***Sin; Righteousness; and, Judgment

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-045***

Our subject is "Thanksgiving for the Colossians," segment number 23. We are looking at the passage of Colossians 1:3-8.

Again, I call to your attention the importance of having a Bible when you attend Berean Church. You should feel intimidated, which I'm going to do my best to do – to get you to that point where you are intimidated. I haven't quite gotten the nerve up to have you ask one another, “Where's your Bible?” That's next week. But do not come to church without a Bible. We are here to be instructed in the Word of God, not in the word of man. And you cannot be true Bereans if you can't check out what I tell you.

One man once told me, "Dr. Danish, it's a good thing you're a preacher, because you'd be one of the greatest con men the world has ever seen," so that's always lying under the surface. If you don't have a Bible, you can't check me out.

**Salvation**

The Colossians Christians, that we have been getting acquainted with here in this book, have been transformed, we have found, by the gospel, which is described as the truth of God – this truth for salvation from the lake of fire to eternal life in heaven. When the Colossians heard the gospel and believed it, they came to know the grace of God. They had no way of achieving that transfer from a destiny in hell to a destiny in heaven, but grace made it possible. Their sins were forgiven, thus removing their moral guilt before the justice of God. They had imputed to them, furthermore, the absolute righteousness of God, thus reconciling them to God's righteous standard, the glory of God. So, they became rightly related to God, and they qualified for eternal life in heaven because they had these two things.

That's what salvation brings. It brings you forgiveness of your sins; and, it brings you the imputation of absolute righteousness. You cannot get into heaven without both of those, and you cannot secure either one of them by your efforts. All this was solely the result of doing one thing: believing in Jesus Christ as Savior – adding nothing to it. There were no deals; no promises; and, no offers to God. It was just believing that He was telling the truth – that if you accept Christ as Savior, you receive salvation automatically as a gift.

So, these believers had been transformed from enemies of God to those who were at peace with him. Colossians 1:16 indicates that the Colossians believers had the gospel of grace salvation residing in themselves. It was present in them. Paul says, in verse 5: "Which (referring to the gospel) has come to you. And we showed you last time that "come to you" is a Greek word which means "it is present," or "it is residing." It is actually within the believer. This is a very important doctrinal principle. The presence of the gospel in them was a transforming power which placed them permanently into eternal fellowship with God. That's why their salvation was irreversible. God has done it, and they're permanently placed in Christ. And the reason for that is that the gospel is in them as the foundation of a spiritual life. It is the presence of the gospel which was the basis, then, for learning what Paul calls "the whole purpose of God," or, as the King James Version puts it: "the whole counsel of God through doctrine." And that is important for you to understand. If the gospel is not residing in a person, he has no foundation for spiritual life. He has no access to what God thinks.

So, this is no small thing to realize that when you trust in Christ as Savior, the gospel comes and resides in you as the basis and the foundation upon which you may now build a life that is a life of victory, and a life that God will bless.

The gospel of free grace salvation is what made this possible. The presence of this gospel then is the foundation upon which you must build your life. This is what Paul meant in the book of 1 Corinthians 3:11" "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Paul, in verse 10, says that he introduced them to the grace of God, and to the gospel, which then resided in them as the foundation upon which they would build a life. That foundation is Jesus Christ. He is placed there as a result of believing in Him as personal Savior. If you have no gospel, you have no base upon which to build a spiritual life. And without a base of the gospel, you cannot enter into doctrinal truths. And without doctrinal principles, you have no divine viewpoint. You're just left with the normal human viewpoint that you're born with, and that's thrust at you from every direction as you go through life. Therefore, you have nothing to guide your decisions.

When somebody, as a Christian, makes a bad choice or a bad move, I know that the problem is that the gospel foundation has not had a proper doctrinal base built upon it. And if that person has had access to doctoral information, I know that this is demonstrated that they have not taken positive volition toward it. The Word of God says, "Don't owe anybody anything. Pay your bills." Don't be like a man that I know who has unpaid bills for several years back, and he knows it, and he doesn't really particularly care about it, obviously, he knows the doctrine, but he has not responded to it. He has not built upon the foundation of the gospel. What do you think is going to happen to him? He's going to have the judgment of God upon him. He's not going to get away with that.

