

## Chapter 32: The Treasurer of Jesus

*John 16:4b–15*

In the previous two passages, Jesus seems to have presented starkly different accounts of what the disciples will experience after his departure. On the one hand, the disciples will grow through their union with Jesus to produce the good fruit of love (John 15:1–17). On the other hand, the disciples will face the hatred of the world coming at them in such ferocity that they will be tempted to fall away from Jesus (John 15:18–16:4a). How will the disciples carry on pursuing Jesus’ fruit of love rather than throwing in the towel? How do we who live today continue on after so many years have passed since Jesus’ departure? What real hope can we as Christians have for success in this dark world?

In John 16:4b–15, Jesus explains that he will equip his disciples. Of course, Jesus has spent the last few years equipping his disciples in person, but after his departure, he will equip them in a different way. Specifically, Jesus will send his Holy Spirit to equip his disciples. In part, this will mean that Jesus will send his Holy Spirit to expose the bankruptcy of the world. Additionally, this will mean that Jesus will send his Holy Spirit to enrich his disciples from Jesus’ own abundant treasury. By leading Jesus’ disciples deeper into the promises of the gospel in Jesus’ word, *the Holy Spirit equips us to know Christ*.

### Equipping the Disciples (John 16:4b–6)

In John 16:4b, Jesus explains why he is now telling his disciples more than he told them in the past: “I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.” In the past, the world did not think much of the disciples, for the world recognized Jesus as their true threat.<sup>1</sup> The world seeks to kill Jesus because, by killing Jesus, they believe that they can remove that threat once and for all. Instead, after Jesus’ departure, his disciples will carry on the ministry of Jesus, bearing the fruit of Jesus (John 15:1–17) and bearing witness to Jesus (John 15:27). Jesus now prepares his disciples for facing the hatred of the world that he faced alone in the past.

“Where are you going?”

As a part of this preparation, Jesus rebukes his disciples for not seeking to learn everything they can while Jesus remains among them: “But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’” (John 16:5). At a crucial moment before Jesus would depart from them, they do not plead with Jesus to equip them to navigate their new reality after he departs. Instead, they are simply caught up in their sorrow at the thought of losing Jesus.<sup>2</sup> They cannot see anything beyond that.

Now, Jesus’ rebuke may seem puzzling at first, since both Peter (John 13:36) and Thomas (John 14:5) did ask Jesus where he was going. But in both of those cases, it is clear that the disciples are not

actually trying to understand *where* Jesus is going (or *what* it would mean for him to go), but only *why* he must go. Peter's question is a protest, and Thomas's question is "nothing but an expression of discouragement and dullness of mind."<sup>3</sup> D. A. Carson gives an insightful illustration to explain their questions:

A little boy, disappointed that his father is suddenly called away for an emergency meeting when both the boy and his Dad had expected to go fishing together, says, 'Aw, Dad, where are you going?', but cares nothing at all to learn the destination. The question is a protest; the unspoken question is 'Why are you leaving me?'

Their goal is not to learn from Jesus, but to see if they can keep Jesus even a little bit longer. Their reaction, then, is a reaction of deep sorrow: "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart" (John 16:6).

Certainly, we can sympathize with the sorrow of the disciples. Anyone who loves Jesus would want never want to depart from his presence for a moment, and now Jesus is talking about going away from them for the rest of their lives. Furthermore, Jesus is explaining that, in his absence, the world will begin to direct its hatred and rage against them because they will resemble their master (John 15:18–25). From their perspective, this is a lose-lose situation: they will lose the presence of Jesus, and they will lose the protection of Jesus.

### "I am going to him who sent me"

But in the midst of their sorrow, the disciples are missing the good news of what Jesus is about to accomplish: Jesus is going back to his Father who sent him into the world. The disciples' problem is that they think of Jesus' departure as something that is clearly good for *Jesus*, but not for them. They are like the younger siblings of the oldest child who gets to go do something that the others are not allowed to do: *What good is it for us if Jesus gets to return to his Father?* They see only the loss, and none of the gain.

