

Searching the Scriptures / 31 / The Holy Spirit And The Gospel / Part 1

In today’s study we will look at the Person and work of God the Holy Spirit with regard to the Gospel. The main elements of the Gospel are stated in John 16:8 and are further developed in the three verses that follow it: *“And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me [Jesus Christ]; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”* From this passage we learn that the Holy Spirit was sent for these purposes:

1. **Reproving the World of Sin**
2. **Reproving the World of Righteousness**
3. **Reproving the World of Judgment**

Reproving the World of Sin

Let’s examine this statement in the first two verses: *“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin... Of sin, because they believe not on me...”* What is the connection between “sin” and “believe not on me”? We must always remember that whenever we study the Bible we must let the Bible teach us. With this principle in mind, let’s look at John 12:46, where we read, *“I [Jesus Christ] am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”* In this verse we find that belief is equated with not abiding in darkness. This can be verified by other verses, such as John 8:12, *“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”* This particular passage helps us to understand that spiritual light, or belief, is associated with spiritual life. This means that a person whom God draws to salvation will not remain in spiritual darkness because God will give him the faith of Christ as a gift. Spiritual darkness is intimately identified with spiritual death and eternal condemnation, as we see from John 3:19-20: *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d.”*

Reproving the World of Righteousness

Next, we want to reflect on the statement in John 16:10, *“... Of righteousness, because I [Jesus Christ] go to my Father, and ye see me no more...”* The Lord Jesus is actually called “Righteous” in 1 John 2:1, and the Old Testament also makes this point in Jer 23:5-6, *“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth... and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”*

I want to highlight two aspects of why Jesus speaks of going to His Father. Firstly, He could only re-enter Heaven if He had successfully paid for the sins of His people, which He most certainly did. God goes to great lengths to emphasize the “joy” that He would ultimately experience after enduring the wrath of God. Heb 12:2 reveals, *“... who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* This same joy would also be the precious possession of every child of God, as these verses in John 16 so vividly point out. It is also beautifully expressed in 1 Pet 1:8, *“... ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”* Secondly, Christians, as recipients of the Holy Spirit, would be qualified to be ambassadors for Christ in accordance with God’s

plan to evangelize the world. Jesus foretold this in John 14:12, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”*

Reproving the World of Judgment

Let us now consider the last statement in this passage about the Holy Spirit reproving the world of judgment as found in John 16:11, *“Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged”*. Well, who is *“the prince of this world”*? The prince, or ruler, of this world is Satan himself. John 12:31 states, *“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.”* Eph 2:2 also declares, *“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”* The Lord Jesus ascended into Heaven and will not appear again physically until Judgment Day, as Acts 17:31 affirms: *“Because he [God the Father] hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Jesus Christ] whom he hath ordained; whereof he [God the Father] hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him [Jesus Christ] from the dead.”* Psa 96:13 is one of many verses in the Old Testament that speak of that terrible day, *“... for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”*

May God be pleased to convict us of sin, righteousness and judgment as we ponder these verses.