

# DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## The Helper or Paraclete

### Lesson 9

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It was Jesus' last supper with the disciples when He taught them about the Spirit's coming. He had saved these important truths until the very end of His earthly ministry. Jesus told them He was going to die and knew their hearts were troubled (Jn. 14:1). He sought to encourage them by telling them His Father had a place prepared for them and by reminding them that after He was gone "the Helper" would come to comfort them and be with them forever. In the gospel of John in chapters 14-16 we have the only four mentions of "the Helper" in the Bible. Jesus calls the Spirit "the Helper," or "the Comforter." In this lesson we will examine the Holy Spirit's role as "the Helper" and "Comforter" to believers. Because of the breadth of the various ways the Holy Spirit helps us we will leave the specifics of how He helps us for other lessons to follow.

#### I. DEFINITION OF THE "HELPER"

- A. *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*: "The Greek word for helper is *paraklete*, literally it means "called to one's side," i.e., to one's aid, is primarily a verbal adjective, and suggests the capability or adaptability for giving aid. It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, an advocate; then, generally, one who pleads another's cause, an intercessor, advocate, as in 1 John 2:1, of the Lord Jesus. In the widest sense, it signifies a succorer, comforter. Christ was this to His disciples, by the implication of His word "another (*allos*, another of the same sort, not *heteros*, different) Comforter," when speaking of the Holy Spirit, John 14:16. In 14:26; 15:26; 16:7 He calls Him "the Comforter."<sup>1</sup>
- B. *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*: *Parakletos* (a title for the Holy Spirit) is one who helps, by consoling, encouraging, or mediating on behalf of - 'Helper, Encourager, Mediator'. . . "The Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name' Jn 14:26. The principal difficulty encountered in rendering *parakletos* is the fact that this term covers potentially such a wide area of meaning. The traditional rendering of 'Comforter' is especially misleading because it suggests only one very limited aspect of what the Holy Spirit does. A term such as 'Helper' is highly generic and can be particularly useful in some languages. In certain instances, for example, the concept of 'Helper' is expressed idiomatically, for example, 'the one who mothers us' or, as in one language in Central Africa, 'the one who falls down beside us,' that is to say, an individual who upon finding a person collapsed along the road, kneels down beside the victim, cares for his needs, and carries him to safety.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>2</sup>Lowe and Nida's, *Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, Logos Bible Software.

- C. *The New Bible Dictionary*: The word *parakletos* derived from the verb *parakaleo*, literally 'to call beside', has been interpreted both actively and passively; actively as meaning one who stands by and exhorts or encourages, whence the AV 'Comforter' in Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; passively as meaning one called to stand by someone, particularly in a lawcourt (though as a friend of the accused rather than a professional pleader), whence 'advocate' in 1 Jn. 2:1. Many versions simply transliterate the Greek; hence the name 'Paraclete' for the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

## II. THOUGHTS TO PONDER ABOUT THE PARAKLETE

- A. *What the Holy Spirit Does in a Believer's Life*: "A man says to me, "I do not believe in sin, in righteousness, or in judgement." Well, the Holy Ghost can soon convince him. If he asks me for signs and evidences of the truth of the gospel, I point him to believers who once were sinners of the very worst sort. How can the great changes be accounted for? Is it a lie that produces truth, honesty, and love?"<sup>4</sup>
- B. *Commentary on John*: Calvin, commenting on Jesus' amazing statement that it would be to the apostles' advantage that Jesus go away, said: "That they may no longer wish to have him present before their eyes, he testifies that his absence will be advantageous, and makes use of a sort of oath; for we are carnal, and consequently nothing is more difficult than to tear from our minds this foolish inclination, by which we attempt to draw down Christ from heaven to us. He explains where the advantage lies, by saying, that the Holy Spirit could not be given to them, if he did not leave the world. But far more advantageous and far more desirable is that presence of Christ, by which he communicates himself to us through the grace and power of his Spirit, than if he were present before our eyes. And here we must not put the question, "Could not Christ have drawn down the Holy Spirit while he dwelt on earth?" For Christ takes for granted all that had been decreed by the Father and, indeed, when the Lord has once pointed out what he wishes to be done, to dispute about what is possible would be foolish and pernicious."<sup>5</sup>
- C. *Pneumatologia, or, A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit*: "When our Savior left this world, he was very far from laying aside his care of his disciples. He has given us the highest assurance that he continues the same care, love, and grace towards us as when he laid down his life for us. But as there was a double work yet to be performed in our behalf, one toward God and the other in us, he has taken a two-fold way of performing it. That toward God, he was to discharge

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<sup>3</sup>*The New Bible Dictionary*, Logos Bible Software.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Spurgeon, *What the Holy Spirit Does in a Believer's Life*, pg. 42.

<sup>5</sup>John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: John, electronic ed.*, Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998), Jn 16:7.

himself, in his human nature, in Heaven; the other, of which believers are the immediate object, is committed to the Holy Spirit; and the peculiar name whereby he is distinguished in this work is, *The Paraclete*, which we translate the *Comforter*. It was with respect to the sorrows of the disciples, that he was promised under this name; and his work is still to support, cherish, relieve, and comfort the church, in all trials and distresses.”<sup>6</sup>

### III. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE HELPER

A. **John 14:16-18**<sup>7</sup> “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

The meaning of this passage therefore is: “ I was given to you by the Father to be a Comforter, but only for a time; now, having discharged my office, I will pray to him to give another Comforter, who will not be for a short time, but will remain always with you.” (John Calvin, *Commentary on John*)

B. **John 14:25-26** “These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. 26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

C. **John 15:26-27** “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, 27 and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

D. **John 16:5-15** “But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ 6 “But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 “But 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. 8 “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and

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<sup>6</sup> John Owen, *Pneumatologia: or, A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit: Wherein an Account is Given of His Name, Nature, Personality, Dispensation, Operations, and Effects: His Whole Work in the Old and New Creation is Explained and The Doctrine Concerning it Vindicated*, Abridged by the Rev. G. Burder, Philadelphia, Towar & Hogan, 1827, 325-326.