Jesus' return to his Father, though, has *everything* to do with them. Coming into the world is only the first part of Jesus' mission of redemption in the world. He must complete this portion of his mission on earth, but then he must reign at his Father's right hand in order to become "the guardian of their salvation[.] For to go to the Father is nothing else than to be received into the heavenly glory, in order to possess the highest authority....to protect believers by his power."<sup>4</sup> Everything Jesus has done up to this point is for nothing if he cannot bring his finished work to the Father as a Mediator on our behalf. Although the disciples will lose their personal interaction with Jesus, the departure of Jesus is nevertheless good news—indeed, the best possible news that Jesus could have given his disciples. The mission is going to succeed! Redemption will soon be accomplished! All God's people will be forgiven and reconciled to God for all eternity!

Jesus rebukes his disciples for not asking more information about *that* new reality. This is their last chance to ask Jesus whatever they want of him to prepare them for life after their departure, and they are too sorrowful even to formulate a question in this direction. They fail to take advantage of this final opportunity for Jesus to equip them personally.

## Exposing the World's Bankruptcy (John 16:7–11)

The departure of Jesus marks more than the *end* of Jesus' earthly ministry. Additionally, Jesus insists that his departure marks the *beginning* of the Spirit's earthly, new covenant ministry: "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7). Certainly, Jesus is not saying that he and the Holy Spirit must avoid coexisting on the earth at the same time.<sup>6</sup> Remember, the Holy Spirit has already been active in the world, especially during the course of Jesus' own ministry, for the Spirit descended and remained on Jesus (John 1:33). Instead, Jesus' point is that his finished work is the prerequisite for the *new* work of the Holy Spirit to begin.

The irony of this phrase "it is to your advantage" is that Caiaphas used the exact same words to explain the need for Jesus to die: "Nor do you understand that *it is better for you* that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish" (John 11:50).<sup>7</sup> For Caiaphas, Jesus' death is convenient for his own political purposes; for the disciples, Jesus' death and departure are profitable for their great good. Not only does Jesus' return to the Father bring our Lord's earthly ministry to completion, but Jesus' return to the Father also means that Jesus will then send us the Holy Spirit to minister on Jesus' behalf.

### Convicting the World

Jesus identifies a specific reason that the Holy Spirit's ministry will be advantageous for the disciples. Namely, the Holy Spirit will continue Jesus' own work of convicting the world:

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. (John 16:8–11)

This is a complicated passage that Bible scholars have interpreted in a variety of ways. Essentially, the interpretation of this passage revolves around two key questions. First, who is the "world"? And second, what is the nature of the "conviction"?

To answer the first question by trying to identify the "world" in this passage, we must look to the surrounding context of this passage. In this case, Jesus has just finished speaking about how the "world" will hate the disciples (John 15:18–16:4). In the Gospel of John, "world" can have a broader meaning to refer to all people—some who repent and believe in Jesus, along with others who do not (e.g., John 3:16). Here, the immediate context for the word "world" refers only to the people who hate Jesus and Jesus' disciples. This negative sense of the word "world" seems to fit with what Jesus goes on to say: "they do not believe in me" (John 16:9). This does not mean that *individuals* within the world can never repent and believe in Jesus; it only means that the "world" as a whole will remain the intractable enemy of Jesus and his disciples until Jesus returns to judge the world forever. The individuals who make up the "world" will change over time, but the "world" will remain until the end.

To answer the second question about the nature of the conviction, we need to look at two elements about this passage. First, Köstenberger points out that the threefold conviction of the Holy

Spirit corresponds with Pilate's threefold "not guilty" verdicts in regard to Jesus (John 18:38; 19:4, 6).<sup>8</sup> This suggests that the "conviction" of the Holy Spirit constitutes a "retrial" of Jesus. Pilate could find no guilt in Jesus, but he crucified him anyway. The enemies want this conviction to stand forever as proof that Jesus was a sinner and they were righteous. Instead, after Jesus' resurrection, the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, vindicate Jesus on the basis of his righteousness, and declare that the final judgment of the ruler of this world has already taken place at the cross (cf. John 12:31).

Second, we should notice that this conviction is primarily for the benefit of the disciples, not for the world. It is to *our* advantage that Jesus goes away, so that the Holy Spirit may come (John 16:7). When the Holy Spirit comes, he will do two things: convict the world (John 16:7–11) and guide the disciples into all truth (John 16:12–15).<sup>9</sup> While the Spirit bears witness *against* the world and *for* the disciples, the disciples are the beneficiaries of both acts: "in his witness vis-à-vis the world the Spirit acts as (helper-)Paraclete to the disciples in their ongoing witness concerning Jesus by portraying to *them* the true nature of the world, of Jesus' departure, and of his victory over the world."<sup>10</sup> That is, the Holy Spirit will not only teach the disciples *positively* the full truth of Jesus, but the Holy Spirit will teach *negatively*—that is, he will *expose*—the bankruptcy of the world.

