christ,” and would refer to God as “Whose I am and Whom I

serve (Acts 27:23).” It was, also a matter of certainty to Paul that the contents of his heart were not to be taken, contaminated or disturbed in any way from without. In that he spoke of being “stablished” in Christ and anointed of God it would seem that the focus was on the visible effect of the seal of the Spirit upon Him.

Paul used a similar approach in assuring the Ephesians. After leading them through the steps whereby God had by His own sovereign will and purpose brought them to belief of the truth they were further assured in this way: *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14.* This was a seal both seen and experienced. It was neither written with pen and ink nor stamped on one like some tattoo. It is recorded in the “fleshy tables of the heart” and is evidenced by a changed life.

Men often place ornate designs and insignias on their seals. Things that indicate some admirable quality or state are often depicted (witness the Great Seal of the United States). But, to what is the Seal of the Spirit likened and to whom does it appear? There is no question that the claim of Christ is registered and indelibly stamped on His people. We would not lose sight of the objective of God in His predestinating love: *For whom he did foreknow,*

he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:29. We are bidden to “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh.” Christ would use the illustration of possession with a coin. The image and superscription of Caesar on a penny was contrasted with the possession of God. So it is the image of Christ is stamped on His people by the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit bringing about Christ in us is the seal and it will be seen as such.

As we read with great delight of the fruit of the Spirit we understand that these things in us are the Lord’s seal of assurance to us. Those things displayed in our lives are the seal of the Spirit on us and those effects may be noted. That seal is seen in the example of Paul whose life was by the “faith of the Son of God.” He is the “author and finisher of our faith.” Paul would confess to being constrained by the Love of Christ in the acknowledgment of redemption accomplished. It is that love which the Holy Spirit “sheds abroad in our hearts.” That seal upon the Lord’s people depicts a hope the likes of which this world has no knowledge. It is *To*

whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Colossians 1:27. That triad of faith, hope and love appears often as the identifying marks of believers. We see it at Thessalonica: *Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; 1 Thessalonians 1:3.* That seal depicts the abiding qualities which are identified in Christ first and then found abiding in the lives of His people. *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. 1 Corinthians 13:13.*

The Lord taught that His people would be recognizable by the world. We are reminded of: *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. John 13:35.* And, the seal of the Lord is discernible by those upon whom it is placed: *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 1 John 3:14.* Is it so with you that “after that ye believed you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise?” *bhs*

Empowered for Holiness – Randy Alcorn in *Seeing the Unseen*

What an encouragement to know that even if no one else knows our needs and is praying for us, Christ does and is. Don’t forget that “the one [Christ] who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). As powerful as the evil one is to tempt us, God is infinitely more powerful to deliver us and has given us in Christ all the resources we need to live godly lives. “Be holy for I am holy.” God is the reason we should be holy. But He’s also the empowerment for our holiness. Many of us are convinced we should be more holy, but we’ve gone about it wrong. To be holy in our strength, and for our glory, is to be distinctly unholy. To be holy in Christ’s strength and for His glory...that’s our calling, and our joy. Christ intercedes for us (Romans 8:34) for the same reason we intercede for each other—we need help and we need God’s power to resist temptation and live holy lives. Since the prayers of a righteous man are effective (James 5:16, NIV), what could be more effective than Christ’s prayers for us? What an encouragement to know that even if no one else knows our needs and is praying for us, Christ does and is. Perspectives from God’s Word “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the

present age" (Titus 2:11–12). "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Perspectives from God's People "The Spirit's work is not to make us holy, in order that we may be pardoned; but to show us the cross, where the pardon is to be found by the unholy; so that having found the pardon there, we may begin the life of holiness to which we are called." —Horatius Bonar "Lord, make me as holy as it is possible for a saved sinner to be." —Robert Murray M'Cheyne

ACTIVITY IN DUTY

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night comes, when no man can work." — John 9:4.

How constant and unremitting was Jesus in the service of His Heavenly Father! "He rose a great while before day;" — and when His secret communion was over, then His public work began. It mattered not to Him where He was: whether on the bosom of the deep, or a mountain slope — in the desert, or at a well side — the "gracious words" always "proceeded out of His mouth." He redeemed every precious moment! Oh, how our most unceasing activities pale into nothing, before such an example as this! Would that we could remember that each of us has some great mission to perform for God — that true religion is not a thing of dreamy sentimentalism — but of energetic practical action; moreover, that no trade, no profession, no position, however high or however humble in the scale of society — can disqualify for this life of Christian activity and usefulness! Who were the writers in the Bible? We have among them a king — a lawgiver — a herdsman — a tax collector — a physician! Nor is it to high spheres, or to great services only, that God looks. The widow's mite and Mary's "alabaster box of ointment" are recorded as examples for imitation by the Holy Spirit, while many more munificent deeds are passed by unrecorded. We believe that God says, regarding the attempt of many a humble Christian to serve Him by active duty, "I saw that effort, that feeble effort, to serve and glorify Me; it was the very feebleness of it I loved!" Did it ever strike you, that notwithstanding the dignity of Christ, and the activity of Christ — how little success comparatively He met with in His public work? We read of no numerous conversions; no Pentecostal revivals in the course of His ministry. May not this well encourage us — in the absence of great outward results? He sets up no higher standard than this — "She has done what she could." An artist may be great in painting a peasant — as well as a king. Yes, and if laid aside from the activities of the Christian life, we can equally glorify God by passive endurance. "Who am I," said Luther, when he witnessed the patience of a great sufferer, "who am I? a wordy preacher in comparison with this great doer." Reader! do not forget the motive of our motto verse, "The night comes!" Soon our tale shall be told; our little day is flitting fast — the shadows of night are falling. "Our span length of time," as Rutherford says, "will come to an inch." What if the eleventh hour should strike after having been "idle all the day?" A long lifetime of opportunities allowed to pass unemployed and unimproved — and absolutely nothing done for God! A judgment-day arrived at — our golden moments squandered — our talents untraded on — our work undone — met at the bar of Heaven with the withering repulse, "Inasmuch as you did it not." "The time we have lost," says Richard Baxter, "cannot be recalled; should we not then redeem and improve the little that remains? If a traveler sleeps or trifles most of the day — he must travel so much the faster in the evening, or fall short of his journey's end." "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." John MacDuff