



ISSUE

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Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF
THE OL-
SEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

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Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

The Holy Spirit's Conviction of the World

By Kyle Pope

In John chapter sixteen, as the Lord offered His final discourse to the apostles on the evening before His betrayal, He made an unusual statement. As He promised the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, He declared, **“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment”** (John 16:8, NKJV). What does Jesus mean by this statement? How would the Holy Spirit convict the world of sin?

The word translated **“convict”** is the Greek word *elengchō*. This word originally meant “to disgrace, or put to shame” (LSJ) and eventually came to refer to *reproof* or *rebuke*. Most often the New Testament translates it in this sense. This is the word used in Matthew 18:15 of the correction that is to be offered to a brother who sins. It is the word used of what John the Baptist did to Herod for his unlawful marriage to Herodias (Luke 3:19). It is why the one who loves darkness does not come into the light, **“lest his deeds should be REPROVED (*elengchō*)”** (KJV, emphasis mine). It is what the conscience did for those who at first sought to

stone the woman caught in adultery, until **“being CONVICTED (*elengchō*) by their conscience”** (NKJV, emphasis mine), they withdrew as Jesus challenged the one without sin to stone her first (John 8:9).

Its use in John sixteen is very similar to these examples. Jesus is not teaching that the final judgment of mankind took place when the Holy Spirit came on the apostles at Pentecost. Instead, He is talking about the consequence of the Spirit’s revelation of the gospel. Only a few verses after this statement the Lord referred to the Holy Spirit as **“the**

Spirit of truth” (John 16:13a). When truth is revealed it does something to error—it causes it to lose all pretense of validity! That is much of what Jesus declares in this statement. In revealing **“all truth”** (16:13b) to the apostles and New Testament prophets it exposed the error of anything else.

If this understanding is correct, how do we explain the specific sense in which the Holy Spirit’s coming did this regarding *sin, righteousness, and judgment*. How do we understand this part of the Lord’s statement?

As the text continues, Jesus explains how the Holy Spirit does this for each of the three things He mentions. First Jesus explains, **“of sin, because they do not believe in Me”** (16:9). Earlier in the gospel Jesus had rebuked the Jewish leaders declaring, **“if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins”** (John 8:24b). Jesus’s sacrifice would offer mankind the solution to the problem of sin. While the Law of Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit would define sin from this point forward (1 John 3:4), it did not introduce sin into the world. It did, however, set the standard that would now hold man accountable before God. Jesus declared that His words would judge mankind on the final day (John 12:47-49). The Holy Spirit



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fully revealed the terms of the New Covenant. If one will not believe in Jesus as the solution for man's problem with sin, the Holy Spirit's work of revelation serves to *rebuke* and *reprove* this error.

Next, He explained, **“of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more”** (16:10). *Righteousness* carries two distinct ideas in Scripture. To be *righteous* is sometimes dealt with in terms of man's legal standing before God. Since the Holy Spirit reveals that, **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:23), in a legal sense the Holy Spirit declares, **“There is none righteous, no, not one”** (Rom. 3:10). Only God's forgiveness granted through the blood of Christ can allow man to stand innocent before God, and thus *righteous*. The second sense, however, in which Scripture uses this term is that of moral behavior. There is behavior that is defined by the Holy Spirit as sinful, and that which is defined as *righteous*. Peter speaks of **“righteous Lot”** who did not practice the **“lawless deeds”** of those around him, but who is described as a **“righteous soul”** who loathed their wickedness (2 Pet. 2:7-8). In Christ, Jesus is important to man with regard to both ways in which righteousness should characterize man's life. His sacrifice is the only way that man can attain forgiveness and stand righteous before God. But in addition to this, His life now offers the ideal example of righteous deeds man must emulate (1 John 2:6). With Christ's return to the Father, from this point forward no disciple can see in the flesh the righteous behavior of Christ—

it must be followed by reading and believing the revelation of the Spirit recorded on the pages of Scripture. In this sense, the Spirit's coming now *reproves* a world unwilling to follow Him, and informs it of the offer of His means of making man righteous.

Finally, He declared, **“of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged”** (16:11). This is the third time in the gospel Jesus had spoken of Satan as the **“ruler of this world.”** As Jesus neared the time of His crucifixion He proclaimed:

Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself (John 12:31-32).

Jesus's death would end Satan's power over all who would come to Him in faith and obedience. His death



would **“cast out”** Satan from any claim over disciples of Christ. At the beginning of this discourse Jesus had said to His apostles, **“I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me”** (John 14:30). Here, Jesus’s death is pictured as a *coming* of Satan. The torment and an-

guish of Jesus on the cross was accomplished through the hands of sinful men yielding to Satan in their wicked behavior (Acts 2:23). It was not, however, a victory for Satan, but a defeat. It would rob him of his power, and ultimately seal His fate for all eternity. Hell is a place **“prepared for the devil and his angels”** (Matt. 25:41). The Spirit’s revelation *reproves* the

world of sin because now in Christ liberation from Satan is granted if man will only accept it. The gospel declares this offer to all mankind. If we will only choose to accept it, we no longer need to be slaves of sin, serving a master doomed to eternal punishment. In Christ we can be freed from sin and brought into freedom from sin and fellowship with God.



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