



**Who's Afraid of the Holy Spirit? - Part 12**  
**Various Scriptures**  
**GCSP - 05/01/2010**

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **John**, chapter 16.

Starting in chapter 13 of John's gospel, Jesus speaks to His disciples and shows them His love for them. In chapter 14 and the beginning of chapter 15, Jesus gives His disciples several promises going forward. Towards the end of chapter 15 and into chapter 16, Jesus deals with many issues they need to understand.

The basis of all of this is that Jesus was about to leave them, and they were puzzled and afraid because of this; they didn't understand. So Jesus once again displays His love for them in a very tangible way by washing their feet, and He goes on to speak repeatedly of His love for them as well. Jesus shares one last meal with them, the Last Supper as we now know it, and begins to teach them about things to come.

He speaks of His betrayal and how He was going away and how that His beloved Peter would deny Him three times before the next morning dawns. But He also then gives them a string of promises:

- He was going away to prepare them an eternal home in heaven
- He told them that He was the way the truth and the life
- He revealed to them that if they had seen Him they had seen the Father
- He promised that they would be given the power to continue the miracles they saw Him do
- He promised to do whatever they asked in His name
- He promised them the Holy Spirit; God living inside each of them
- He promised them that obedience to His Word was the key to the sacrificial love they had seen in Him
- He promised them His peace
- He promised He would be their vine; their lifeblood, and they would be able to do all things through Him
- He promised a second time that He would do for them whatever they asked of Him
- He promised them joy

He then commanded them to love one another just as He had loved them. Jesus knew two things that would necessitate the disciples loving one another in this way. He knew the world would hate them because of Him and He knew there would be a great tendency to fight amongst themselves.

As a side note on that last point, on average 7,000 pastors leave the ministry each and every month in this country. Some reach the point of retirement and some simply were not called to the ministry in the first place, but the majority of these men are either forced out by their congregations, usually over differences of opinion, or have reached the point where they simply cannot handle the stress, the strain, and the conflict that rages from inside the walls of the church.

So Jesus twice commands that they love one another just before He moves into a series of warnings and issues they will soon face. And He starts by telling them that the world will

hate them; and they will hate them because their sin will become more aware of the sin in their life and will become realize that they have no excuse for their sin.

Jesus basically says, "Gentlemen, here are all the great and marvelous promises I leave you with, but if you choose to really live for Me, if you truly love Me, if you consistently and genuinely name My name by doing the things I have commanded you, and if you are sincerely one of My own, you will face persecution because you will be in direct opposition to the world."

And that's the key; as we truly follow what the Bible says we will be in direct opposition to the world. We won't follow after the pleasures of this world, we won't think like the world thinks, we won't choose to party like the world parties, we won't seek justice and vengeance like the world seeks justice and vengeance, etc.

Unfortunately, most Christians instead act just like the world, so the world does not hate us as they should, and the church displays very little of the Holy Spirit's power. So the world sees us as a bunch of hypocrites and thus has no attraction to the church.

Have you ever approached your Christianity in such a way that the world should hate you? Because this is a promise from Jesus if we are living the way we should be living. But I don't see that very much. I don't see it in my life or in the lives of the overwhelming majority of believers. As a matter of fact, I see the exact opposite in the church today. I see believers bending over backwards to identify with the world and to make the world comfortable in the church. Beloved, we are obviously called to go into the world and to reach them with the gospel message, but we are never to become like the world and the world should by no means be comfortable in the church of Jesus Christ, the Almighty and Holy God!

Jesus told His disciples that the world will hate them! Not dislike them, but hate them! And this brings us to the passage we are currently studying concerning the Holy Spirit's work through us in this world.

### **John 16:1-11**

Let's pray.

After repeating His warning that the world will hate them, thus to expect persecution and not be surprised when people try to kill them in the name of God, Jesus says the very first work of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost would be to convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. And even though the Holy Spirit works through us, it is not our job or responsibility but the divine work of the Holy Spirit.

### **Concerning Sin (v. 9)**

First, as we looked at last week, the Holy Spirit convicts people concerning sin. It is the Spirit's job to bring a deep sense of the sinfulness of sin in people's lives. Satan has done a masterful job of alleviating and marginalizing and minimizing and even to some extent eliminating the sinfulness of sin in this world.

Satan has duped you and I into believing that we are not responsible for our problems; it's not your fault. You don't need a Savior; you don't need to believe in Jesus; it's not your fault that you are the way you are. Someone else is to blame; always it is someone else or something else to blame.