### Concerning Sin

First, the Holy Spirit will convict the world: "concerning sin, because they do not believe in me" (John 16:9). The grammar of this sentence in Greek does not make the first part of the verse the primary thought, with the second part of the verse a subordinate or supporting thought.<sup>11</sup> That is, the fact that they do not believe Jesus does not merely *prove* the main point about the existence of their sin. Rather, Jesus is saying that unbelief *defines the nature* of their sin. R. C. H. Lenski suggests that "because" gives the wrong impression in English, and he instead suggests translating this phrase as "inasmuch as they do not believe in me" or "seeing that they do not believe in me."

The point, then, is not that the world sins through unbelief. Much more—the chief characteristic of the sin of the world is in unbelief in Jesus. John Calvin writes this:

Again, Christ mentioned unbelief, in order to show what is the nature of men in itself for, since faith is the bond by which he is united to us, until we believe in him, we are out of him and separated from him. The import of these words is as if he had said, "When the Spirit is come, he will produce full conviction that, apart from me, sin reigns in the world;" and, therefore, unbelief is here mentioned, because it separates us from Christ, in consequence of which nothing is left to us but sin. In short, by these words he condemns the corruption and depravity of human nature, that we may not suppose that a single drop of integrity is in us without Christ.<sup>12</sup>

The conviction of the Holy Spirit concerning sin will demonstrate the guilt of the world in this separation from Christ. Apart from him, we have no hope, no purity, no righteousness, and no holiness, for the nature of life outside of Christ is *sin*.

### Concerning Righteousness

Second, the Holy Spirit will convict the world "concerning righteousness, inasmuch as/seeing that [ESV: because] I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer" (John 16:10).<sup>13</sup> Jesus' exaltation

and return to his Father who sent him in the world is the ultimate vindication of his righteousness. John Calvin writes, “Next to the conviction of sin, this is the second step, that the Spirit should convince the world what true righteousness is, namely, that Christ, by his ascension to heaven, has established the kingdom of life, and now sits at the right hand of the Father, to confirm true righteousness.”<sup>14</sup> Because Jesus perfectly accomplishes every part of his mission, the Father not only raises him from the dead, but also highly exalts him to his right hand, giving him the name above every other name so that at the name of Jesus every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2:9–11). The world convicted Jesus for “doing evil” (John 18:30) and for blaspheming by making “himself the Son of God” (John 19:7). The Holy Spirit, however, convicts the world for condemning Jesus Christ the Righteous. In fact, the Holy Spirit presses further in his conviction to establish that the only true righteousness in this world rests with Jesus, who has been received with glory and power at the right hand of the Father.

This conviction of Jesus’ righteousness is the inverse of the first conviction about the world’s sin. Just as the *nature* of sin is separation from Jesus, so also the *nature* of righteousness is union with the exalted Jesus. Indeed, it is only inasmuch as Jesus goes to the Father so that his disciples see him no longer that he can serve as the perfect, righteous Mediator for us at the Father’s right hand. The second part of John 16:10 gets back to the idea of why it is to the disciples’ advantage for Jesus to go away and for the Holy Spirit to come (John 16:7). It is better for us to abide in Jesus by the Holy Spirit *now* than it was for people to dwell with Jesus *bodily* during his earthly ministry, for the Holy Spirit makes us righteous by uniting us to Jesus. Therefore, the Holy Spirit convicts the world for resisting this union with Christ through unbelief.

### Concerning Judgment

The Holy Spirit’s third and final conviction against the world is “concerning judgment, inasmuch as/seeing that [ESV: because] the ruler of this world is judged” (John 16:11). The world judges Jesus at the cross, but Jesus uses the cross to judge and cast out Satan, the ruler of this world (John 12:31). Therefore, the Holy Spirit convicts the world “concerning its own judgment by what has already happened to its own ruler. The world is not yet judged, but it is to be convicted in regard to judgment.”<sup>15</sup> The fact that the ruler of this world could not prevent the resurrection proves that the power of the ruler of this world is forever broken. He is judged, condemned, cast out, and chained.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit convicts the world for their willingness to continue following their ruler, who has already been judged. Just as the world then continued to reject Jesus despite having seen clear signs as proof of his divinity (John 12:37–43), so the world today continues to reject Jesus even though he is risen from the dead. The Spirit reveals, portrays, and bears witness to this judgment.

