

The Comforter

by Wayne Goff

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:16-17)

The promises of **John 14-16** were made by Jesus to His apostles and were fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**) when the Holy Spirit rested upon them. Many readers mistakenly believe that these promises are made to all believers generally, but the context proves otherwise.

The **KJV** translates the Greek word as “*Comforter*,” the **NKJV** as “*Helper*,” the **Douay-Rheims Bible** as “*Paraclete*” (a transliteration), and the **HCSB** as “*Counselor*.” None of these terms are wrong, and the variety of choices shows us the difficulty in translating the rich meaning into our language with one word! I have used the phrase “Defense Attorney” to also help explain the idea behind the description given.

“**Comforter**” is found in the **KJV** New Testament four times (**John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7**). The Greek word is **Paraclete** and is also found in **1 John 2:13** in the Greek. It is also found at **1 John 2:1** of Jesus, where He is called our “*Advocate*.” The word *literally* means “to summon to the side of.” Originally, “*one who is called to another’s side to aid him, as an advocate in a court of justice*” [Vincent’s *Word Studies*, vol. II, pp. 243-244]. Therefore, to call the Holy Spirit the apostles’ “*Comforter*” is most appropriate. It suggests not only *consolation*, but also *strength*. In **John 14:16**, Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would be **another** Comforter, One to replace Himself, the *first* Comforter of the apostles! Incidentally, the Greek word suggests “*another of the same kind*.” The Holy Spirit would provide the comfort needed by the apostles as they went into the entire world to preach the Gospel! He would teach them all things (**14:26**) guide them into all truth, remind them of what Jesus said (**14:26**), and show them things to come (**16:13**). It was through this Comforter that the apostles were able to reveal the entire, complete message of Jesus Christ to the world by infallible inspiration, whether spoken or written.

John 14:16 also says of the Holy Spirit, “*that He may abide with you forever*.” The denominational world and its commentators *consistently* apply this **generally** to the Christian! But dear reader, these promises have been made to the apostles, and the context of **John 14-16** will make that abundantly clear! But is there *no application* for us? Oh yes, there **is** an application of the principle.

The Holy Spirit would abide with the apostles throughout their lifetimes, and would never ascend back into heaven as did Jesus after His resurrection. And let me suggest to you that the **product** of the Spirit’s comforting through the apostles remains with us until the end of time! That **product** is the New Testament. By reading, studying, believing, understanding and assimilating God’s Word, the Spirit dwells *within* the heart and life of the Christian, and *guides* Him unto eternal life. The Spirit dwells in the Christian through the Word itself (compare **Ephesians 5:18-19** with **Colossians 3:16**; to be “*filled with the Spirit*” is to “*let the Word of Christ dwell in your richly*”!) There is no greater comfort than what we receive from the Lord’s instructions given to us infallibly by the Holy Spirit! Those words will comfort you in life and will lead you across the chilly waters of death as a Shepherd’s rod and staff when the time comes. Jesus said, “*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will be no means pass away*” (**Matt. 24:35**).

*“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, **through the knowledge** of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:” **2 Peter 1:3, KJV**.*

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