So the Holy Spirit is in the world to convict the world concerning sin. And the Holy Spirit uses those in whom He dwells to accomplish this task as we present God's Word to them.

We also saw in the Book of **Galatians** and the Book of **Romans** that believers will also be convicted of their sin by the Holy Spirit, and this is in direct proportion to how much we walk in the flesh or walk in the Spirit.

Unfortunately, the Holy Spirit has to convict Christians for the same reason He has to convict non-Christians; **because they do not believe in Me**. The world sins because they do not believe in Jesus Christ. Believers sin because they do not believe what Jesus said, thus proving by their actions that they do not believe in Jesus either; or at least they do not believe in Him enough to obey Him.

Beloved, every time you sin your life proclaims that you believe in Satan more than you believe in Jesus. Every time you choose sin over righteousness you shout to the world that Satan's ways are right and God's ways are wrong. The same issue of unbelief plagues us when the Holy Spirit has to convict us concerning sin.

That was last week. Let's cover the other two initial reasons for the Holy Spirit's coming.

#### Concerning Righteousness (v. 10)

There are two directions we can go with this statement; both are valid and both have application for us tonight. John could be speaking of the fact that the Holy Spirit will convict the world of their utter lack of righteousness and/or he could be speaking of the fact that the Holy Spirit will convict the world of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. As I said, either interpretation fits. Most likely both positions are in mind here.

Let's start by looking at the fact that the Holy Spirit will convict the world of their utter lack of righteousness.

We all think we are righteous to one degree or another. This is not just a problem within the ranks of genuine believers, but is probably a more common problem with the world. But the righteousness we have is an arrogant self-righteousness based on works and on our own standards and measures.

Hold your place in **John** and turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **2 Corinthians**.

#### 2 Corinthians 10:12; 18

Paul was being attacked by false teachers; his integrity was called into question and the instigators of this attack were poisoning the minds of the people against Paul behind his back. In the process of spreading these lies the false teachers were propping themselves up by promoting their own righteousness. Paul gets straight to the heart of the matter by revealing the false standard by which they compared themselves. He says, "...**they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves.**"

Anyone can look good if you choose the right person to compare yourself to. I could look pretty amazing on the basketball court if I compare myself with a 90-year old woman in a wheelchair, but compare me with Michael Jordan in his prime and I will look ridiculous and foolish. Put me up against a drug-dealing, rapist and murderer and I am going to look like

the most righteous man alive, but compare me to Jesus Christ and the filthiness and vileness of my sins will blind you.

The self-righteous person only sees what doesn't measure up to their own standard. The self-righteous person convicts without all of the facts. The self-righteous person judges the motives of someone else's heart; something they cannot possibly know. The self-righteous person misses the fact that they are wallowing in their own sin when looking down on the sins, or even the possible sins, of others; "**...they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves.**"

Paul then says, "**For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.**" The self-righteous always believes he or she is doing what is right. The course of action they have taken is always the best course of action. They have absolute justification (in their own minds) for what they are doing and what they are saying. And here is the kicker: They will confirm that they are on the right course and the right track by getting someone else to agree with them. And of course the other person is going to agree with them because they only get the information given by them; measuring themselves by themselves and commending themselves for a job well done.

And the Holy Spirit has come to convict such people, whether they are genuine believers or the unbelieving people of the world.

Still holding your place in **John**, turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Isaiah**.

#### **Isaiah 64:6-7**

No Bible translation team that I know of has ever had the guts to translate **verse 6** as it appears in the original Hebrew. They choose filthy rags, defiled garments, or something of the sort, but literally the Hebrew reads "Like a cloth of menstruation (is) all our righteousness."

So do you get the picture here? In our self-righteousness we are presenting used menstrual cloths to God and expecting to be commended.

And if that is not bad enough, Isaiah goes on to say at the end of **verse 7**, "**For You have hidden Your face from us and have delivered us into the power of our iniquities.**" And while all of our iniquities, or sins, are in view here, the primary context of this passage is speaking to the iniquity or sin of self-righteousness; and when we fall into this heinous sin God delivers us into the power of that sin!

So what is the power of our iniquities that we are in danger of being delivered into when we are self-righteous?

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Romans**.

#### **Romans 1:24-32**

The primary context of this passage deals with how God handles unbelievers who continue in their sin of unbelief, but this gives us a vivid picture of the danger of being delivered into the power of our iniquities.

