

Catford Lectures 2008-2009

Part 2

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[00:00:00] Will you turn please to the Gospel by John, chapter 14.

The Gospel by John, chapter 14 and verse 1.

Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.

[00:01:02] Later in the chapter, verse 25, these things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Chapter 15, verse 26.

For when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me, and he also shall bear witness, because he hath been with me from the beginning. Chapter 16, verse 7.

[00:02:02] Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, of sin because they believe not on me, of righteousness because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more, of judgment because the Prince of this world is judged.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of

Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall [00:03:01] not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come.

He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you.

Regular attenders at Catford Lectures, which includes most of you, will remember that last year, about this time, we looked at seven reasons why Jesus is in heaven and, of course, we looked at the Scriptures to establish that fact.

[00:04:04] This evening, with the Lord's help, I hope to look at nine reasons why the Holy Spirit is on earth. If you like, the counterbalancing study to the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is in heaven.

Now, if this was a personal conversation with those of you who know me pretty well, when I say I want to mention or look at nine reasons why the Holy Spirit is in heaven, knowing me well, you might well say, well, you would, wouldn't you? And I would say with great innocence, what do you mean, you would, wouldn't you? [00:05:06] You would say to me, well, you often feel obliged to say that in the Scriptures, when God is at work, that somewhere in the immediate context, you get references to God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, and then in the New Testament, particularly in John's Gospel, when the Lord Jesus is spoken of and it is emphasised that he is God, that you keep telling us that to emphasise the deity of the Son of God, things happen in sets of three.

Well, of course, I would be obliged to admit the truth of what you say. [00:06:01] I have also noticed, and I cannot help repeating what I see Scripture says, in a similar way, I have noticed that very often when things about the truth concerning the person and the work of God the Holy Spirit is looked at in Scripture, things tend to happen or things are set out in sets of nine.

Now, you may well find it somewhat of a coincidence, you may even think it is contrived, that at the very least, I have noticed nine sets of nines in Scripture where the Holy Spirit is directly or indirectly involved. I am sure there is many more, but as a start, it is a help to me that when the Holy Spirit [00:07:07] is referred to and when the power, the person, and the work of the Holy Spirit is being emphasised that there is a guidance of the Holy Spirit himself in setting things together in sets of nine to trigger off the expectation in my mind, certainly, ah, there is something important here about the Holy Spirit which I will have to follow up. Now, I am not going to attempt in any way to line, to delineate, or to spell out the nine sets of nine, but as a start, I will mention one or two of the easy ones for you to follow up.

You are aware, of course, that the fruit, singular, the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, 22 is demonstrated to be ninefold.

[00:08:06] The fruit of the Spirit is so intimately connected, the aspects are put together under one head, the fruit of the Spirit, there are nine features of that.

You will have noticed that there are nine persons in the Scriptures, Old and New Testament together, there are nine persons who are spoken of as being full of or filled with the Holy Spirit.

You will have noticed that the nine features or virtues that Peter speaks about in the first chapter of his second epistle, again, there are nine different expressions of that. You will have noticed that in 1

Corinthians 13, which includes chapter 14, verse 1, nine [00:09:06] times over, demonstrations or accentuations or features of love are spoken about in a ninefold way.

Way back in the Old Testament, the ingredients of the holy anointing oil and the holy incense, the ingredients that had together before they were made, again, there are nine ingredients mentioned. I will only mention one more to whet your appetite. When the spices used in the preparation of the bride in the Song of Solomon are mentioned, no surprise is it there are nine spices which are listed there. Now, I am sure there are more than nine sets, but at least having got nine sets of nine, [00:10:03] I am satisfied for the moment. I will get to know a bit more about the details of them before I look further afield. So tonight, I want to suggest, for a start, nine reasons why the Holy Spirit is here upon earth.

Now, I am going to start with the most difficult one first, John Gospel chapter 16, verse 8.

When the Holy Spirit is come, he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Now, the difficulty or the apparent difficulty is this. We won't necessarily agree on what verse 8 means or what verses 9, 10 and 11 mean.

[00:11:09] Don't worry about that. Take any two honest Christians who study the Bible for themselves with whatever help they can get.

