

Jesus Promises an Advocate

Key Verse: *“The Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, 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.”*
—John 14:26

Selected Scripture:
John 14:15-26

JESUS PERFORMED MANY

miracles as a preview of the greater blessings to come in God’s promised kingdom on earth. His disciples had recognized him as the long-promised Messiah, and they expected him to set up the kingdom which had been promised by all God’s holy prophets. However, when the Lamb of God was unexpectedly crucified and slain, they were stunned and perplexed. They were alone and confused, not knowing what to do, or where to go.

In the night hours just prior to his arrest and trial, Jesus tenderly spoke to his disciples about these very events. Paraphrasing a portion of the verses in our lesson, we hear Jesus lovingly telling his followers, “I need to go away, but I will not leave you alone. I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, which will abide with you in my absence.” (John 14:16,18) This “Comforter” was the Holy Spirit, the enlightening power of God. (vss. 17,26) This was to be their new means of access to God through prayer, as Jesus had taught them and provided a pattern of during his ministry.—Matt. 6:9-13

Here we find the key to having a direct relationship with the Heavenly Father during the Gospel Age. While Jesus has no longer been physically present to speak to God on his followers' behalf, he is with us through the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle John explains this beautiful arrangement: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."—I John 2:1

When John speaks here to "my little children," he is clearly talking to the spirit-begotten followers of Christ. He assures us that Jesus is with us today, just as he was with his disciples during his First Advent. Since his resurrection and ascension to heaven, however, Jesus is now with his consecrated people in the role of "advocate." The word "advocate" as used in this scripture means one who stands alongside of another as an intercessor. As Jesus literally stood beside his disciples during his earthly ministry, he has stood beside all his footstep followers throughout the Gospel Age, including those living in the present time of the "harvest."

The words "Comforter" and "advocate" as rendered in the above-referenced scriptures, are actually from the same Greek word—*parakletos*. In view of this, we see complete harmony in the work of the "Comforter," which Jesus said was the Holy Spirit, and the "Advocate," who John said was Jesus Christ. Indeed, it is by these two means, Jesus Christ and the influence of the Holy Spirit, that we have access to God. Without leaving his disciples, Jesus could not have become our Advocate, and the Holy Spirit could not be our Comforter.

When the Master spoke the words of our Key Verse, he knew it would only be a short time after his departure from the disciples before the benefits of the Advocate and Comforter—together, the *parakletos*—would be made available to them. Let us thank God for his loving provisions for the consecrated followers of Christ. ■