When your sin is given power over you, you will have a depraved mind, meaning you will be deceived and virtually unaware of your sinfulness. This will cause a vicious cycle of self-righteous behavior and being delivered into the power of your sin, because apart from the intervention of the Holy Spirit you will never see the problem; you will always think you are right in your way of thinking as your arrogance and your judgmental spirit and your self-righteous attitude consumes you and has complete power over you.

And this is why it is a work of the Holy Spirit and only the Holy Spirit to convict the world and us of our utter lack of righteousness.

Let's turn back to the Gospel of **John**.

### **John 16:10**

The second possible interpretation of this statement the Apostle John makes is the Holy Spirit will convict the world of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

In our study this past Wednesday evening we discussed how the vast majority of people who witnessed or heard about the crucifixion of Jesus believed He was being tortured and put to death for crimes or sins He had committed. The world did not view Jesus Christ as the sinless Son of God; they did not see Him as a man of perfect righteousness.

So in addition to convicting the world and us of our utter lack of righteousness, the Holy Spirit will also convict us of Jesus' perfect righteousness, meaning He will reveal to the world that Jesus was the sinless and perfect Son of God. And again, we can speak the words and make the arguments but we do not have the power or the ability to convince anyone that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and came to this earth to die for their sins; that is the sole responsibility of the Holy Spirit, many times working through us.

The reason the Holy Spirit will convict the world of their utter lack of righteousness and of the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ is "**because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me.**" The Holy Spirit was not only going to be the means by which the world knew of the righteousness of Christ, but He was also going to be the means by which the Disciples, and those of us who follow in their footsteps, know of the righteousness of Christ. And we need to be reminded of the righteousness of Christ to keep us humble and to keep us on the path to holiness.

### **Concerning Judgment (v. 11)**

The final initial reason for the Holy Spirit to come was to convict the world of judgment.

Hold your place in **John** and again turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Romans**. Let me go first to how this applies to Christians.

### **Romans 14:10-12**

While **1 & 2 Corinthians** teaches us that the judgment seat of God will primarily be a seat of reward for the things we have done of eternal worth after our salvation, this passage teaches us that we will have to give an account at least for how we have treated our brothers and sisters in Christ. Think about that the next time you judge a brother or sister too hastily or too harshly just because they do not measure up to your standards.

But primarily this verse deals with the judgment of unbelievers because our sins were judged eternally at the Cross. Believers may have to give an account of their behavior toward other believers, and possibly forfeit some of their eternal rewards, but they will not forfeit the reward of heaven; that was taken care of by the blood of Jesus.

But unbelievers will be convicted by the Holy Spirit concerning the final judgment that will come to all mankind; the judgment of what they did with Jesus. This judgment is sure and it is final and all people will feel the conviction of this reality throughout their lives. Believers will feel it prior to salvation but unbelievers will feel this all the way up to the Great White Throne Judgment, and it will be felt by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

**Hebrews 9:27** says, “**And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment**” (KJV).

The convicting power of the Holy Spirit will be upon men throughout their life but if never heeded to, judgment will come after their death.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Revelation** and let’s re-read a portion of what we all read together earlier this evening.

**Revelation 20:11-15**

Beloved, this judgment is sure and it is final, as I already mentioned. And the conviction of this truth of a future judgment will be evident in each person’s life according to Scripture. I know there is always the question of the natives in the deepest darkest jungles of the world who have never seen a Bible or never heard the Word of God preached, and we are of course to be doing what we can do to get the gospel message to them, but the convicting power of the Holy Spirit will reach even them. No one will have an excuse to reject God. All who reach out to Him through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit will be given the opportunity to be saved.

The last phrase in the passage we have been looking at in John’s gospel says, “...because the ruler of this world has been judged. We have heard the terminology, “Dead man walking” in reference to prisoners on death row who are making their final walk to the execution chamber. They have already been judged but were just waiting for their sentence to be carried out. This is the truth concerning Satan as well. He is a dead angel walking; his judgment has been issued and he is simply waiting for his sentence to be carried out.

Satan was judged at the Cross along with all of our sins. The Great White Throne Judgment is where the final sentence is carried out. This judgment didn’t have to include any human being and it doesn’t have to include any more human beings still today; it was primarily meant for Satan and his demons that rebelled against God in their fall from heaven. But all who resist and reject the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and thus reject the Son of God who paid for their sins in full, will be there. And beloved, all who appear at the Great White Throne Judgment will be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity; there will be no escape at that point.

So how are you responding to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Let’s pray.