You will always find there is some detail of Holy Scripture on which they don't see eye to eye.

Inevitable. And if it is on something relatively important, if it is a detail of application, you don't need worry too much about it. Of course, on vital matters, you would want to be in full agreement with him or her. Now, the reason I say we wouldn't all necessarily agree on this first one is this. I would suggest, happy to discuss it with you afterwards, that this demonstration of [00:12:04] the Holy Spirit while he is in the world is what I would call passive rather than active.

It's what we learn from the fact of his being in the world rather than what he does while he is in the world. I hope that's not too abstruse for you.

Certainly, when we see what follows, the three statements that are made, we are told very plainly that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world is intended to be taken account of, not at the moment by unbelievers, but by believers.

You and I know and are reminded that the Holy Spirit is in the world because the world [00:13:03] wanted nothing to do with Jesus and cast him out. Wicked, cruel hands crucified and slew the Lord of glory.

That in itself teaches us Christians a lesson and it's the presence of the Holy Spirit that brings that to our mind. I want to suggest things that will enable you or cause you to think them through for yourselves, but I would expand verse 8 into verse 9 and say the Holy Spirit's presence in the world reproves the world, demonstrating the world is under sin.

It's under the domination of people whose lives are riddled through with sin so that [00:14:03] they cannot make a sound judgment of anything in spiritual matters and because of that they are unable to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is reflexive. It says the world is under sin because they believe

not on me, but it's also true that they cannot believe on him until God effects a work in their hearts by the Spirit because sin dominates the thinking of unbelievers.

Secondly, in verse 10, he said the world, and it follows on from verse 9, the world is without righteousness.

Righteousness is not a feature of present day governing the world at large.

[00:15:07] Popularity, self-gain, self-aggrandizement, all these things feature in what men seek to do and the world is not ruled in righteousness. This is why in Acts 17, 31, we read that the day will come, God has appointed a day in which he will rule the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained whereof he has given assurance unto all men in that he has raised him from the dead, evidently speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to know a little bit more about when and how and what relates to these things, if the Lord hasn't come, come along next Saturday and I'm sure you'll hear a bit more about it. [00:16:05] But for the moment, we'll just say that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world demonstrates that the world's under sin because they rejected Christ, it's without righteousness because the world will never be ruled on a righteous basis until the Lord Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and it says the world which is under sin and without righteousness doesn't know it but it's heading towards judgment, it's going on to judgment. Now my suggestion tonight is completely apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, what he does while he's in the world, the very fact that he's here demonstrates or reminds the believers that Christ has been rejected by the world but God raised him from the dead [00:17:06] and has seated him at his own right hand in glory. That's before the Holy Spirit does anything at all. Now I'm suggesting that the first reason why the Holy Spirit is in the world to give a passive demonstration not by what he does but the fact that he is here, that demonstrates to you and me who have the scriptures in our hands, the Holy Spirit in our hearts and that gives that demonstration to us, that's what I mean by a passive demonstration. Of course it is also true that as he did with you and me, the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of men and women, boys and girls, to give a sense of sinfulness and sin which gives [00:18:08] an awareness of spiritual need which God uses to bring men, women, boys and girls to the Saviour.

The first book in the Bible, Genesis, chapter 6 isn't it, God says my spirit shall not always strive with men but it's implicit that until a certain point is reached that the Holy Spirit does and will continue to strive with men bringing them to a sense of their sinfulness and wickedness. So the actual conviction of sin is brought about by the Holy Spirit himself and that I would put as a second reason for his being here.

[00:19:06] Once we've been brought to Christ, what then? Oh we find very quickly there are greater issues at stake than little you and little me and one major matter that the Bible teaches us is that on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the day when Jesus our Lord was raised from among the dead, Acts 2 tells us in great detail that the Holy Spirit inaugurated the Christian church. He brought it into being. He formed it.

He brought it into being. Now just, I think it will help to look at the scripture, we have the time, 1 Corinthians [00:20:03] chapter 12 verse, by one spirit are we all baptised into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free.

God has brought into being a community, chapter 12 verse 13, I got it the wrong way around first time.

God has brought into being a community, a group, a body that collectively God speaks of as the assembly, the church of the living God.

