

He Will Reprove the World of Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment

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Bible Text: John 16:8

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Let us begin this morning by going right to our text and then we will read the text and ask the Lord's blessing upon it. Our text this morning comes from John 16:8.

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, we thank thee for the time to assemble in thy name, O Lord, for we know that this is thy day that you have sanctified, that you have set apart. Lord, thy word has told us where two or more are gathered you will be in the midst. We ask, O Lord, for that presence to be known and felt this morning, that thou would reveal thy truth and that thou would teach us indeed the very depth in this passage. O Lord, make it personal between you and thy children this day. Lord, search our hearts. See if this evidence is in the hearts of thy people. Reveal thy presence, O Lord, reveal that you are the great revealer of all things. May your name be honored and glorified this day and may it be high and lifted up to its rightful place. Bless this day to thy glory. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

As I said, our text is right here in John 16:8, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." I'm taken back to the time that the Lord said these words. As you see, they are in red and immediately on top of it and on the bottom of it and to the left and to the right, all red words. It was a very precious time. The Lord was at the end of his ministry. He was just about to lay down his life for his children. He was just about to go to the cross in just mere hours and at that very last moment of instruction in these precious chapters, 14, 15, 16 and 17, the Lord would have his disciples sitting at his feet, all 11 of them. One had been dismissed for these truths were not to go to him. They are particular truths. They are truths meant for the people of God. They are spoken to the people of God and I pray today that they speak to the people of God in this room.

It is a precious truth what the Lord left here in verse 8 but if we back up just a moment to verse 7, he tells them the necessary, the expediency, the reason why all of this must take

place. In verse 7 he says, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient," it is profitable, "for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." He had already introduced the Comforter as being the Holy Spirit back in chapter 14. He had already told them that one was coming that would lead them into all truth and would testify of him, would take the very sayings that Christ was saying this hour and at this time and would reveal the depth in them later and it's no different for you and I today. We can sit in here and we can read the red words and that's what they are to us, red words. But when the Holy Spirit comes and he comes in the depth to bring forth the voice of the Shepherd, to testify to his children what they mean for their souls and that's what we have for us today in examination. This is soul work.

"And when he is come," verse 8, when the Holy Spirit is come and he has come but when he comes experientially in the child of God's life, these 3 precious truths come out: he reproves the world of sin. "Reprove" means "convicts or convinces." The Holy Spirit convinces the child of God of sin, sin being present in their life. Sin and the sinfulness of sin. He convinces them of it. He convicts them of it. He reproves them of it. I think in this life we become flippant when we look at sin. It's looked at lightly. The Puritans wrote against this because they knew what the fallen nature of man and how we get involved in life and how we get involved in everything in our daily walks and everything that we have and how we excuse sin in this life and how we justify sin in this life and they wrote about the sinfulness of sin and how wicked it is. And you and I can't get there just as the disciples couldn't get there. They couldn't understand the depth of the sin and running away from Christ in his hour. They couldn't understand. Peter didn't understand the depth of denying Christ 3 times. He didn't understand the depth of that and you and I are no different. We're in dire need at this hour for the Holy Spirit to come and to reprove the world. That world is the same John 3:16 world. It is a world of the elect. How silly it would be for us to sit here today and say that this outside world, the world outside of Christ is reprov'd of sin. Is convicted of sin. That the Holy Spirit reveals sin to them. That he reveals righteousness to them. That he reveals the judgment to them. These are precious words given as instruction to the people of God as I hope they are today.

It is a dire need. A dire, dire need and what we lose sight of his holiness. What we lose sight of is the holiness of this Lord that we profess with our mouth to believe in. That we profess hopefully with our walk. That we trust in. That we abide in. But when we lose sight of holiness, if we lose sight of the holiness of this Triune Lord, we begin to justify our actions and justify the things we do and that's why we look so flippantly or so haphazardly or so lightly at sin.

I was thinking about this this week and when I was thinking about the holiness of the Lord, 3 people the Lord brought to mind. The first one was Moses when the Lord appeared to him in the burning bush; when Moses was sitting there watching the sheep or whatever he was doing on the other side of that mountain and there was this burning Bush that was consumed with fire but yet not consumed. It was this holy awe-inspiring vision that Moses saw. And do you remember what the Lord said to Moses? He said to Moses, "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place where thy standeth is holy ground." Now, that ground is no holier there than the ground we have here. The reason it

was holy is because the Lord's presence was there. You and I today, if we be God's children and the Lord is present with us today, where 2 or more are gathered, this is holy ground. It's a holy place. It's sanctified by the Lord. Are you ever inspired, does the Holy Spirit ever lead you to the holiness of this Triune Lord as he did to Moses?