What God will do is He will take away his access to further information. That's the worst thing. He will take away that man's access to further knowledge of the Word of God. And He'll throw him out into some trivialized religion. Where can you go if you cannot be instructed in the doctrines of scripture? You have to go to religion. Where can you go if you don't have the foundation of the gospel in you, on which to build the spiritual life? You go to religion. And religion is the devil's game, and it's destructive all the way.

Somebody may come along and says, "Hey, the Bible says, 'Do not neglect the assembling of yourselves together, as is the manner of some, but get prepared for the returning of the Lord.' What do you think that means?" Well, that's a principle that if you have the gospel you now build upon, and you act accordingly. You might as, "Even during Super Bowl Sunday?" And someone may say, "Well, I don't think so." Who would think that that's what that meant? Well, we have a problem. These saints are meeting Sunday night. On Super Bowl Sunday, I came in here Sunday night, and the place was empty. The Lord Jesus was sitting here. The angels were fluttering around. I greeted them. And it looked like Barry and Jerry, the gods of the Christians, that particular Sunday were going to win out over the Lord Jesus. All of a sudden, the doctrinal base evaporated. And we had people who didn't know how to act. But I'm happy to say that, before the evening was over, the Lord was encouraged by a goodly number that arrived, and we had a super service, and we learned some super information.

This is what we're talking about. We're talking about the doctrine of the gospel residing present in us as the foundation, and the person of Jesus Christ. Then we don't act like the world. Then we don't pretend that suddenly some principle of doctrine that is forbidden is something we can do. If you do, then I know that you have a negative attitude toward the Word of God at some point, so you're disoriented as to what you should do. The point is that when you follow the principles of the Word of God, you're always a winner: "Greater is He who is in us than he that is in the world." The devil cannot beat you. But if you don't have the foundation of the gospel to start with, and if you don't have the doctrines of scripture built upon it, then you will have no guidance. And if you do have instruction and go negative to it, bingo – you're out of the inner circle, and you're out of fellowship with God. The next thing you'll do is something else that you shouldn't be doing, because one sin leads to another. This is serious business – to have the foundation of the gospel, and then to be instructed in the Word of God and then to say, "Well, I can ignore it."

This is what Jesus said to the Pharisees: "You people would not have had sin" (meaning that you would not have had great condemnation if I hadn't taught you these principles of doctrine). Now that you know them, boy, are you ever going to be held accountable for them. Now, there are some people within the circle of our association who are very wise. They know that this is a place where they're going to be instructed in the Word of God. And like one person said recently: "Why should I sit there and hear things that are going to make me feel guilty?" And what do they do? They evaporate. They don't come. They obey Jesus principle: "Are you ever going to be held accountable for what you know and turn your back upon?"

So, people who don't care to find themselves confronted with the doctrines of Scripture will do one thing. They will seek to silence the communicator. They'll either not attend, so that they don't have to listen, or else they'll kill him. One way or the other, they will try to silence the communicator. And that's exactly what they eventually did with the Lord. When they couldn't silence Him, because the people listened, and He rang the bell of truth to them, then they killed Him in order to remove His voice that way.

So, the gospel present in you is the first step toward having a genuine spiritual life. If you don't have that, and you don't have Christ to build on, then you don't have the indwelling Holy Spirit to teach you the principles of the Word of God. This is the way it works. The gospel of free grace salvation is not just another plan of salvation in the world. It is the only plan that God has. And Romans 1:16 says, "It is the power of God." That's why it is so important to realize that you as a Christian have the gospel present in you as the foundation for a spiritual life, and it is the power of God. It is going to make you something beyond your fondest dreams. All you have to do is follow James' axiom, "Be doers of the word and not hears only." All other plans of salvation, or any combinations with grace salvation, are false plans. Remember that last part, because that's as bad – if you combine something with grace, some human religious ritual or work, then it is no longer grace salvation. Any other plan is not the truth, and, therefore, it will not save. So, if you are not saved, you have no spiritual foundation in your soul, and you'll go into religion.