### “I will send him to you”

Remember, Jesus says that he will send the Holy Spirit “to you” (John 16:7). This work of conviction is primarily for the benefit of the disciples to bolster them in their faith. The world will seem daunting and impressive, and the rage of the world will grow so fierce that the world will not only cast believers out of the synagogue, but the world will consider it an act of worship to murder Jesus’ disciples (John 16:2). This time of intense persecution will make “falling away” (John 16:1) an

ongoing temptation. And yet, Jesus will send the Holy Spirit to convict the world so that Jesus' disciples can see the bankruptcy of the world and avoid falling away.

## Enriching from Christ's Treasury (John 16:12–15)

The convicting work of the Holy Spirit is the *negative* aspect of his ministry, but the Holy Spirit also performs a *positive* aspect—the Holy Spirit guides the disciples into all truth. Jesus says, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come” (John 16:12–13). As in John 14:17, Jesus again calls the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of truth,” but this time with a clearer expectation of the significance of his name. The Holy Spirit will be the Paraclete to enrich the disciples from Christ's treasury.

### “He will guide you into all truth”

We must not overstate or understate what Jesus means when he says that the Holy Spirit will guide the disciples into “all truth.” Jesus indeed wants us to know that the Holy Spirit will lead the disciples into the knowledge of everything necessary for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). This means that Jesus granted those first disciples—that is, his apostles—to know everything necessary for writing the New Testament that would explain, define, and proclaim the reality of the gospel of Jesus. But, this does not mean that the Spirit continues to give us new revelations beyond Jesus, as though Jesus were not enough. John Calvin writes this:

That very Spirit had lead them into all truth, when they committed to writing the substance of their doctrine. Whoever imagines that anything must be added to their doctrine, as if it were imperfect and but half-finished, not only accuses the apostles of dishonesty, but blasphemes against the Spirit.<sup>16</sup>

Everything we need is contained in the Scriptures, for the Scriptures are the record of “all truth” into which the Spirit led the disciples. We do not need additional revelation or another word, for the Spirit has give us all truth in the Scriptures. If we nevertheless go on seeking additional revelation, we detract from the glory of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the Scriptures.

### “Not...on his own authority”

Significantly, Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will not speak “on his own authority” (*aph heautou*). This is a phrase that Jesus has used throughout the Gospel of John to say that the Son does nothing “of his own accord” (John 5:19) and that he has not come “of my own accord” (*ap' emautou*; John 7:28, 8:42). The only thing that Jesus does of his “own accord” is to lay down his life for the sheep (John 10:18). In the same way, the Holy Spirit will not speak “on his own authority” or “of his own accord.”

Importantly, this does not set up tiers of authority among the persons of the Godhead. In other words, this does not mean that the Father is the one who possesses all authority, so that the Son and the Holy Spirit submit their wills to the will of the Father. Instead, what this means is that in the

outworking of the economy of salvation, the Son and the Holy Spirit work in conjunction with the other persons of the Trinity, and not according to their own, private wills. Indeed, God has only one will and one authority that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share. Jesus is not saying that the Holy Spirit is subservient (in his divine nature) to the Father and the Son, but that the Holy Spirit will carry on the mission of redemption now that the Son's earthly ministry to accomplish salvation is drawing to completion.

### "Whatever he hears"

Second, Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will speak "whatever [truth] he hears." Once again, this phrase demonstrates the continuity of the Holy Spirit with the ministry of Jesus. Jesus said something nearly identical about his own ministry: "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me" (John 5:30).<sup>17</sup> In the same way, the Holy Spirit is not going rogue, heading off to do whatever he pleases apart from the Father and the Son. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit (like the Son) speaks the truth that he hears from the Father and the Son. Lenski writes that "hearing" is "a human term for a divine act, picturing the divine Persons as communicating with each other after the manner of human persons. Being one in essence, each is in the other, and nothing known to the one is ever hidden from the other."<sup>18</sup>

### "The things that are to come"

When Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will "declare to you the things that are to come," it is helpful to interpret comments in light of what the New Testament ended up becoming. By doing so, we see that the New Testament does indeed include some predictive prophecy, although eschatology (the study of last things) makes up only a small amount of the New Testament. Instead, it is likely that this phrase refers to the Spirit's work of helping the church "understand their present situation in light of Jesus' by-then-past revelation of God."<sup>19</sup> This work would include the way that the rest of the New Testament expounds the significance of the work and words of Jesus during his earthly ministry, as well as how the church ought to behave in light of Jesus' finished work.