Then I think of Joshua. The night before the battle, the night before Jericho, Joshua was sitting over on the other side of the brook and he was very troubled and one appeared to him, a captain of the Lord's Army, a captain of the host all decked out in battle array. Do you know what that captain said to Joshua? He said, "Loose thy shoe. Take it off, the place where thou standest is holy." Where the Lord came to Joshua, where he revealed himself as a conqueror, where he revealed himself as the Captain of the Host, where he revealed himself as the Lord God Almighty, was a holy place. And where you and I are wherever the Lord takes us in this world, if he reveals to us in that place his holiness, you will see sin for what it is. You will see the sinfulness of sin. There will not be a justification of yourself in your flesh. There will be a justification of Christ's finished work; of how he paid the debt for that sin; of what that debt was. It was the wrath of his Father poured out upon him for that sin. Is sin wicked to you?

Then the third place I think of, I think of Isaiah. In the day that King Uzziah died, what vision did he see He saw the Lord high and lifted up and his train filled the temple and he said, "Woe is me, I am undone." What's present there in the child of God's life to see that he is undone? That he is filthy rags? That everything he has is nothing? That everything he has to present before God is nothing? This was a prophet of God and you and I today, it's so easy to get caught up in what we do and what we say and who we are but what is it in the face of an Almighty God? What is your position? What is your title? What is your name in this life today? Has the Lord convinced you of his holiness? Has he convinced you and reproved you and convicted you of sin? Of his righteousness? And of his judgment? But why did Isaiah say such a thing, "Woe is me, I am undone"? "For mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts." That's how the Lord does it. That's how he convicts us of sin. He reveals to us the holiness and the justice and the righteousness of the Lord.

I have experienced that from time to time with my children. My children wanting to please me and not to make me angry and I think of that in measure. I think of that and how the Lord gives that to his people when they see a glimpse of his holiness. When they see his righteousness. When they see him reigning as King. Paul tells us in Romans that it is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance. It's the revelation of his greatness. It's the revelation of him without sin. And that's what I mean, how easy it is for us to get dragged down by this world and that's the whole tenor of the message today and the questions that we have are in your soul. Has the Lord convinced you in this way? Has he brought you to see him high and lifted up? Have you put your hand on your mouth and said, "Lord, I can't speak"?

I don't know that. I know that that's how the Lord reveals who he is to his children. That rod and righteous that he has wrought out, he applies it to his children when we're stripped of ourselves. I refer to Burrige's comment all the time about having to be

brought to the stripping room, being stripped of self. Being stripped of self-knowledge and self-will and self. And the Lord has his ways in afflictions. He has his ways in the providences and the places that he leads us. He has his ways in his goodness and his mercy just to reveal it by love and what a merciful Lord.

Two places I want to take you to before we settle in this passage today. Both of them talking about how the Lord revealed to his children the depth of sin. Of course, we can't go anywhere but Psalm 51. We're going to go there first and read the first 10 verses. I think we all know the account. The Lord had spoken to David. He had spoken to David through one of his messengers by saying just one little phrase to him, "Thou art the man." And the Lord used that to cut to the very soul of David. "Thou art the man." And how the Lord uses that in our life. Does he use it in yours? Does he convict you of sin? Look at Psalm 51 and may the Holy Spirit search our hearts. Has he ever brought you here?

Has he ever brought you here to say, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." According to thy mercy, Lord, I appeal to thy mercy to blot out my sin. There is no worthiness in me. There is no worthiness. David didn't say, "Lord, I'm a king. I'm a king. I'm worthy to have my sin blotted out." No, there is unworthiness. There is a broken and contrite spirit.

"Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." What do you see in David that was revealed? That he had a part in this. That he could somehow scrub his way out of sin. That somehow all the things that he would say in the prayers that he would pray would bring him to repentance and would absolve him for the sin. Nothing. You won't see that. What you see is one that is totally dependent upon his Lord to wash that sin away. To bring it to his soul and say to him, "Thou art forgiven." That's what the Holy Spirit does. He convinces the child of God of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.

