

15 December 2013

## The Holy Spirit reproves the world and bears fruit in Righteousness (Pt 4 Righteousness)

Today we continue our topical study of righteousness. In our previous study we covered three points; (1) believers are called in righteousness, and (2) we are to put on the breastplate of righteousness, and (3) we are to sow to ourselves in righteousness. In this study we will look at three additional points; (1) the Holy Spirit reproves the world of righteousness, and (2) the Holy Spirit is life to a believer because of righteousness, and (3) the Holy Spirit bears the fruit in righteousness.

Let us add a little detail to our points:-

### 1. The Holy Spirit reproves the world of righteousness

Jn.16: 8 & 10 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment...Of righteousness, because I go to my Father; and ye see me no more;*

Our verse in John has troubled me for meaning; the fact that the Comforter was given to reprove the world of sin because the world believes not the Lord Jesus Christ is something I can understand, because the Scriptures say that the Holy Spirit is come into the world to reprove the world of sin, and the Lord clarifies *that* sin as rejecting the free gift of God, His Son the Lord Jesus Christ (see verse 9). However, how do we understand the saying that the Comforter will come and reprove the world of righteousness from the explanation provided in verse 10 that says “of righteousness because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more”? What does that mean, and how does that explain that the Holy Spirit of God was given to reprove the world of righteousness?

Ps.98: 9 says, that the Lord “he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.”

Jer.23: 5 & 6 says that the Lord will raise unto David a Righteous Branch and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; “In his days Judah shall be saved...and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Keeping in mind our verse from Jeremiah, I suggest the following meaning:-

When Jesus was on earth He was the perfect measure of righteousness and therefore the Scriptures record that He was without sin (see 1Jn.3: 5). Hence, whilst the Lord Jesus was on earth the world knew that ALL have sinned (see Rom.3: 23) because they were reprov'd by His righteousness. They had a perfect measuring stick, a perfect plumb-line of what was right. And the Lord Jesus told His disciples that He would go to be with the Father and send the Comforter who would “reprove the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.” And the reason for that was because He was going to be with His Father and they would see him no more (see verse 10). And given that there are three members of the Godhead; Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and these three *are* one (see 1Jn.5: 7 & 8), then the result of the Holy Ghost being sent into the world is the same outcome as the Son being there, because they are both members of the triune Godhead. The promise of Jn.16: 8, 10 made by the Lord Jesus Christ proves to any who have ears to hear, that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter is a) a person (“*he* will reprove the world of sin” & see Jn.15: 26), and b) He is a member of the triune Godhead identified in 1Jn.5: 7 & 8. Therefore, when the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the second member of the Godhead departed from the earth, the Comforter or Holy Ghost was given by the Father to reprove or censure the world in righteousness; that perfect righteousness was established by Christ and His words as recorded for us in the Scriptures of truth, and that record is true (see Jn.19: 35).

Therefore, whether a person is a believer or a lost man, when they sin then read of the righteousness of Christ, His righteousness reproves them through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, who was given to reprove the world of righteousness.

Therefore, only the Holy Spirit sent from the Father convicts the world of sin and of righteousness. Therefore do not expect anyone to get convicted of sin, righteousness and judgment if the preacher does not preach from the Scriptures (see also Rom.10: 14), because it is the words of truth, the words of righteousness, that the Holy Spirit uses to convict the *world*, for by them is known a perfect standard, and therefore the knowledge of sin. So if you hear a man preaching from his experience, or his knowledge, rather than with words of Scripture, and people get ‘saved’, then it is *likely* that those who thus believed have done so in vain (see 1Cor.15: 2).

Let us always remember that it is the Holy Spirit and the word of righteousness that convicts a man of what is sinful.

### 2. The Holy Spirit is Life to a believer because of Righteousness.

Rom 8:10 *And if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness.*

Tit.3:5 says that it is *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.* This verse is clear; salvation in Christ (when a person becomes a Christian)

takes place *not* by our works of righteousness which we have done (see also Eph.2: 8 & 9), but by God's mercy, and by the washing of Christ's blood (see Rev.1: 5). Once that has occurred the believer is immediately given the Holy Spirit in all abundance through the Lord Jesus Christ. They do not have a secondary baptism of the Holy Spirit, as the Charismatic churches believe. A person is renewed by the Holy Spirit, they receive the Spirit, the Holy Ghost dwells in them (1Cor.6: 19) the moment they believe and receive Christ Jesus as their Saviour. It is from *that* moment on, and not after they have been 'slain' in the Spirit that they are filled, that they are anointed by the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit from that moment on is life to a person because of righteousness (Rom.8: 10). So if a person does not have the Holy Spirit, they are not in Christ, they are not a Christian, not because I said so, but because that is what Holy Scripture says.