[00:21:01] And God brought it into being on the first Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus our Lord was raised from among the dead and that is another mighty reason why the Holy Spirit came into the world to inaugurate the Christian church, the assembly. No time for the detail, it is not the point. Acts chapter 2 with many comments in the New Testament epistles, that is what I have suggested as a third reason for the Holy Spirit to be here.

My suggestions are more or less but not necessarily in chronological sequence.

[00:22:02] We read the verses in John 14, 15 and 16 and like many other things, well known to most of us but a very happy point in the history of our souls when we have confirmed in the very text of scripture things that we instinctively are aware of but perhaps have difficulty finding where in the scripture it puts it. But in these well known verses in chapter 14, 15 and 16, we find this fourth, as I put it, reason why the Holy Spirit is here.

Relative to the unbeliever, the unsaved sinner, we thought about it, the Holy Spirit produces [00:23:10] a sense of sin, a sense of spiritual need and in one way or another, this involves the presentation of Christ to the soul.

Warnings, exhortations, warnings of future peril and the judgment of God have their place but unless there is the presentation of Christ to the soul of the sinner, there can be no salvation enjoyed.

Oh but you and I are no longer unsaved sinners, oh we're still sinners but we're saved sinners now and what has the Holy Spirit got for us compared with what he has for the sinner? [00:24:04] It's exactly the same. The Holy Spirit brings to the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ aspects, different thoughts, different teaching of who Christ is, what he's done, what he's done for God, what he's done for us, what he's going to do in the future but basically, as with this unsaved sinner, it's true for the saved sinner, we get the presentation of Christ for the soul. Now, if we were to look at Luke's Gospel, chapter 24, I think we will. John's Gospel, chapter 24, please.

[00:25:03] Luke 24, verse 25, Jesus said unto them, O fools, slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. What they had as the scriptures then are what we refer to as the Old Testament scriptures. The New Testament scriptures had not been written. [00:26:04] And then we read that in all the scriptures he spoke about the things concerning himself. He presented Christ. He presented himself to the souls of the disciples in their day. Now look on to verse 44. He said unto them, These are the words which I speak unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day. Now go back to verse 26. Ought not [00:27:09] Christ to have suffered and to enter into his glory? There's a nice little touch here. To read about the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, you need Moses, which is a title for all the Psalms. And the prophets include the historical books and the major and the minor prophets. That's how the Jews looked at them. But you get an addition in verse 46. You also say that thus it is written, it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead. The addition is the

