

Seal Of Approval

Holy Spirit as the Seal of Approval

Christian D. Hunter

Given 24-May-26; Sermon #1877-PMs

You have all probably heard the phrase "seal of approval" before. Maybe it was at work or in a commercial, a movie, or a novel. One of the first recorded uses of the phrase in English was written in 1833 in the American Quarterly Observer. It appears on page 297. In this section of the book, the author is defining what makes a good critic, and I found it interesting what the last qualification of a good critic should be as defined by the author.

The qualification is a pure moral sensibility. The author states the following quote: "The purest of all beauty is moral beauty, and the purest of moral beauty is the beauty of holiness." The author was stating in this last qualification the need for the critic to put down any piece of work that was full of moral depravity or iniquity, noting that even genius cannot atone for it. Thus, the good critic could not give their seal of approval if the piece was not morally sound. How the times have changed since 1833!

Morality in production today is not a must. In fact, it seems that immorality gets the seal of approval most often these days. I do not know how many popular shows or hits my wife and I have turned on, only to turn them off after the first 10 minutes, wondering how in the world are people watching that. Yet these shows get the approval, the seal of approval from the masses and critics alike.

Would God give His seal of approval? Does He have a seal of approval? And how does it relate to this day today, this Day of Pentecost? These are the questions that we are going to look into today, as we investigate what the Scripture has to say about seals.

A quick search online shows that the phrase "seal of approval" is a metaphor or idiom, and idioms.com gives it five meanings.

First, it can be an official or public approval of something. Second, it can be a clear sign that someone accepts or supports something. Third, it can be a confirmation that something is trusted, good, or acceptable. Fourth, it can be an endorsement from someone of importance or an organization. And finally, it can be a mark or symbol showing authenticity or quality. A sign, a mark, a symbol, all items that can be seen in Scripture.

This type of seal appears sometimes as a signet or a stamp from a royal or someone of high ranking. According to an online article, an in-depth look at the history of signet rings,

Signet rings held immense significance in ancient civilizations, serving as personal seals and symbols of authority in Greece. These rings often featured intricate monograms or coat of arms engraved on precious gemstones like onyx. The practice spread across cultures, with each society adapting the signet ring to its own customs and beliefs, cementing its role as a crucial tool for authentication and a mark of social status.

Now, in Exodus 28, the priestly attire had engravings on it like that of a signet. It is actually repeated three times that the engravings were to be performed as a signet. First, in representing the sons of Israel, as seen in verse 11 by the two stones that are upon the shoulders. Second, as the 12 tribes of Israel, as seen in verse 21, represented by the set stones on the breastplate of judgment. And finally, on the head plate on the forehead, representing the holiness of the Lord as seen in verse 36.

It is interesting that David went over this or mentioned it yesterday in his sermon that the high priest wore this on his forehead, so that the gifts and sacrifices of the people might be accepted. Was it a seal of approval?

From here, we will go to another location where a seal was marked on the forehead. Please turn with me to Revelation chapter 7. We are going to start in verse 2 as a lead in, but we are going to read verse 3 here as well.

Revelation 7:2-3 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud

voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."

Now, when you think of what this seal is doing for those who receive it, it helps you to understand what it represents. In the case of the 144,000, it was marked on the forehead. The mark is setting them apart prior to the destruction of the earth, the sea, and the trees. And the word used for seal here, *Strong's #4972, sphragizo*, is defined as a mark or security mark for security or preservation.

So because the angel is crying out for a delay of destruction until the seal is placed, it can be determined that this seal is going to preserve those receiving it. How does the seal relate to the day of Pentecost? Now, perhaps one of the most dominating themes of today, as we already heard, is the church's receipt of the Holy Spirit. In Acts chapter 2, we see this displayed, and we heard a little bit about it from Martin earlier.

What does the Scripture say about the Spirit? Well, if you chase out the word from Revelation 7, *sphragizo*, you will find that on three separate occasions, the Spirit is linked to sealing for those who receive it. The first occurrence is in II Corinthians 1:22, and I am just going to quote this one.

II Corinthians 1:22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

In the next two occurrences are both in Ephesians, so please turn to Ephesians chapter 1. I am going to read Ephesians chapter 1 and then we are going to go to Ephesians chapter 4, verse 30.

Ephesians 1:13 In Him, you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Now turn to chapter 4, verse 30:

Ephesians 4:30 and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

In these three occurrences, we are given a little bit of information each time about the sealing link to the Holy Spirit. In the first occurrence in II Corinthians 1:22, we see the sealing and the giving of the Holy Spirit done as a guarantee. The focus in this occurrence is on who is doing the sealing and the giving of the Spirit.

And in the previous verse, verse 21, it is clearly defined as God working through Christ. That verse states, "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God." He placed the seal upon us as a guarantee. In this verse, the tie of the Spirit and the seal is not directly stated, but with the use of the conjunction the two statements are actually joined together. They are linked together almost as if they work hand in hand.

