

Jesus the Source of Living Water

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Introduction and Context

If you're looking for a biblical reference for learning about the Holy Spirit, and the role he plays in a Christian's life and spiritual journey, one great place to start is the Gospel of John. Throughout John, the Holy Spirit is spoken about many times, each time revealing more information about this member of the Trinity.

As one of the Gospels, John talks about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, John is different from Matthew, Mark and Luke (the synoptic Gospels), and the authorship remains a matter of controversy among scholars.

As Beasley-Murray describes it, "The last of the four Gospels appears among the rest in a manner reminiscent of the appearance of Melchizedek to Abraham: "without genealogy" (Heb 7:3). Everything we want to know about this book is uncertain, and everything about it that is apparently knowable is matter of dispute."¹

The Apostle John is most commonly given credit for writing of the Gospel, because the author would have had to have been an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus as referenced in John 1:14, 19:35 and 21:24 (ESV), would have had a "familiarity with Palestine before the destruction of the temple in AD 70," would have been "familiar with the Jewish way of life."² John not only fits these criteria, but some of the earliest sources also associate John with writing this Gospel account.³

The Gospel of John starts out in the first chapter with John the Baptist witnessing the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus in the form of a dove, and then later in the same chapter talks about Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit.⁴ Then, as we will explore in this paper, Jesus speaks about the Holy Spirit in what some refer to as the Spirit Passages, which include John 14:16, 15:26, 15:36 and 16:13, during the section of

¹ Ralph Del Colle and Chad Brand, *Perspectives on Spirit Baptism: Five Views* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 223-224.

² "Introduction to the Gospel of John - Study Resources," Blue Letter Bible, , accessed February 02, 2019, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/john.cfm>.

³ Ibid

⁴ Walter A. Elwell, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), Volume 2, Page 1196.

John where Jesus speaks to his disciples about the Holy Spirit who will come after him as he foreshadows his death and resurrection, as found in John 14:28-31 (ESV).

As Beasley-Murray tells us in his commentary, the first part of John “reveals the Holy Spirit as the author of the Spiritual life of men, and our Lord as the giver of the Spirit to those who will come to Him for the gift.”⁵ However, he goes on to say that the Holy Spirit is shown in a different light in later passages. These later passages, as he concludes, address “The relation in which the Spirit will stand to the Christian brotherhood, the office which it is to fulfil towards the future Church...”⁶

Main Body

The passages that refer to the Holy Spirit as referenced in John 14:16, 26, 15:26 and 16:13 are most often referred to as the “Paraclete Sayings,” and are part of the “Upper Room Discourse,” an intimate teaching time between Christ and his disciples which took place one evening before Jesus’ crucifixion on the cross. The topics covered in Jesus’ teaching during this time include service, love, the Holy Spirit, heaven, union with Christ and Prayer.⁷ On this night, Jesus speaks to his disciples, as we see in 14:15, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (ESV). After this statement, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit in 14:16, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,” (ESV).

In verse 16, it is implied that while Jesus has been performing the role of helper during his time on Earth, after his departure, “he will ask the Father to send another Paraclete to perform a like ministry for his disciples.”⁸

The word used for “Helper” here is the word “*paraklētos*,” which means “One who acts on another’s behalf as a helper, legal advocate, advisor, or intermediary. “*Paraklētos*” is used a total of six times in the New Testament, five of which are in John.⁹ As the Faithlife Study Bible says, “The Greek term

⁵ George Raymond Beasley-Murray, *John* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 2000), xxxiii.

⁶ George Raymond Beasley-Murray, *John* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 2000), xxxiii.

⁷ "John 13 - The Upper Room Discourse," Faithlife Sermons, , accessed February 02, 2019, <https://sermons.faithlife.com/sermons/9238-john-13-the-upper-room-discourse>.

⁸ George Raymond Beasley-Murray, *John* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 2000), xxxiii.

