

"Nor is God known by the intellect. "God is Spirit" (John 4:24), and therefore can only be known spiritually. But fallen man is not spiritual, he is carnal. He is dead to all that is spiritual. Unless he is born again supernaturally brought from death unto life, miraculously translated out of darkness into light, he cannot even see the things of God (John 3:3), still less apprehend them (1 Corinthians 2:14). The Holy Spirit has to shine in our hearts (not intellects) in order to give us "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). And even that spiritual knowledge is but fragmentary. The regenerated soul has to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus (2 Peter 3:18)."~Arthur Pink, "The Attributes of God"

SPURGEON'S CATECHISM

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

57.Q. Which is the seventh commandment?

LVII. A. The seventh commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

58.Q. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

LVIII. A. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts (Matt. 5:28; Col. 4:6), words (Eph. 5:4; 2 Tim. 2:22), and actions (Eph. 5:3).

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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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SOVEREIGNTY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Acts 2:23

The God of the Bible is an absolute Sovereign. This concept was wrested from the minds of men by the temptation and ultimate fall in the Garden. Part of the deception was “...ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” That thought has persisted in that men think themselves to be free agents with the ability to rise to the level of divine acceptance. The thought of one exercising such dominance over them so as to make even their evil acts to serve His purpose is hateful to them. Many pay lip-service to a belief in the sovereignty of God. They freely use such terms as “almighty,” “all-wise” and “all-powerful” but insist that the dominion stops at their will.

The following definitions of “sovereign” are taken from the Webster’s Dictionary of 1828. (1) *Supreme in power; possessing supreme dominion; as a sovereign ruler of the universe.* (2) *Supreme; superior to all others; chief; God is the sovereign good of all who love and obey Him.* (3) *Supremely efficacious; superior to all others; predominant; effectual; as a sovereign remedy.* As we carry these thoughts to the Word of God we find these things to be confirmed. Peter reinforced this thought with regard, especially, to the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ our Lord.

This text tells of a most profound exercise of the sovereignty of God. It would seem that the disciples thought that all had gone awry and was lost as they witnessed the suffering and death of Christ our Lord. They could not grasp that the

One who had raised the dead would Himself be raised and salvation would be accomplished. The sovereignty of God was not in their thoughts. But, when the day of Pentecost was fully come and the Holy Spirit empowered them and brought to their minds the living truth He had given them, the sovereignty of God was the dominant issue. Peter related many things to the amazed crowd, but none so great as the fact that the Lamb of God had been delivered up at precisely the time and in precisely the manner determined from before the foundation of the world. God in perfect wisdom and exercising absolute control had before determined every detail and assured that the needs of every one of His people were met in what took place at Calvary. This was far removed from any concept that men might have as to how salvation would be determined. He was delivered up or surrendered to those who cruelly killed Him. His death was specifically marked out in accordance with the divine design and forethought of God. There was much to accomplish and there could be no mistakes. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Romans 8:32.* Those things to be given to His people were the outcome of an eternal determination by the ultimate Sovereign and they are given for our good and His glory.

This account needs to be rehearsed in the ears of those who would seem to charge God in the matters of human tragedy and sorrow. We

have heard the question. "How could God allow this to happen?" The answer is "how could he have allowed His Son to die in this manner?" He did not allow in either case – it was a matter of determination that it should happen!

Does Peter at this point contradict himself? He has attributed the death of Christ as accomplishing the will and purpose of a determined Sovereign. Then he charges the Jews with the death of Christ. They had taken Him and given Him into the hands of the Romans demanding His crucifixion. Ownership for this great sin was laid squarely at their feet. It is probable that some of them that had cried out "we will not have this man to rule over us," were present. Had He not said to them on one occasion "fill ye up the measure of your fathers," indicating that they would have done what they were going to do at the appointed time? Peter did not hesitate to press this charge on them. He charged them with killing the Prince of Life. See Acts 3:15. On two other occasions he charges them with crucifying Him and hanging Him on a tree. See Acts 4:10 and 5:30. It is evident that they were fully culpable in the death of Christ and yet God's purpose in obtaining salvation was fully accomplished.

The fact is that what God did was fully in accordance with His own will and purpose

and what men did was according to their will and purpose. It was the purpose of God that man should display the infinite extent of human depravity. It would also serve the purpose of bringing the Lamb to the place of sacrifice where the wrath of man against God would be displayed and the wrath of God against man would be felt in the soul of Christ. His soul was there made an offering for sin in the behalf of His people, for all that would ever call upon His Name. Here, true believers see the awfulness of sin (their sin) and learn of the price paid for their redemption. Those who die in unbelief have the testimony of the death of Christ as the assurance of their eternal punishment.