resurrection of Christ. Now we've already read in verse 44 that as well as Moses and the prophets, [00:28:01] the Lord taught them from the Psalms. And it is in the Psalms that we get direct and indirect references to the personal bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So we see how exact scripture is. Now it shows Christ in all the scriptures certainly takes in all what we have as the Old Testament scriptures. But when we turn to John 14, 15 and 16, and it's a real joy the first time you notice this, we get references that imply, if they do not directly state, that as well as all the Old Testaments that the Lord Jesus himself used to teach the disciples all things concerning himself, we also in a special way get help from all the New Testament [00:29:09] scriptures. In one of these verses we've read, speaking about the Holy Spirit, the Lord said, he will bring to your remembrance whatsoever things I have spoken unto you. Clearly the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, that's the place to look for the record of the things that the Lord Jesus did and brought to the attention of the disciples. Another phrase that's used by the Lord, ye shall testify of me. That's the book of Acts. Clearly that's the record of the early years of the church where the disciples and those who responded to their teaching went about preaching and teaching the Gospel message, the Acts. Again, the Lord said, the Holy Spirit will guide you into [00:30:09] all truth. That wouldn't be possible unless we had the New Testament epistles available to us that we can read for the Holy Spirit to enlighten us about. Again, he will show you things to come. In particular, the book of Revelation, I suppose, most of the second epistles, but other little touches here and there in much of the New Testament, not excluding the Gospels, which tell us in what way the Holy Spirit uses the New Testament scriptures to show us things to come. I like the little touch that the Lord gave, I love it all, but a special delight is when he summed up the totality of what the Holy Spirit would do because he'd come into the world relative to the [00:31:09] Christian believer and the assembly, the church of the living God. Overall, the Lord said he, the Holy Spirit, shall glorify me. That's why we sang about that in that lovely hymn number 33. Was that the first, second, third, that was the fourth object in view, the fourth reason why the Holy Spirit has come into the world. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit brought into being, set up, inaugurated the assembly, the church of the living God. That was the beginning of it. In order that there might be a proper continuation and development of what was according to God, [00:32:13] God has provided resources, spiritual resources, in order that the assembly might be built up, and that it might continue, develop, and function as we know the human body functions. Each member with its own job to do, and all interdependent in a correlated way to one another, and we know all about that in the human body. Now, this matter is taken up in three special chapters. In Romans chapter 12, we learn that God as such has provided the gifts, that's the resources. [00:33:06] In Ephesians 4, we read that the head of the body has provided the gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12, and you'll understand the reason for that, we are told that it is the Holy Spirit who has set up in the assembly those who will be a measure of help to others as members of the body help one another, and that matter of gifts. By the way, in chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians, you get nine operations of the Spirit that help in the development and maintenance of the body. So, that is number five. Now, as a distinct matter, we have a special chapter which tells us [00:34:02] how the resources are to be employed, how the gifts should operate, how they should be in exercise, and that's 1 Corinthians 14. There are certain vital chapters and concepts in the Bible about which I can never understand our bashfulness or why we are afraid of them, things that are perfectly plain in the Scripture and which Scripture spells out, and there's no need to be afraid of them or to despise them. We can just read them and put them into practice if we choose so to do. Matters like baptism, election, predestination, and 1 Corinthians chapter 14. I think it would be a good thing if, not infrequently, [00:35:03] we were to sit down and read 1 Corinthians chapter 15 as to the proper manner in which the assembly should function when we come together in assembly, and we'd have to discuss many ramifications of that. But if we want another reason, and each of these reasons is sufficient in itself for the Holy Spirit to be in the world, one valid reason, apart from anything else, one

valid reason for the Holy Spirit being in the world, indwelling the assembly, is to empower and control the gifts that he himself has placed in the Christian church, and that is a separate matter in itself. Again, still in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, [00:36:01] and this is the seventh reason, we read that the purpose of the gifts functioning in the assembly under the guidance, leadership, and control of the Holy Spirit, that it is to have three results, edification, exaltation, comfort. If you like, we need to be built up.

We need to be stirred up, and we need to be comforted. We need to be bound up, and these three expressions of the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in regulating things according to God by the Holy Spirit is indeed something that only the Holy Spirit can do. [00:37:08] Now, again, I would welcome the opportunity to be present when you discuss this, because it is a very edifying thing in itself. But if we want to look at one chapter above another which tells us how we should regulate or be regulated by the Holy Spirit through the gifts, 1 Corinthians 14 is the place to look. Number eight, God is holy.

God makes holy those who are his, those who belong to him, and God requires to be holy, [00:38:06] in a practical way, those who've come to God through Christ. If you like, that's a summary of the truth of sanctification. God sets apart for himself those who are Christ's. He does it by the Holy Spirit. Now, this is one of the important things in scripture about which we read that God himself does it as such, the Lord Jesus does it, and the Holy Spirit does it. Wherever you notice something which is attributed to God, the Son, and the Spirit, or the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, you can be sure that it's very important indeed, and the truth of sanctification. God setting apart for himself those who are his [00:39:03] is a very important subject. Now, when we get to the practical epistles, all scripture, properly understood, has a practical result. But those who concentrate on that sort of thing, like Peter, puts it very simply. On behalf of God, he quotes God to say, be ye holy as I am holy. Because you are, what in ecclesiastical terms might be said, because we've been granted or brought into a position of sanctification, God requires us to show practical sanctification, to live in a holy way devoted to him. And this is, whether it's individually or whether it's collective, what we are when we are together, and bear in mind that [00:40:06] the way we act when we are together is a reflection upon what we are as individuals. Shame on us, in many cases. Let us bear in mind, if we make a mess of things when we are together, and we do, it's because as individuals we shy away from this requirement of God that those whom he has made holy in the absolute sense, he requires to be wholly sanctified in a practical sense. Now, there will be many more. But having given you wait for a start, I will give you one more. In chapter 24 of Genesis, we find that a servant who isn't named is sent by his master to a far country, [00:41:17] a great distance away, in order that he might first of all secure, obtain, then preserve and bring home a bride for the master's son.