**The Gospel**

So, today, having pursued Paul's reference to the gospel, and having presented the procedure of good news / bad news (or bad news / good news) for dealing with this, let's just have a quick review of the gospel. If you're going to lead a person of salvation, give him the bad news. He's a sinner (Romans 3:23.) That's a given. There is no question about it. Then give him the second piece of bad news. The consequence of being a sinner is eternal death – separation from God in the lake of fire (Romans 6:23). That is a principle of the Word of God. It is true. But there is good news. Christ died for our sins (Romans 5:8). "While we were yet sinners," he did that. And then tell the person that he can be saved as per Ephesians 2:8-9 – God's grace basis of believing the gospel – accepting the fact that God has given a true statement concerning the fact that Christ has substituted for his penalty of death, and he's free. That is the simple way. This is the thing to give people when you have an opportunity to present the gospel to them.

However, there is something else that I want you to understand now: that, having done this, you step back, and get your hands off of it. You do not interject yourself with some kind of a human element to get people to believe the gospel. At this point, it is the work of God the Holy Spirit, and His work alone – nobody else. And we're going to look at that today.

Here at Berean Memorial Church we do not give you a chance to come forward and to walk an aisle in order to be saved. The only thing we give you a chance to walk an aisle for is to the offering boxes. Other than that, you don't get a chance to walk forward for anything. You are invited to believe the gospel when we deal with that subject, as we have been recently. But we are dependent upon the believers who have been instructed in the gospel, and in what their duty is as ambassadors of Christ, to tell the gospel. You are the people who should be taking those evangelism brochures that we have prepared, and hand them out. You can do that everywhere, and anywhere, and it's a complete statement. Anybody who seriously reads that little booklet, and accepts it, will go to heaven. You have it in your hand to open the doors to heaven. That's why Jesus said that all of you have the keys of the kingdom. Don't tell the pope, that because he thinks he has them, but he doesn't. His key is the key to a different kingdom. You have the key to the real kingdom, and it's in the gospel. And the booklet is a simple way for you to do it.

However, I want you to understand something else that is happening in the process when you do that, so that you'll know how to cooperate with the work of God the Holy Spirit, who is very much involved in your witnessing and your testimony, to those who need to have the gospel foundation placed in their lives. We don't go for a public show, but we are very much interested in your recognizing the fact that you need to believe the gospel. And we invite you to do that, but you can only do that in your own mind so that you are then prepared to have a gift from God given to you, and to have the spiritual foundation in your life.

Please turn to John 16:8-11. We're going to look at this in some detail. This passage is talking about the witnesses of God. You Christians live your lives, and you serve God, in enemy territory. It is very important that you understand that. You live, and you serve God, in enemy territory. That territory belongs to Satan. You reside in Satan's world system. 2 Corinthians 4:4: "In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Every time you try to tell somebody how to go to heaven, the devil is there, doing everything he can to keep that mind blinded, so that they don't understand it, so that they will not take it under consideration, and will not respond to it. The devil is doing his best to undermine your testimony. And he does that in a variety of ways.

Notice James 4:4: "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." That's the system under which we live. We are in the devil's territory. This is his world. He is the god of this world. And those who are friendly with our society and its institutions (the world system – what the theologians call "the cosmos diabolicus"), are, by that act, the enemies of God. You're not going to walk through this world as the friend of God openly – a man or woman after God's own heart, like a David. You will not be welcomed in the world. They're going to dislike you; they're going to hate you; and, they're going to see what they can do to bring injury to you. For some Christians, that's all they need in order to put their tail between their legs and run. They don't want to be rejected; and, they don't want to suffer that kind of antagonism that expresses itself from the world system. We Christians live in the world system of Satan.