### "He will glorify me"

The Holy Spirit guides the apostles to proclaim (both in their preaching and their writings that become incorporated into the New Testament canon) the finished work of Jesus Christ. On this basis, Jesus can affirm that "He will glorify me" (John 16:14a). The ministry of the Holy Spirit is not to magnify himself, but to cast a spotlight on the finished work of Jesus. J. I. Packer gives a marvelous illustration to help us understand this reality:

I remember walking to a church one winter evening to preach on the words "he shall glorify me," seeing the building floodlit as I turned a corner, and realizing that this was exactly the illustration my message needed.

When floodlighting is well done, the floodlights are so placed that you do not see them; you are not in fact supposed to see where the light is coming from; what you are meant to see is just the building on which the floodlights are trained. The intended effect is to make it visible when otherwise it would not be seen for the darkness, and to maximize its dignity by throwing all its details into relief so that you see it properly. This perfectly

illustrates the Spirit's new covenant role. He is, so to speak, the hidden floodlight shining on the Savior.

Or think of it this way. It is as if the Spirit stands behind us, throwing light over our shoulder, on Jesus, who stands facing us.<sup>20</sup>

Just as Jesus came to glorify his Father (John 17:1–5), the Holy Spirit comes to glorify Jesus, who has accomplished our salvation through his life, death, and resurrection: “the Spirit will not come to erect any new kingdom, but rather to confirm the glory which has been given to him by the Father.”<sup>21</sup> The Father sends the Son, and the Holy Spirit glorifies the Son, so that God's elect may come to the Father *through* Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

### The Treasurer of the Trinity

Jesus closes this section with an intriguing image: “He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14–15). The Trinitarian emphasis of the Gospel of John comes to one of its clearest expressions in this passage. The Father entrusts all the riches (“All that the Father has”) of his treasury of glory, grace, and mercy as a deposit in his Son, Jesus Christ (“All that the Father has *is mine*”). John Calvin writes, “In a word, the Spirit enriches us with no other than the riches of Christ, that he may display his glory in all things.”<sup>22</sup>

Then, the Holy Spirit takes what belongs to Christ (that which is entrusted to him by the Father) and gives those riches to *us*. Herman Ridderbos writes this:

This does not mean that the Spirit merely repeats Jesus' words. He takes “what is mine,” bringing forth the treasure entrusted to Jesus, in order to redistribute it in his own way, “bringing it to remembrance” (cf. 14:26), and thus is the permanent mediator between Jesus and those who belong to Jesus.<sup>23</sup>

The Puritan John Owen restates this idea to state powerfully:

There never was, nor is, nor ever will be the least particle of holiness in the world, but what flowing from Jesus Christ, is communicated by the Spirit, according to the truth and promise of the gospel.<sup>24</sup>

It is hard to overstate the significance of the Holy Spirit's ministry. While the Holy Spirit perpetually directs attention away from *him* and toward *Christ*, we can have no union with Christ apart from the Spirit. Put another way, we can *receive* nothing from Christ, except through the Holy Spirit. While Jesus Christ accomplished everything for us, it is the Holy Spirit who applies it.

A few years ago, I worked for a church as an interim pastor. When I was first beginning, I remember going to a meeting where I met all the members of the church's leadership. I had preached for the church a few times, but I hadn't had a chance to meet all of them or to talk much with them. So, as these people went around the room introducing themselves, it came time for a quiet, unassuming man to introduce himself. He had said nothing in the meeting until that point, and he didn't even begin speaking by telling me his name. Instead, he simply said, “Well, you know

me. I'm the guy who signs your checks!" In fact, this was the treasurer of the church. Like many accountants, he wasn't flashy or glamorous, but he just quietly did his job so that everyone else would be able to do theirs. The money in the treasury of the church didn't belong to him, but he alone could sign the checks—and he *did* sign the checks in order to keep the ministry of the church moving forward.

