

# *Sin, Righteousness & Judgement*

## The Spirit's work in the world

### John 16:7-11

We know that the Lord Jesus fulfilled His promise and sent the Holy Spirit on that special day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The Holy Spirit now indwells every Christian. But here Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will 'convince' the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. How did this happen or how is this happening? I see the world around me becoming more and more secular, I see today a growing negation of anything Christian – even many healthy moral guidelines.

What adds to the difficulty in understanding these words of Jesus is the fact that the word translated 'convince' has various possible meanings. It can also be translated *convict*, *rebuke*, *demonstrate* or *expose* (John 3:20; 8:46; Ef. 5:11,13). Words like *convince* and *convict* imply a response on the part of the world. That is, that the world is changed in some way by Holy Spirit. The other terms like *rebuke*, *demonstrate* or *expose* do not imply that the world changes or responds. Which is the best translation? I do not know. But I notice that both approaches yield encouraging lessons for us all. Let's begin with the second view.

#### **The Holy Spirit 'demonstrates'**

With this interpretation, the arrival of the Holy Spirit is seen as a statement. It shows the world that the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus on earth has completely satisfied the Father. Even if the world does not understand, believe or like it, the arrival of the HS demonstrates:

**Sin:** that by rejecting Jesus Christ they are sinners, 'because they do not believe in me' (v.9)

**Righteousness:** that Christ is the Righteous One, who's life and redemptive work has been completely accepted by God, 'because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more' (v.10)

**Judgement:** that through His death and resurrection the Lord Jesus is forever victorious over Satan and the demonic world, 'because the ruler of this world is judged' (v11).

The arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, confirms these three truths to anyone who cares

to listen. These statements of truth can encourage us all!

#### **The Holy Spirit 'convinces'**

With this interpretation, the arrival of the HS in some way changes the heart of people in the world. This is not automatic. This is not forced upon anyone. The Holy Spirit illuminates, encourages and offers the power, but every person in the world must choose to respond. In what areas does He seek to bring conviction?

**Sin:** that by rejecting Jesus Christ they are sinners, 'because they do not believe in me'

**Righteousness:** that Christ is the Righteous One, who's life and redemptive work is completely accepted by God, 'because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more'. And that only by believing in Christ can we sinners be forgiven and declared righteous.

**Judgement:** that through His death and resurrection the Lord Jesus is forever victorious over Satan and the demonic world, 'because the ruler of this world is judged'. Divine judgement is a reality. But there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1).

#### **We are God's co-workers**

Just like Jesus did His work through His physical body while He lived in earth, now the Holy Spirit does His work sovereignly but also through 'the body of Christ', that is, through Christians like you and me.

In this passage, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the 'Counsellor' (v.7). This Greek word describes someone who comes alongside to help. It is also translated with words such as comforter, helper, intercessor and advocate (1 John 2:1). The Holy Spirit has arrived and dwells inside every born-again believer, He is there to stay. He is there to guide and comfort us. He is here to give power and make our service effective.

Our God still loves the world. The Spirit of God is still working in this world. Let's continue to do our part: talk, share, preach, give, love. But let us do so consciously dependent on the team-work with God's Spirit. He alone can bring conviction, new birth and then transformation.

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