Charles Spurgeon was asked how he could reconcile divine sovereignty and human responsibility to which he replied "I would never try to reconcile friends." We are not required to understand it all, but we must see redemption in Christ alone. When Peter's message was finished many felt the stabbing of Holy Spirit conviction is their hearts as they confessed their guilt, and were graciously brought to repentance toward God and faith in Christ Jesus. The sovereignty of God demands that we seek only to Him for mercy in the matter of sin and guilt discovered. The efficacious remedy is found in Christ. *bhs*

The essential thing in the Christian life!

(J.R. Miller)

"No longer do I call you servants; but I have called you friends!" John 15:15

For myself, after all my years of teaching and helping others, and all my experiences as a Christian, my whole creed is summed up into one little sentence, "Christ and I are friends!" No friend in all the world is so near to me as He is. I trust Him, I love Him. I take everything to Him, I lay every burden upon Him. I go to Him for wisdom, for help, for the love I need in my own heart. He is everything to me as Friend.

Christ is my personal Friend. He is my dearest, truest, strongest and best Friend!

Then for myself, my whole duty is summed up in being a friend of Christ's. He says, "You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you." This includes all Scripture commands.

In telling you this, I want to help you to understand that the essential thing in the Christian life is knowing Christ, trusting Him, loving Him, following Him, having Christ for your Friend--and being His friend.

The secret of a beautiful life is living in unbroken fellowship with Christ, under the influence of His presence, and the inspiration of His love and grace.

The Seven Churches in Asia

The Downward Spiral and Then the Upward Victory

Rev. 1:11; 2:1-3:22

A few thoughts by Pastor Ron Rumburg

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ" was given to John. He was to write what he saw in a book and send it to the seven churches which were in Asia (Rev. 1:4, 11). The people of God were "in tribulation." John is to write to them and be an encouragement-"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy" (1:3). Then the Victorious Christ is pictured (1:12-18). The glorified Christ presents each church with a particular aspect of his person.

When the imperfect conditions of the churches and their pastors are examined it seems to throw a dark shadow over the expectation of any glorious results, but the following words should encourage-"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). There are two elements of hope in the picture: one, Christ is walking in the midst of the seven churches, and two, the Holy Spirit is directing and enabling the people of God. B. H. Carroll remarked, "The first time I very carefully studied the condition of the seven churches in Asia, and then applied the revelation to any seven churches around me.. I never got over that discouragement until I read chapters 4-5, when the heavenly scene of the 'things that are' revealed the throne of grace with agencies and activities helping the churches and preachers on earth."

Local churches are the instruments of the Lord to perpetuate His Word and gather the elect. What would happen if the Lord removed the candlesticks? This would be a judgment. The spiritual state of the seven churches was analyzed by the Victorious Lamb of God. There was no daubing over the flaws but a call for repentance. The Lamb, who loved the church and gave Himself for it, had the right to expose error and did. There was no dealing with those churches about what they thought about themselves or the state of their self-esteem or what they voted on doing. No church council was necessary for this examination. No elder gave a State of the Church Report. No, it was the Lamb with the "eyes as a flame of fire" and "the countenance as the sun shineth in His strength" who examined the local churches. The letters to the seven churches are nothing less than the Lamb's view of each church. It was like a spiritual snapshot taken by the Lord who sent a copy to each assembly so they could see themselves as He saw them and "repent."

The body of Christ will be victorious as was Christ the Head. All overcomers will be granted a place with the glorified Christ in His throne and will be set down with the Father in His throne (Rev. 3:21). The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church was Jesus' word to Peter (Matt. 16:18).

The Lord through John promised His people a victory as they faced persecution and martyrdom. The same victory is still promised as we face the deterioration of our world. What we are seeing is a spiral downward but there is to be expected an upward victory. Sin will be banished, evil will be overthrown, believers will live in unbroken fellowship with their Lord and will enjoy the spiritual benefits of His companionship. We may anticipate this goal. The Book of Revelation brought a newfound courage and empowerment to the Christians who were under harassment. Why? "And He shall reign for ever and ever."

We must remember that we are assured of victory. Why? Because our God rules and holds sovereign sway over all creation and events. One has said, "Behind all that transpires on the field of history stands God Himself." The overshadowing of God brings confidence that we shall ultimately triumph in His Son.

Remember the victorious Lamb of God coming as a warrior on a white horse with the multitude in victory (Rev. 19:11-16). He shall reign forever and forever. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come" (Rev. 22:16-17).

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View sin in the looking-glass of Christ's sufferings. The least sin cost His blood! – Thomas Watson