However, we are also to remember that we are citizens of heaven. Philippians 3:20: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

We add to that Ephesians 2:19: "So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and our of God's household." There was a time, before we believed the gospel, when we were strangers and aliens to the household of God. Now, having the foundation of the gospel, we have a citizenship with the family of God. So, that's our problem. We belong to another entity; another society; and another country, so to speak. We are aliens here in this world. So, stop acting like you were friends of the people around you. Something is wrong if you don't understand this doctrinal principle – that you do not look to the world for its sympathy and its support. We don't go out to the world to find support for the Lord's work. We go to God's people for that. And when we need the support of other people, we go to Christians. They are the ones who are our family, and that we are really related to.

The world of Satan itself is an evil place, and it is antagonistic to Christians. Please notice 1 John 2:15-16: "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anybody loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world: the lusts of the flesh; and the lust of the eyes; and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father but is from the world."

1 John 3:13: "Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you."

1 John 5:19: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

I think it is very clear that the world belongs to the devil, and he has organized it to carry out his purposes. And everywhere we look today, we are living in the exciting times of the final stage of the church age. And we are living in the midst of the intensified stage of the angelic conflict, because we're getting near the end. And Satan is moving all humanity toward a world government; toward a world organization; and, toward a world religion. And it is so subtle, and it is so in the background, that unless you are reading other sources than the normal media, you won't even know what's going on in the background; and the hatred and the plans that are afoot for silencing the Christians, and for exalting a single unified world religion.

So, we are living in a place which is antagonistic to us. How in the world are we going to witness in that kind of a society? How are we going to be able to name the name of Christ, as you cannot even do in a public school system without the authorities coming down upon you?

There was a story in the news recently about a little girl who was going to write a story. She was something like a third-grader. They were told to write a story about their favorite person. And so she selected that she would write about the Lord Jesus Christ. So, and the teacher said, "No, you can't do that. This is a public school. We can't allow you to do that. That's not appropriate." And when she did it anyhow, they expelled her. So, that's just a little example of what happens all the time, and we're not even aware of it. The world is Satan's realm of authority, and he is in complete charge of it.

Just imagine what it would've been like for you to live in atheistic Russian communism which hates God and persecutes His believers. Among the millions that were killed by communist Russia were Christians. They have a memorial to the Holocaust that the Jews suffered during World War II. Somebody wants to put up a memorial to the victims of communism right there in Washington DC. Wouldn't that be great? And the writer of the article finished it by saying, "Pray for this project." Wouldn't that be great to visit Washington, and see the great monuments, and you'd come this great monument dedicated to the victims of communism, to remind us that communism is Satan's evil system.

I made a man very indignant in one service one time when I listed the deep things of Satan as compared to the deep things of the Spirit of God. And one of the things that I said was a deep thing of Satan (one of his devices) was socialism. And he didn't like it because he liked socialism. He liked taking other people's money and giving it to those who would do him favors. And I was glad to hear that, because I'm always concerned that we always try to have something in every service to offend everyone in some respect. And I found that you can get a lot of people with the socialism thing. Just take a crack at socialism, or make a reference to the socialist party of the United States, which is very blue right now. You'd think that we've never had a constitution that had freedom encased in such a way that socialism could not be permitted. And yet the devil has made that inroad because when he takes over, after we Christians are gone, and the world moves into the tribulation era, socialism will be the economic system of the world. And all the world is getting ready for it. And our country, of all things, is running pell-mell into socialism as fast as it can.

So, just imagine trying to witness in a context like that, where you know the Word of God. You have the foundation of doctrine. You know what the principles are, and you try to live by that. They're going to attack you from every direction. And they're going to want to silence you.

Imagine living in a Muslim country which persecutes Christians who exalt Jesus Christ as Lord above Mohamed. You may have seen the TV program this week, of what is being done to Christians in Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia. Children who have Christian parents, and who will not deny Christ, are sold into slavery. That's what happens when you want to be true to the Lord.

