

The Spirit of Truth

Key Verse:
***“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.”***
—John 16:7

Selected Scripture:
John 16:4-15

the nation of Israel among all the nations of the earth. (Amos 3:2) Through a system of laws, religious services, and other ceremonies, God showed by type, or symbolic illustration, what lay ahead for the followers of Christ. The Apostle Paul describes the purpose of this typical arrangement, saying of Israel, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [age] are come.”—I Cor. 10:11

With the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus we see that a new phase of God’s plan began which Israel did not understand—being hidden from them due to their hardness of heart. This change is referred to by Paul as centering in the “mystery of Christ.” He says, “By revelation [God] made known unto me the mystery;

IN OUR LAST LESSON, WE discussed the necessity of Jesus leaving his disciples in order that his role as their “Advocate” might be accomplished, and that his promise of another “Comforter” would be fulfilled. In today’s lesson, we turn our attention more directly to this “Comforter”—the Holy Spirit—another important gift promised for those who would follow in Christ’s footsteps.

Prior to the arrival of the “Lamb of God,” the Heavenly Father had dealt exclusively with

(as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”—Eph. 3:3-5; see also Rom. 16:25

As already noted, this new arrangement was difficult for most Jews to comprehend. They had depended upon the works and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law to know and serve God, and were his favored people through those arrangements. Now, however, they were being asked to give up this position of exclusive favor among the nations of the world and follow the son of a carpenter. As a nation they were unable to make this transition. They rejected Jesus, and he, in return, declared that their house would be “left unto [them] desolate.”—Matt. 23:38

The Law, though, had not been given in vain. It was a “schoolmaster” to prepare the Israelites for the arrival of Christ, and they were given the first opportunity to be “justified by faith” in the very one whom their leaders had crucified. (Gal. 3:24-26) In his letter to the church in Rome, the Apostle Paul clearly set before the early Jewish converts the requirement of being justified by faith in Christ. He pointed out that their veneration of father Abraham was well placed, for his great faith foreshadowed the faith in Christ now required.—Rom. 4:19-25

Here we return to today’s Key Verse, in which Jesus promised a “Comforter”—the Holy Spirit—the means for coming to an understanding of the “mystery of Christ.” The Apostle Paul discussed this gift which Jesus promised to give his followers after his death: “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: . . . As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”—I Cor. 2:7-10 ■