"For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." Just a few hours or days before, there was no acknowledging of sin. There was no transgression before him. That's a scary place, dear ones. It's a scary place to be left to ourselves to explore the depravity that's in us. To be left out there just to see how far we'll go in the lust of our flesh, in the desires that we have for the things of this world. But in the Lord's faithfulness, the Lord in that time said, "Thou art the man." In the day of the Lord's power, he brought his sheep back.

"My sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." And everybody wants to say, "Oh no, David, you sinned against Uriah. You sinned against Bathsheba." True, but in this stripping place, in this room where the Lord has brought David in close communion with the Lord, he is stripping David of himself and when you're stripped of self, the Lord reveals to you that you have sinned against him and against him alone. That's the depth of how the Holy Spirit brings the child of God to his feet. Have you experienced this? Or have you experienced sin as some kind of notional thought? As some kind of evil thing and you say, "Well, I try to stay away from

that," like you have some part in your keeping from sin? Or maybe you don't recognize sin for what it is, a transgression of the Lord's holy law, also defined as anything not of faith. These are the things that search the child of God. When the Holy Spirit brings the child of God to his knees, he brings him to the throne of grace as David is brought here. "Lord, against thee and thee only have I sinned." Do you have that relationship with your Lord where he has brought you here? Does he move you to tears? Does he move you to cry out to him, "Lord, I've done this evil in thy sight. That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest. Lord, you are justified for what you have done. You are justified in your view of sin. I'm not."

And don't make no mistake of it: we view sin a lot differently than God does. Our pet sins, we lie right next to them. There are some sins that we put in order. "Oh, that's a horrible sin." We say, "I'm going to stay away. Oh, I would never commit that one." But the sin that we're going to talk about today is a lot deeper sin. I know it's not a popular message. Sin never is. It's not preached in this world today. It is not preached in this nation today. How will you know your need for a Savior if it is not revealed that you are a sinner? How? How will you ever see the justifying and the sanctifying and the righteous work of Christ and that it is finished without knowing that it was your sin that put him there? How? Are you going to be a religionist that runs around with his head up in the air talking about how righteous you are? Where is the depth? The depth is where the Holy Spirit is. He searches the deep things of God. I hope he's searching our hearts right now and plowing them.

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." David, you're a king. Where is it? It is stripped from him. "I was shapen in iniquity."

"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts." Lord, you desire truth. The Lord looks on the heart. "Desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom." That's my soul. Lord, make me to know your wisdom. Make me to know your repentance. Make me to know your finished work in my soul.

"Purge me with hyssop." That was a cry. As I said, this is one-to-one. This is a bitter time. "Purge me with hyssop." Purge me with that nasty tasting stuff. I want sin to be bitter to my taste, do you? Do you look at sin that way? Of how sinful it is? Maybe you look at that and go, "Well, that just doesn't make sense." It does to the child of God. How else can you describe it without making light of it?

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice." Broken over sin. "Make me to hear the joy of thy salvation, the joy of thy blood covering my sin, the joy of your finished work. Lord, make me to hear that." Do you see that? He doesn't leave the child of God without hope. He doesn't strip him of hope. He doesn't strip him of love. He strips him of the filthiness because our God is a consuming fire. He consumes the dross. We have to have that. That's how he washes us and makes us new.

"Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." And what is that right spirit? A holy hatred of sin. A holy love for your finished work. A holy reverence for what the Lord has done in my soul.

So that's David. Now just flip over a few pages to the end of Job 42 and we'll see what Job had to say, just 2 verses. After all of the discourse going back and forth with the friends and everything else and the Lord spoke to Job. The Lord revealed himself to Job and when the Lord convinces and convicts his people of sin, when the Holy Spirit reveals to us that, "Thou art the man," these, this as we saw with David and as we see with Job now in verse 5, 42:5,

"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear." "I have heard, Lord, your view against sin. I've heard about your holiness. I've heard about unrighteousness. I've heard about how filthy sin can be." "But now mine eye seeth thee." Now my eye sees thee. In the day of the Lord's power. In the day of faith. In the day the Holy Spirit reveals the holiness of God. You not only hear it, you see it. That day Uzziah saw him high and lifted up, "Woe is me!" Have you been there? Have you been brought to that room?