Now, without any lectures about it, if we read the Bible and pray every day, whatever age or stage we are, I trust we do that. If we've never read any of the Old Testament, but we are conversing with what the New Testament says, [00:42:01] when we read that story of Rebekah being secured and preserved and presented to her bridegroom, straight away we say that's got to be a picture of the Holy Spirit who has come down from heaven into the world, has formed the church and will preserve that church until it goes to heaven and is presented to Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Isn't that so? The thought appeals immediately. Not so easy, perhaps, to get direct scriptures in the New Testament that tell us in a direct, unmistakable way that that is one of the reasons why the Holy Spirit is here. The truth is there, of course. [00:43:02] The Lord said, I will go away. Now, if I go away, I will come again and receive you unto myself. But he went on to say, I will send the Holy Spirit and he will be with you forever. Now, again, a little point we might differ on. Forever doesn't, to me, necessarily

mean forever and ever chronologically.

It's not always directly related to time, although it usually involves that. Very often, the term is used to indicate something that's necessary will be made available and it will continue to be available as long as it ever is necessary, whether you agree with that or not. The New Testament [00:44:09] tells us that, well, the Lord said he will be with you forever. If there's blessing for you and me, it's only the Holy Spirit who can make that good in our souls as to knowledge, as to enjoyment, as to response. And because the Lord Jesus, who came into the world and became a man and has gone back to heaven as a man, all that God has to tell us, show us, give us enjoyment of in eternity will be through Christ, who has entered into what we might call an eternal, everlasting manhood. And the power that God has made available and will continue to be available so that we can [00:45:07] enter into the eternal enjoyment of what God has done through Christ will always be in the power of the Holy Spirit. I only issue the word of caution because when you get to the epistle to the Hebrews, where the phrase forever is used, it hasn't always that kind of meaning. But the Lord said he'll be with you forever. Very good. And certainly, when you get to the negative side, the Thessalonians had quite a few problems about whether or not they would be preserved, whether they'd missed the boat, whether when Christ comes in glory they would be with him. And to satisfy them, to put their minds at rest, apart from other things, [00:46:05] Paul said to the Thessalonians, he said, the Holy Spirit will be available to you and to keep evil and Satan under proper restraint until the church, the Christian church, is taken out of the way. No need to worry about a so-called partial rupture. The Holy Spirit, who indwells you because Christ has put him there, because God has put him there, because he himself has set up residence in your heart, he will be with you until the catching away of those who are Christ's at his coming. Now, that's what I mean. The term is used that as far as this world is concerned, the Holy Spirit will continue to be on the earth indwelling the believers as individuals, [00:47:08] indwelling the church, the assembly as a whole, until, as we read in 2 Thessalonians 2, until he be taken away. Well, I've given you a start. Nine reasons why the Holy Spirit is in the world. I wish you every effectiveness in looking for many more and I'll be delighted to get your emails or your letters to give me a long thesis on how many I've missed out. I'll be delighted to receive them. But before then, let us sing another relevant hymn, number 462. O gracious God, our Father, we thank thee for thy Word. We thank thee for thy Spirit that moved [00:48:09] these men of old, who in the holy record thy truth and love unfold. The whole hymn 462.

The impression, the Holy Spirit is a person, he is a mighty person, he is God. But we need always to remember that nowhere in Holy Scripture is there anything which properly understood would encourage or allow us to sing to or to pray to the Holy Spirit of God. We read those verses or the statement by the Lord, he shall not speak of himself. Now, again, we have to treat that word [00:49:05] with care. Really, it is he shall not speak from himself on his own behalf, on his own initiative. He says many things about himself in the Scriptures. We've considered some of them this evening. The point that outweighs everything else to me, as well as the Holy Scriptures, is that there is never any record of the Lord Jesus himself addressing the Holy Spirit in heaven while the Lord Jesus himself was on earth. I think that gives us the necessary note of caution while we are most impressed by all that the Holy Spirit has come to do. Let us pray.