Later during my ministry at that church, I preached a series of sermons on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. As I came to preach on this passage, I realized that the man's words were a perfect illustration of this aspect of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Treasurer of the Trinity, taking what the Father has entrusted to the treasury of Jesus, and then distributing those riches to us. While the riches belong to Jesus, it is the Holy Spirit who signs the checks, and we can receive nothing from Christ except what he distributes to us through the Holy Spirit. Although we sometimes treat the Holy Spirit as superfluous to the Trinity, the Holy Spirit's ministry is vital, for we would not experience any salvation apart from his ministry of glorifying the Son and applying the finished work of the Son to us. In this way, the Holy Spirit equips us to know Christ.

## Discussion Questions

1. What opportunities do you take advantage of to equip yourself to know, love, and treasure Jesus? What opportunities are available to you that you nevertheless neglect? Why is it so important to take advantage of the opportunities we have to equip ourselves *before* trouble comes upon us?
2. Why do we need the Holy Spirit to convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment? Why is the allure of the world so powerful that we might be tempted to fall away from Jesus if the Spirit did not expose to us the world's bankruptcy? How do you feel this tension in your own life of feeling drawn to the world, while nevertheless recognizing the foolishness of the world?
3. Who is the Holy Spirit? In the outworking of God's plan of salvation, what role does the Holy Spirit take in relation to the Father and the Son? If the Spirit works humbly to glorify Jesus (and not himself), how should we relate to the Holy Spirit? How should we worship and adore the Holy Spirit?
4. What are the riches of Jesus? Why does the Father entrust them to Jesus? Why do we need them? In what way does the Holy Spirit communicate those riches to us? How do these questions affect our lives practically as we seek to persevere in this dark world, day after day?

## Notes

1. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1076.
2. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 136–37. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.vi.i.html>>
3. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1078.
4. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 533.

5. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 136. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.vi.i.html>>

6. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 533–34.

7. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 618.

8. Köstenberger, *John*, 471.

9. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1080–81.

10. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 532.

11. “The particles simply place the three subjects side by side and do not intend to make the first the chief one and the other two subordinate. The three μέν, δέ, δέ in v. 9–11 have the same force. They offer more than an instruction of the world in regard to what sin, righteousness, and judgment are; hence we cannot translate ‘that,’ or ‘this that.’ They offer more than a proof to the world that sin, righteousness, and judgment exist; hence we should not translate ‘because’ (our versions). What these three ὅτι introduce convicts the world, lays the finger on the three points in sin, in righteousness, and in judgment that strike the conscience of the world either to make it bow in repentance or to harden it in unbelief. Hence we translate ‘inasmuch as,’ or use an equivalent like ‘seeing that.’ It is similar to the conjunctions used in 2:18; 8:22; 9:17; etc.

The thought is not that the world knows nothing about sin. Its daily crime list contradicts that, as well as its moralists with their repressive and reformatory measures. What the world lacks and the Spirit supplies is something that goes far deeper, something that actually convicts in regard to sin. This is not the fact that sin is sin, or that the real essence of sin is unbelief. The Spirit is not to repeat the work of Moses in preaching the law. The conviction in regard to sin lies in one direction: ‘inasmuch as they do not believe in me.’ Yet note that this is the capital sin. For to believe in Jesus is to be saved from sin, to have sin forgiven; and thus not to believe in Jesus is to remain in sin, to perish forever in sin. The Spirit’s work in regard to sin is to confront the world with the terrible fact of its unbelief in Jesus, which means, with the fact that this unbelief leaves it in its damnable sin, doomed and damned forever, in other words, that only he who believes escapes from his sin. This conviction in regard to sin naturally operates in two ways. It will crush some hearts so that they will be frightened at their unbelief and cry out like the 3,000 at Pentecost, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ Acts 2:37, and thus be led to repent and to believe. Or it will further harden those who resist this conviction; they will go on, convicted though they are, more obdurate than before, fighting against this conviction until they perish.” (Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1082–83.)

12. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 140. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.vi.ii.html>>

13. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1084–85.

14. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 140–41. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.vi.ii.html>>

15. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1087–88.

16. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 143. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.vi.ii.html>>

17. See also: John 3:11; 7:16; 8:24; 12:49; 14:10, 24. (Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 328.)

18. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1091.

19. Köstenberger, *John*, 474.

20. J. I. Packer, *Keeping in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 57.

21. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 145. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.vi.ii.html>>

22. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 146. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.vi.ii.html>>

[www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.vi.ii.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.vi.ii.html)>

23. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 536.

24. John Owen, *The Holy Spirit: His Gifts and Power* (Ross-shire, UK: Christian Heritage, 2007), 248.