<sup>7</sup>It should be noted that Jesus promised “another Helper.” There are two words in the Greek which Jesus could have used here. One means a another of a different kind (*heteros*) the other means another of the same kind (*allos*). The latter is in view here. Jesus is promising another helper like himself who will be a replacement for His physical presence.

you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. 12 “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14 “He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. 15 “All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.

- E. **I Jn. 2:1-2** “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”

#### IV. APPLICATION OF THE HELPER

- A. It is encouraging to remember that the “Helper” was sent to replace the physical presence of Christ. In fact, Jesus promised that He would not leave them as orphans because of the Helper’s coming (**Jn. 14:17**), the Helper would enable the disciples to do greater things (**Jn. 14:12**) and the abiding presence of the Helper would also mean the abiding presence of Christ and the Father through the Holy Spirit (**Jn. 14:16-24**). All believers have that same Holy Spirit!
- B. John Calvin in his commentary on John said, “. . . indeed, when the world rages on all sides, our only protection is, that the truth of God, sealed by the Holy Spirit on our hearts, despises and defies all that is in the world; for, if it were subject to the opinions of men, our faith would be overwhelmed a hundred times in a day. We ought, therefore, to observe carefully in what manner we ought to remain firm among so many storms. It is because, *we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which have been given to us by God,*” (1 Cor. 2:12.). This single witness powerfully drives away, scatters, and overturns, all that the world rears up to obscure or crush the truth of God. All who are endued with this Spirit are so far from being in danger of falling into despondency on account of the hatred or contempt of the world, that every one of them will obtain glorious victory over the whole world.<sup>8</sup>
- C. As one surveys the different things that the “Helper” would do in John chs. 14-16 there are nine prominent things. These things are listed below. Consider how these nine things apply to the life of every Christian today, either directly or in principle.
1. The Helper will be with us forever (**Jn. 14:16**).

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<sup>8</sup>John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: John*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998), Jn 15:26.

2. The Helper will be in you (**Jn. 14:17**).
3. The Helper will teach you [the disciples]<sup>9</sup> all things (**Jn. 14:26**).
4. The Helper will bring to your [the disciples] remembrance all that Jesus said to them (**Jn. 14:26**).
5. The Helper will bear witness of Christ (**Jn. 15:26**).
6. The Helper will aid in evangelization by convicting the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgement (**Jn. 16:8**).
7. The Helper will guide you [the disciples] into all truth (**Jn. 16:13**).
8. The Helper will reveal the future to you [the disciples] (**Jn. 16:13**).
9. The Helper will glorify Christ by disclosing Christ and the things of the Father to you [the disciples] (**Jn. 16:14**).

**“He shall give you another Comforter,  
that he may abide with you for ever.” — John 14:16**

Great Father revealed himself to believers of old before the coming of his Son, and was known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as the God Almighty. Then Jesus came, and the ever-blessed Son in his own proper person, was the delight of his people’s eyes. At the time of the Redeemer’s ascension, the Holy Spirit became the head of the present dispensation, and his power was gloriously manifested in and after Pentecost. He remains at this hour the present Immanuel—God with us, dwelling in and with his people, quickening, guiding, and ruling in their midst. Is his presence recognized as it ought to be? We cannot control his working; he is most sovereign in all his operations, but are we sufficiently anxious to obtain his help, or sufficiently watchful lest we provoke him to withdraw his aid? Without him we can do nothing, but by his almighty energy the most extraordinary results can be produced: everything depends upon his manifesting or concealing his power. Do we always look up to him both for our inner life and our outward service with the respectful dependence which is fitting? Do we not too often run before his call and act independently of his aid? Let us humble ourselves this evening for past neglects, and now entreat the heavenly dew to rest upon us, the sacred oil to anoint us, the celestial flame to burn within us. The Holy Ghost is no temporary gift, he abides with the saints. We have but to seek him aright, and he will be found of us. He is jealous, but he is pitiful; if he leaves in anger, he returns in mercy. Condescending and tender, he does not weary of us, but awaits to be gracious still.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>It should be noted that in the upper room discourse Jesus is addressing the apostles. The things He promises them are not specifically promised to all believers. But we can glean some principles for our lives from what He said to them concerning the Holy Spirit and we can understand how the Holy Spirit helps us by examining how He has helped others. These things are still written for our instruction that by them we might grow in respect to godliness.

<sup>10</sup>Charles Spurgeon, *Morning And Evening*, Evening February 12<sup>th</sup>, Logos Bible Software.

Weary and sad and sorrow-spent were they  
In that still upper room,  
While the rich crimson of the closing day  
Was fading into gloom;  
And over all, benumbing soul and sense,  
Hung the cold shadow of a dried suspense.

The promise of a Spirit yet to come,  
That other Paraclete,  
To lead them on to Truth's eternal home  
And guide their wandering feet;  
They could not soothe the anguish of their heart,  
They ask'd in sadness, Must their Lord depart?

Yes, after all, or clear and open speech,  
Or sayings dark and dim,  
They yet had much to learn and He to teach,  
Ere they could rest in Him,  
Ere they could preach His words with cleansed lips,  
Or He impart His full Apocalypse.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> E. H. Plumptre, *Pulpit Legends, Understanding the Holy Spirit*, pg. 72.