"Wherefore I abhor myself." Dear ones, it's biblical to abhor yourself. The child of God abhors himself. Ourselves. That self-will. That self-righteousness. That selfishness of everything. I abhor it. That's where the holiness of God is present. "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." That is the work of the Holy Spirit, to convince the child of God.

Back to John 16:8, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." That's what the Lord does in his children's lives right there and now we're going to talk about it because the Lord gave us a brief little description of each one of these and now we're going to follow the Lord's words. This is the question of the day: has the Lord brought you to this room? Has he stripped you of yourself? Has he given you a vision of his holiness that is high and lifted up? And what effect did it have on you? Did it puff you up? Because if it did, it was not him, it was an angel of light in disguise. We don't want that. That's a scary thing. That's a scary passage, that the devil can come that way. We're going to talk about him in a minute and his defeat.

But now look at this: "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Verse 9 says, "Of sin, because they believe not on me." I read a sermon a couple of weeks ago by J. K. Popham, a Baptist minister, on this passage, this verse right here, "because they believe not on me." Popham said that this sin of unbelief is a most immoral sin. Okay, well you think about that for a minute. Now unbelief, I know to the religionists, the religionists say that unbelief just says that, "I don't believe in Christ." There you go. That's a horrible sin but let's talk about what unbelief is. Let's talk about what the Holy Spirit says that he convinces and his children, convinces the world of the elect, convinces the people of God, convinces the sheep of God of sin "because they believe not on me." We must be convinced of unbelief. What kind of

things are unbelief? When you don't believe that it is finished. When you're running around to add to your righteousness. You don't believe. You don't believe the word of God as it's revealed in its pages. You don't believe when Christ uttered those words, "It is finished," that it is finished. You are totally walking around and going around trying to add to your righteousness, trying to spin your own robe. The creature must be added to something. "Lord, you've done your part, now here's my part. I've got to do this." That's unbelief. It's not saying, "I don't believe in Christ," it's the very actions. It's the very life of not trusting in the Lord. We all succumb to this sin of unbelief. If we didn't, it wouldn't be written against. The Holy Spirit wouldn't convict us of this. Hebrews 3:12 says, "Take heed, brethren." Why would the Holy Spirit write these words, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God"? That's what unbelief is, it's departing from the living God and there are so many ways to describe it. In justifying self, you're departing from the living God. In justifying our sin, we're departing and we're not believing that the Lord hates sin. We are not being convinced that the Lord is holy.

It's so much deeper than just that little word "unbelief." And as we look into the word of God, we have those saints that fell to unbelief as Peter many times: in the denial; in the taking of his eyes off the Lord. But the Lord was always there whether it was in that look to restore Peter. Whether it was in the hand to lift him out of the depths of falling down into the water, the Lord was there. It is no wonder that when the Lord was raising Lazarus from the dead it is recorded for us, "Jesus wept." What did he weep over? Everybody around him telling him, "Oh, you're late. Oh, he's dead. He's been dead for days. Oh, how you loved him." I'm sure that he wept in his humanity over the love he had for them but all the unbelief around, it permeates the word of God to the saints. We can't put this off to the people outside of Christ. They're condemned already. But to you and I, the Holy Spirit comes. When he comes, he will reprove. He will convince you of sin. And then Jesus, the Lord Jesus Christ, takes that verse and says, "Of sin, because you believe not on me." Remember what we said at the beginning when he spoke these words to them? Guess what they are about to live out? They're about to live out not believing on him. They are going to live out running from every place they can to hide. They are going to live out in those days when the Lord is in the ground, being sorrowful, crying. The 2 on the road to Emmaus, "Haven't you heard? Haven't you heard what has happened? He's gone. We thought he was the Messiah." That's unbelief.