Imagine living under the socialist dictatorship of China today, where the communist party is god, and Christians are brutalized for witnessing to the fact that Christ is the Lord God. That's the world in which we live. And we are to be ambassadors to the gospel in that kind of a context? For us in this country, it's not so bad. Nevertheless, we are also looked upon with disfavor.

Well, God the Holy Spirit has been sent into the world to meet this problem. He has been sent by the Lord Jesus Christ, first of all, to teach Christians doctrine through the teaching ministry of the pastor-teacher. That's the setup. You have a local church, and you have a single pastor-teacher-elder. He has the gift to be able to communicate spiritual phenomena – no credit to him. It's just something that God has enabled him to do, and that is his business. And he has the authority to do that. He, of course, will be silenced wherever he can. He will be intimidated. He will be undermined. He will be deserted. He will have his financial structure threatened. Everything that the devil can get carnal people to do will happen. But he has to be true to his calling. People have a right to know what the Scripture says. Then, when they make fools of themselves, at least they cannot say, "Why didn't you teach me?"

As I told you, the Marine Corps barracks at Paris Island had that sign over it that said, "Let no man's ghost ever arise to say that he died because we did not properly prepare him to meet the enemy." And so too, nobody will ever be able to say that Berean Church ever failed a Christian who gets out to the Judgment Seat of Christ, and sees what his loss is, because we did not prepare him for the angelic combat, and the warfare that he faced with Satan's forces.

John 16:12-15 refers to this teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of the truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak. And He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall teach you prophecy. He shall glorify Me," Jesus says, "for He shall take of Mine and shall disclose it to you." That's why we say that the Holy Spirit is your teacher, and you must be in a receptive mode in the inner circle of temporal fellowship: "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore, I said that He takes a vine and will disclose it to you."

What this does is enables the believer to make Jesus Christ the Lord in their lives. First you make Him your Savior, and then you are obligated to make Him your Lord. Of course, He is always Lord, by nature of the fact that he is God. But to be Lord in your experience is where the Holy Spirit comes in with the teaching ministry of the Word. The objective of the Holy Spirit is to enable the Christian to discern Satan's human viewpoint deceptions, and to resist his temptations to evil.

Now, if you want to not to discern Satan's human viewpoint deceptions, and if you want to go for his temptations to do evil, just stay out of church instruction. Just stay away from the instruction in the Word of doctrine. Just go to some church where you can eat the husks instead of the kernels of spiritual food. And sooner or later, you'll get socked. You will not escape. This is an important thing that the Spirit of God teaches us, and that's His ministry, and that's the only way we survive in the devil's world. The Holy Spirit enables the Christian, then, who is oriented to doctrine, and in temporal fellowship, to escape becoming a spiritual casualty in the angelic warfare which surrounds him every day. It is the Holy Spirit, then, who must come in to help us if we're going to witness to the lost. It is He who amplifies to the lost sinner what his problem is with God. And without His work, a person will not believe the gospel. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that you must cooperate with if you are going to be a true witness.

**The Holy Spirit is the Helper**

So, we have this in John 16:8-11. The Holy Spirit brings conviction to the unbeliever in order to make Jesus Christ his Savior. This is an essential part of salvation. Verse 8: "And He (God the Holy Spirit), when He comes." This means that when He arrives on the scene on earth: "And He, when He comes will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. When the Holy Spirit," Jesus says, "takes up His residence on this earth (this was before the day of Pentecost), He is going to do certain things to unsaved people." This is the only ministry that God the Holy Spirit has to unsaved people. The Spirit of God only serves Christians, except in this one case. He overrides their dead human spirit. Without a living human spirit, you can't learn God's truth. You can't learn doctrine. That's the foundation of the gospel in us. It gives you a living human spirit in which to store the word of truth. But the believer has this overridden for him by a supernatural act of God the Holy Spirit, who takes into his mentality an understanding concerning three things described here as sin: righteousness: and, judgment. He is the Helper. The one who comes is the Helper that Jesus referred to in verse 7.