If you have ever completed the Alpha course in any of the main-stream churches you will know that they have one night devoted to the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' and I remember when I completed the course 17 years ago, thinking that this was just what I needed. You listen to the tape and go up the front to receive the gift of the Spirit. I remember being told that someone would stand behind me because when you get 'slain' by the Spirit you are likely to fall backwards. And when I did not feel anything different I was encouraged to fall backwards. And even back then when I was ignorant of the truth of Scripture I smelled a rat in the teaching. I was not sure what it meant, or what I was to do about it, but I remember that when I made a comment, I was told that "not everyone gets slain". From our verse in Romans we know that the only reason that the Spirit of God "is life is because of righteousness", is because of Christ's perfect one-off sacrifice of His sinless body on the cross. Christ's perfect righteousness is the reason a believer receives the Holy Ghost, not because they eat a wafer and believes the wafer has changed into Christ's righteous body, or because they drink wine and believe it changes into Christ's precious blood (as the RC institution teaches its adherents). To do so is contrary to the work of Christ on the cross, to do so is contrary to the Scriptures of truth. It is only when we *believe* that our sins are on the righteous Saviour, on the cross at Calvary, and not placing our hope in a future place of purging, like the imaginary RC Purgatory, that the Holy Spirit is life unto righteousness in the believer.

Do you notice every day the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Do you notice Him comforting you in times of tribulation, guiding you (Acts 16: 7 & 8) at each junction you encounter? We are encouraged to walk in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:31), is that how you walk each day?

I suggest that if you are a Christian, if you are in the body of Christ but you live in a Muslim country Iran or Turkey, you would either know that the Holy Spirit is life in you comforting you in times of persecution, or you are there in your own strength, for your own purpose. Because if God, the creator of the heavens and the earth sends you forth as a lamb in the midst of wolves (Lk.10: 3), or into a hostile area, then He will strengthen, comfort and guide you through His Holy Spirit. Because for the true believer the Holy Spirit of God is life because of righteousness.

Let us pray for our brethren in lands where they are being persecuted for their faith in Christ that they would walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, for the Holy Spirit of God is life because of the righteousness of Christ.

### 3. The Holy Spirit bears fruit of the Spirit in all righteousness

Eph 5:9 (*For the fruit of the Spirit [is] in all goodness and righteousness and truth;*)

One of the tests that a believer has as to whether or not they are in Christ, whether they have believed in their heart unto righteousness is the evidence of the fruit of God's Holy Spirit. It would be like an apple tree proving to the world that it *is* an apple tree, by bearing apples and not figs. If a person is a Christian, if they are in Christ, then the Holy Spirit of God resides in them, therefore they will on their journey, bear fruit of the Holy Spirit as identified in Gal.5: 22 & 23. In our verse from Ephesians 5 we see that the Holy Spirit of God bears fruit in righteousness. Our verse says a little more than our point, it says that the Holy Spirit bears fruit "in all goodness and righteousness and truth", and in Gal.5: 22 we see that goodness is also part of the fruit of the Spirit. So whatever the fruit of the Holy Ghost bears in a believer, it is born, it grows and develops in righteousness, goodness and truth. It is not wickedness, evil and error, but righteousness, goodness and truth. It would be like an apple tree bearing fruit of apples, they would need to be grown in good nutritious soil and not polluted soil.

Given that righteousness is doing that which is right, upright, just, and obedient according to the Scriptures, when a person calls themselves a Christian and appears to be bear fruit for example of 'meekness' yet calls their sin of sodomy good, then their fruit is not born in righteousness but evil. And just as an apple tree cannot bear apples in polluted soil, neither can a Christian bear fruit of the Spirit of God when they do so in unrighteousness.

For example, the fruit of the Spirit includes love (see Gal.5: 22), and a large proportion of the visual church today, adopt love as their overriding action that outweighs any other doctrine, but when you take into account this point from Eph.5: 9, you cannot take that approach. To do so is to bear fruit in unrighteousness. Let me explain; if you know of a church that says they obey the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and love their neighbour (in obedience Matt.22: 37-40), yet they are happy to live in sin, call their unrighteousness good, then they are not bearing fruit of the Spirit in righteousness. And the Holy Ghost that resides in a believer can not bear fruit in unrighteousness. So if a person seeks only to obey the 'love commandment', and that love is seen by believers as evidence of the Holy Spirit (because the fruit of the Spirit of God includes love, Gal.5: 22), then the love they have will not be the love of the Bible, but a love that is copied by our adversary the devil, because the Holy Spirit of God does not and cannot bear fruit in unrighteousness. Well, that is what the Scriptures say, you either believe it, or you do not believe it, you either accept it, and seek God's help to obey it, or you reject it and teach others to do the same. But for those who have ears to hear, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, for the words of God, "they are spirit, and they are life", Jn.6: 63.

Let us who believe God, who believe the Holy Scriptures, pray for those who say they believe God on one hand but on other hand are happy to live in unrighteousness, for the Holy Spirit of God bears fruit in the believer in righteousness.

Having said what we have said, let us say it again. In this our fourth study on the topic of righteousness we have covered three points:-

1. the Holy Spirit reproves the world of righteousness, and
2. the Holy Spirit is life to a believer because of righteousness, and
3. the Holy Spirit bears fruit in righteousness.