In the next occurrence in Ephesians 1:13, we see our response to this receipt of this seal of the Holy Spirit. The actions were trust and belief, actions tied to faithfulness that Richard spoke about the Sabbath before last. This first shows a little more the direct link between being sealed or marked by God with the Holy Spirit.

The idea can be twofold for seal here. First, we can see the Holy Spirit as the mark of God, showing that we are His. And second, we can see it as the sealing for preservation or setting apart similar to that in Revelation that we saw. But both these viewpoints actually work together. They are blended together to show the true impact.

Now in the final occurrence, we looked at Ephesians 4:30, and we see that our actions can actually have an impact on this seal of the Holy Spirit. We can actually make the Spirit sad or sorrowful. That is what grieved means. And we can do that with our actions. And if you look at the previous verses leading up to this one and the verse that follows, these actions are sinful actions that we do. It lists them as bitterness, wrath, anger, loud quarreling, and evil speaking, iniquity that we commit.

Turn with me to Ezekiel 28. Might sound like an odd place to go for today, but we are going to go to Ezekiel 28, and we are going to look at the Hebrew version for seal here. It is *Strong's #2856, chatham*.

The meaning of this word is close to that of *sphragizo*, in that both mean to mark or stamp and to stop up, but *sphragizo* adds preservation, as we heard earlier. Now we are going to read verses, verse 12 only so far of Ezekiel 28 here.

Ezekiel 28:12 "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty."

This phrase, seal of perfection, is also translated as full measure or seals of the sum in other versions, but maybe a better way to say it is, you were the mark at the top of the created beings. But in verse 15, further down, we see what broke this seal, what knocked away this mark at the top.

Ezekiel 28:15 "You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you."

Iniquity broke the seal. Can it break ours as well; the one that's upon us? See, the iniquity of Satan was his pride. It swelled up in him. We cannot boast about being sealed by the Holy Spirit, at least not of ourselves, because if you think of a degree or letter given by a high ranking official or king, they are just words on a paper, words that anybody could write.

The seal, however, gives the authority. It represents the authority behind those words. The authority, that authority of the one doing the writing represented by the seal allows the words to be trusted, carried out, and implemented.

Now back to the three occurrences from the New Testament.

We have three words mixed in with sealing and the Holy Spirit, and they provide a good overview for the plan of the Holy Spirit. The three words are

guarantee in II Corinthians 1, *promise* in Ephesians 1, and *redemption* in Ephesians 4. Kind of putting it together, the Spirit was *promised* from God as a *guarantee* for our sealing for the day of *redemption*.

If you link this with the belief that the giving of the law occurred on the Day of Pentecost, as again we heard earlier, it really brings the idea full circle. See, keeping the law was the mark of someone who was of God. They were following His way of life, so they were His. It could be seen by others, their actions could be seen by others, but more importantly, it was seen by God.

Now in Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26, and Jeremiah 31:33, we see a promise from God to write this law upon the minds of those He will make the New Covenant with. He is actually going to take away the stony heart and put a heart of flesh within them.

He will mark those who are His, but how will it be known? Well, the indwelling Spirit, the very mind and character of our God and Savior, will be within the person. This character will help to change the person so that they do the will of God. They do acceptable things, and they produce fruit, actions that are seen by others, actions that mark or seal the person as a child of God.

As we saw earlier though, we cannot expect that this seal will be a 100% guarantee. Now, that may sound funny since in II Corinthians 1:22, we heard, we were sealed and given the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. But Satan also was the seal of perfection. As Ezekiel 28 stated, he was the cream of the crop. Yet iniquity and pride saw him thrown down.

The guarantee mentioned in Corinthians, is a guarantee that God and Christ will follow through on Their end of the deal. Remember, the focus of the verse was on *who* was doing the sealing and giving of the Holy Spirit. They will do everything in Their power to bring us to the full receipt of the Spirit, to the measure and the stature of the fullness of Christ.

They will keep Their promises, but the risk lies with us and our actions. Thus, we must do all we can to work with Their Spirit. And you can see that Their Spirit has a seal of approval, but it is more in an active sense. Yes, it is a mark of God and Christ, but it is also actively sealing us, preparing us to be

approved or accepted, kind of like the holiness of the Lord, allowing for those sacrifices to be accepted.

So, we must do all we can not to grieve the seal of approval from our Lord, for our Creator is not a mere critic, but Judge, and immorality will not have a place in His Kingdom. But thanks be to God that He has and will follow through on His promises. He has and will seal those who are His.

We are going to go to one final verse here. In I Corinthians 15, Martin was close to it. I believe David was yesterday as well. We are going to read and just end here.

I Corinthians 15:57-58 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.