He came to reside on earth on the day of Pentecost. On that day the church body was formed. There was no church in the Old Testament, and there will be no church in the tribulation. The church age comes between Pentecost and the rapture of the church, when it's caught up to be with the Lord in heaven. Acts 1:8: "Jesus said to his disciples (just before His ascension), "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the remotest parts of the earth." You cannot be His witnesses until the Spirit of God comes to do His distinctive unique work.

In Acts 2:1-4, here's the fulfillment: "And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place (the believers). And suddenly, there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared on them tongues as of fire, distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues (other languages) as the Spirit gave them utterance." They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

Later in Acts chapter 11, we discover that the other thing that happened to them was that they were all baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ, and thus formed the first of the believers who formed the body of Christ, the church.

**Convict**

Now, the Holy Spirit is going to come, John 16 tells us, and He's going to arrive on this earth to do a specific work for the unbeliever. Well, He came on Pentecost, and what He came to do was, first of all, to convict. This word looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the Greek word "elegcho" (el-eng'-kho), E L E G C H O. "Elegcho" is a word that means to bring something into the light in order to expose it. It has a variety of uses.

Here's one use: John 3:20 uses it in this way, "For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deed should be exposed." And there's the word, "elegcho." So, the idea of "convict" here means to bring something into the light in order to expose some truth.

It also means "to reprove" in some specific way. We have it used in this way in Revelation 3:19, "Those whom I love, I reprove, and discipline. Be zealous, therefore, and repent." One of the meanings of "convict" is that God reproves you for what you're doing that you shouldn't be doing.

The basic definition of this word is to make something known with the idea of refutation. Make something known to refute something that is not true. We have this used in this way in 1 Corinthians 14:24: "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever (or an ungifted man) enters, he is convicted by all. He is called to account by all." The verse previous to this is saying that speaking in foreign languages is a temporary thing that has a special, confirming purpose that God is speaking. You couldn't do this if there was not the supernatural act of God. The devil does not enable people to speak in foreign languages. They can speak in gibberish. The devil makes them do that, but he cannot make them speak in languages they do not know. But this is something that God does, and therefore, confirms that the message of the church age was from God. And here he is saying that it is better for people to prophesy; that is, to tell forth the truth of doctrine, and then the unbeliever who is there will be convicted. This is the word "elegcho" here – to convict.

Take a look at Titus 2:15. That illustrates the word: "These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you." When people do something wrong, Timothy is told, “You're an authority. You're a spokesman of God. You tell people that's wrong to do. And you illustrate it from the Word.”

James 2:9 is another example, "But if you show partiality, you are committing sin, and are convicted by the Law as a transgressor." Here, something is made known in the Law of God, and you are refuted in what you're doing by your partiality.

So, what this word means is to convict the mind of the truth of something, and that's how it's being used here in John 16. The Holy Spirit is going to come. And to a believer, He will convict them of something. This word means "to expose one to information," then to give understanding of this information to the mind of the hearer, resulting in comprehension and a response. The Holy Spirit has to make something very clear to the unsaved person. He has a dead human spirit. Therefore, he has no access to spiritual things. He has no contact with God. Therefore, the Holy Spirit overrides that dead human spirit, and right to the mind, He gives him understanding on something that is critical if he is to ever be saved.

To whom is this going? This is going to go to the world. This is the Greek word "kosmos" (kos'-mos), K O S M O S. This refers to the mass of humanity, especially to unbelievers. The word "kosmos," in Ephesians, (kos'-mos), speaks about an organized entity with its thoughts and its standards. That is often the way we speak about the world that we consider our enemy. Ephesians 2:2: "In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air (Satan), of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience." Here you have the world spoken of as an entity that is antagonistic toward God. This word also means people who constitute Satan's world – people who make-up Satan's world system: the unbelievers. This is John 3:16: "For God's so love the world" – the organized people of society.

It also refers to society in opposition to God. We have this in John 17, the high priestly prayer of Jesus Christ. This is the true Lord's Prayer. John 17:11: "And I am no more in the world." Here, is this society that opposes God. And yet, they themselves are in the world. Christians are going to have to be in a society that opposes God, and thus opposes them. "And I come to You, Holy Father. Keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are One." And here, Jesus says, I'm going to pray that that dirty world is not going to contaminate My people. And if they stay in doctrine, and they stay in temporal fellowship, it won't.