And you and I are no better and praise be to God that we're not. I hope he convinces us this hour that we're not better than the disciples of that day. But in Christ, in Christ, in the revelation of Christ, in the righteousness of Christ which is coming next, we can see and have revealed to us the depths of how far unbelief goes and may the Lord move us to confess that sin and maybe, just maybe if the Holy Spirit is willing today to plow us a little deeper, to show us the depths of how unbelief is in our life. I don't know about you, but I long to be cleansed of that. The more I live in this life with this dead carcass that I haul around with me and this old nature, I desire to be rid of it. It doesn't believe. It's angry all the time. It thinks evil thoughts. I'm in dire need of my Lord every minute of the day to cleanse me from the unrighteousness. To cleanse me from myself. And to lift my eyes upon him. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief,

in departing from the living God." Lord, keep me close to thy side that I don't depart from you.

Now we move on to verse 10, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of righteousness," this one is beautiful, O Lord, come and convince me, "because I go to my Father, and you see me no more." I hear his words, I hear the voice on the cross, I hear him say to me, "Shawn, it is finished. I've ascended into heaven. I have wrought out a perfect righteousness. I have wrought out a robe that will clothe me one day from head to foot and there won't be anything that I can add to it and there won't be anything that I lack and there won't be anything in me that will be seen. It will be the righteousness of my Lord," and that's what the Holy Spirit needs to convince me of at this hour. He needs to convince us all at this hour of this righteousness. And when he convinces us of this righteousness, he puts down that self-righteousness. He reveals it as filthy rags. He reveals it as creature work. O Lord, reveal this hour of your work.

Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Do you see those 2 words? They have "ings" on the end of them. That's what he does over and over. We need to be enlivened. We need to be washed. Yes, the blood cleansed us of sin but we're still polluted in this life by sin. We don't see that one day, oh one day to see, to be wrapped in this robe of righteousness. To see this perfect obedience that was wrought out for me. To see the blood that had covered all of my sin.

Malachi 4:2 says, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings," and that healing comes with his righteousness. "I want to see it, Lord. I want to see it every day. I don't want to just see it now in this hour, Lord, I want to see it every day. Cleanse me from unrighteousness and open my eyes and my heart and my mind to see your righteousness." "And ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." Life. Growth in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, the knowledge of what he has done.

Romans 8:10 tells us, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin," how true that is, "but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Because of his righteousness. My dire desire is for the children of God today to know his righteousness. To feel his righteousness. To get a glimpse and an understanding that the Holy Spirit must reveal that you are clothed in his righteousness.

Finally of judgment. You might have thought at the beginning there, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," that that's something that maybe we don't need. Oh boy, we need it. I'm going to tell you what a glorious truth this is and I can only speak from personal experience: the struggle with the enemies in this world is so deep and so mighty that I have to be convinced that they have been defeated. I have to. "Lord, thy Spirit must convince me that you have defeated my accuser." Let's just talk about that because that's who Jesus focused in on is my accuser that stands accusing the brethren and the people of God every day and every

night, the wicked one. The one whose voice seems to be heard a lot in my life. "Lord, how holy and just you are to come and convince your children of judgment because of the prince of this world is judged. You mean, this antagonist to me will be thrown in the Lake of fire? Will be destroyed forever?" Yes. Let me read from his word. Matthew 25:41 says, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand," Lord, I hope none of us ever hear these words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Did you hear that? Did you hear what is prepared for the devil and his angels? Are you convinced of that today that this adversary that seeks to destroy your soul, that's going around as a roaring lion, that can masquerade as an angel of light, that has all of these powers and principalities, who is a prince of the power of the air that seems to win the day in our lives so much. And we're told to resist the devil and he will flee from us. How does that happen? Right here: being convinced of the Holy Ghost. Convinced that the Lord has defeated him. Convinced that the enemy has been destroyed. That's how. And the day of the Lord's power and his power, the one wielding the power is the Holy Spirit in our souls.

1 John 3:8 says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." "O Lord, take that great crumb, that food right there and feed my soul with it, that you were manifest, that you put that enemy under your feet." And you know that last one that will be destroyed too, don't you? That specter of death that Hebrews tells us all our life we are subject to. But all these enemies, we see the Lord has conquered by faith. He has overcome the world. He has put the devil under his feet. He has raised up himself in his children to defeat our carnal nature. That's the new man who is always victorious.

"And when he is come." I hope the Holy Spirit has gotten this point across: the dire need in this hour for him to come and reprove, convince, convict the elect world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. That's all I have to say and may the Lord speak even mightier and even deeper.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, come Lord, convince us of sin. Convince us of thy righteousness and convince us of thy judgment. To the praise and glory of thee. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.