The organized human and angelic enemies of God are at war with the people of God. John 17:14: "I have given them Your word (doctrine). And the world has hated them, because they're not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Here is organized humanity: organized demonic angels.

In John 16:13, the world is the world of the mass of unsaved people: "When He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He will bring to an understanding and a conviction concerning three things.

**Sin**

First: sin. There are various words for "sin." In the Greek, this is "hamartia" (ham-ar-tee'-ah), H A M A R T I A. This is a word that means to miss the mark. Here is the mark of God's standard of absolute righteousness. This is referred to as the glory of God in Romans 3:23: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." They miss the mark. What mark? Absolute righteousness. This word "hamartia" is used in various ways. It is used of personal acts of evil (Galatians 1:4). 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins." It is referring to your personal acts of evil there in that particular verse.

Then it is also used to refer to the sin nature in man. We have that in Roman 7:17: "So now no longer am I doing this, but sin which indwells me." We have a clue that that's the sin nature because it's singular. But it's the word "hamartia." Paul says, I have a sin nature that's causing me to do this.

Notice verse 20: "But if I'm doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me." Here, the apostle Paul is struggling with: why in the world am I doing the terrible things that I object to; that I don't want to do; and, that I don't believe in. Well, he says, "Because I'm subject to the sin nature." Then he comes and says, "How am I going to break that?" He says: "Ah, through Jesus Christ." And he goes to confession of personal known sin.

Here's the way it's expressed for us in 1 John 1:8: "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Anybody who tells you that he doesn't have a sin nature (that he is sinlessly perfect) is not telling you the truth, and he is deceiving himself.

This word is also used as a quality or a condition of condemnation with a sense of guilt. I'll just look at one of those. In John 8:21, "He said, 'therefore, again to them, 'I go away, and you shall seek Me, and shall die in your sin. Where I'm going, you cannot come.'"

This is also in verse 24. Jesus says, "I said, therefore, to you that you shall die in your sins. For unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins." And what He's talking about is in the condition of condemnation: "You're going to die under the condition of sin (the condition of condemnation). You have this in John 15:22 and in John 19:11.

So, here, in John 16:8, we have sin as the conviction that one is morally guilty and under divine verdict of destiny to hell. That's what he means by sin: "He will convict them of sin." The unsaved person suddenly becomes aware of the fact that he is under a moral guilt condemnation by God, and that the verdict is the lake of fire. This is not an emotional guilt, but is a fact that he understands that, by nature, he is under the condemnation of sin. He is in this condition. This is an abstract idea that is in view here. It is not personal individual sins: "I am just under the divine condemnation of God because I am a sinner. I have a sin nature, and I perform acts of sin." The Holy Spirit convicts the lost person in order to lead him to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior.

Now, you are never going to make that clear to people no matter how much you talk to them, because we live in a society where sin has been made acceptable; and where things that the Bible says are wrong are practiced, and because everybody does it, it's okay for you to do it.

When I was growing up, there was a product which was being sold, and it used to be advertised on the radio as "50 million Frenchmen can't be wrong," because they all used this product. Well, 50 million Frenchmen are wrong about nearly everything, let alone about that particular product. But the whole idea was that if so many people accept it, it must be true. And that's not the case in spiritual things. If so many people accept it, it's probably not true. And what people accept in our society is a violation of the Word of God on our personal thinking and our personal conduct, and it'll bring injuries. The person has to realize: "I am in a condition of sin, and that is bad business." The Spirit of God must make that clear to the individual.

**Righteousness**

Then he says, "I'm going to deal with you on a thing called righteousness." This is the Greek word "dikaiosune" (dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay), D I K A I O S U N E. This refers to the absolute righteousness of God. This is a quality which is not possessed by an unsaved person. This is not an act of righteousness. This is a character of absolute perfection. This kind of absolute perfection of righteousness is essential to entering eternity in heaven. Absolute righteousness cannot be earned by the lost sinner, but it must be received as a gift from God. And that's the only way you can receive this absolute righteousness. And the unsaved person is brought to the place where he realizes that, if he is not as good as Jesus Christ, he cannot go to heaven. If you try to convince him of that, with his rationality, he'll excuse himself. But when the Spirit of God does it, he understands that Christ is essential in His absolute righteousness to him.

Philippians 3:9: "And may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own," which most people try to offer to God, "which is from the Law, by their good works and their promises; but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith."

Then, of course. Ephesians 2:8-9, is the clincher: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that (salvation) not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

**Judgment**

And there is a third thing that the Holy Spirit is going to make clear. He has made clear now that the person is a sinner. He has great moral guilt upon him, and he can't remove that guilt. Secondly, He's made clear to him that he has to be as good as God Himself to go to heaven – He must have absolute righteousness. Then the third thing that he makes clear to the individual is judgment. And that word is the Greek word "krisis" (kree'-sis), K R I S I S. This word indicates a verdict which has been reached in a court of law. And it implies that the verdict is guilty – that there is a condemnation. And it will include, therefore, punishment.

Here are some examples of its use. John 3:19: "And this is the judgment (the 'krisis'): that the light has come into the world. And men loved the darkness rather than light, for the deeds were evil." Here is a condemnation – a judgment of God. The Judge of the universe says, "You're guilty, and you are guilty of sin. You are doomed to the lake of fire.

Take a look at John 12:31: "Now judgment is upon the world. Now the ruler of this world shall be cast out. All of the world (of the unbelievers) are under the judgment of God." What is that judgment? Guilty! I sentence you to eternity in the lake of fire with your master, the devil.

One more: Hebrews 9 uses this word "krisis." And since it indicates a judgment and a condemnation, it clarifies this verse. Hebrews 9:27 says, "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment." Here we have the decision of destiny. What it is talking about is an abstract quality of being under the condemnation of God. That's what's in view here. This is a state. So, the Holy Spirit comes in, and He makes clear three important things for the believer to understand as he contemplates the bad news / good news gospel that you have given him. This is what the Spirit of God is using. He will bring an understanding of the world, and to a conviction of a sense of doom. He will convict him of his guilt. He will convict him concerning sin. He is morally guilty. He will convict him of righteousness, the absolute righteousness of God, which he must possess. And He will convict him of judgment – that he has been judged to go to the lake of fire.

Now, why would He do that? John 16:9-11 have two words that keep coming next to one another in each of these verses down the line: concerning / because. "Peri" / "hoti" are the two words. And it gives an explanation now of exactly what he means by convicting of sin. Why? He tells what he means by convicting of righteousness. Why? He tells what he means by convicting of judgment. Why? And that gives us the final clarification of the ministry of the Holy Spirit upon which your witnessing ministry must be based, if it is be fruitful. And we shall look at that next time. Our Heavenly Father, we thank You for this Thy Word. We pray that Thou shall seal it to our understanding, and help us to realize that we are not out there in this world that hates us alone, but we are fully capable of walking it with full victory, and we ask Thee to help us to act accordingly. We pray that when we make the bad choices, we shall realize that doctrine was not functioning in our mentalities, and so we acted on Satan's world system. We pray that Thou will help us to realize that our job is to give the gospel, and to give it clearly, without any contamination, so that grace (which is what evangelism is all about – evangelism is the grace work of the spirit of God) may go on without any hindrance, and that the Spirit of God may step into the picture, and deal with the unbeliever on sin and righteousness and judgment, so that there may be a basis for that individual to change his destiny from the lake of fire to heaven. We have the keys. May we be faithful to use them, and may we have a greater sense of dependence upon the Spirit of God, and appreciation for what He must do, and which only He can do, and that we do not intrude upon His part of the ministry of reconciling people to the standard of God. Thank you for this time, in Christ's name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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