⁹ "John 14:16 (ESV)," Blue Letter Bible, , accessed February 02, 2019, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G3875&t=ESV>.

used here, *paraklētos*, refers to a legal assistant in a court who pleads someone's case before the judge (compare 1 John 2:1). The judge is God, and people are judged based on whether they follow Jesus' command to believe that eternal life comes through His death and resurrection (John 12:48–50).¹⁰ In other versions of the New Testament, "*Paraklētos*," is translated as "Comforter," (KJV), and "Counselor" (RSV). Ralph Del Colle and Chad Brand assert in their book "the meaning of the Spirit's name implies a continuation of the work of Christ. Much discussion has occurred as to the origin and meaning of the term chosen by Jesus to name the Spirit. Various translations include "Advocate," "Counselor," and "Helper." All are agreed that in today's linguistic context, "Comforter" is less than satisfactory. I would suggest that "Helper" is probably the broadest and best rendering."¹¹

While this definition of *Paraklētos* shows us that the Holy Spirit is our advocate and intermediary between man and God, other verses in the Upper Room Discourse that address the Holy Spirit give clues to other attributes of the Holy Spirit.

In 14:26, it tells us "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all the things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (ESV). In 15:26, it calls the Holy Spirit the "Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me" (ESV). And then in 16:13, it says "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come" (ESV).

Starting with 14:26, we learn that "the Helper is sent by the father in Jesus' name, and his function will be to "bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."¹² This shows that the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father, the work of the Holy Spirit is Christ-centered, and its purpose is to bring to mind spiritual things. This can also be interpreted as the "Spirit works in the church as a Paraclete by

¹⁰ *NIV Faithlife Study Bible: Intriguing Insights to Inform Your Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017).

¹¹ Ralph Del Colle and Chad Brand, *Perspectives on Spirit Baptism: Five Views* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 223-224.

¹² *Ibid*, 223-224.

distributing gifts ... by reminding them of Jesus' words and teaching as well as revealing the hidden facts according to the truth which is Jesus himself."¹³

The idea that the Spirit is sent by the Father is re-emphasized in 15:26, and the verse helps us identify one more detail about Jesus, God, and their relationship to the Holy Spirit, which is that the Son, (Jesus) "would also send the Spirit. Thus, the Father and Son together would send the Spirit."¹⁴ However, as you look at 15:26, you also see the reason the Holy Spirit is being sent, which is to "bear witness." (ESV) As David Guzik writes, "Without the witness of the Spirit, the disciples' witness would be powerless, without the disciples' witness, the Spirit would be restricted in His means of expression. God intends to work in partnership with man in partnership."¹⁵

The last passage we will look at that speaks about the Holy Spirit is 16:13, which gives us another new insight about the Holy Spirit. While 14:26 and 15:26 spoke about the Holy Spirit bringing to mind what Jesus had taught, and bearing witness about what they know about Christ, 16:13 speaks to the Holy Spirit's ability to "declare to you the things that are to come." (ESV)

The final Spirit saying (vv. 12–15) turns to a new subject and should be compared with 14:25–26. In this earlier passage the Spirit's work was conservative, preserving the historical sayings of Christ. Now we learn that there are things to be revealed which are yet unknown (16:12). The Spirit will be a guide into truth, especially that which pertains to future disclosures (v. 13). Thus Jesus is predicting a prophetic anointing similar to that known to Paul (1 Cor. 12:29; 14:21–23; Eph. 4:11; 1 Thess. 5:19–20). First John 2:26–27 implies that the Johannine churches used this gift as well. But note a very important limit on this "charismatic" activity: the Spirit will not diverge from the historic revelation of Jesus Christ (16:13, 14).¹⁶

As one might imagine, there has been much debate over what this passage is referencing as it pertains to the Holy Spirit's ability to disclose the future. As one commentary noted:

Popularly it has been understood as the inspiration of a prophetic ministry regarding the future of the kingdom of God, with the notable example of the Book of Revelation in mind ... The difficulty about relating such a prophetic ministry exclusively to the future is that it is out of harmony with the general outlook of this Gospel. Thus it makes the interesting suggestion that "the things that are coming," from the standpoint of the company in the

¹³ Connie Ho Yan. Au, *Grassroots Unity in the Charismatic Renewal* (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 2011), Page 227.

¹⁴ Barton, Bruce B. *Life Application New Testament Commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001., 318

¹⁵ Jey J. Kanagaraj, John: *A New Covenant Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 162-163.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 162-163

Upper Room, most naturally refer to the “hour” that is coming, of which Jesus in the Gospel often speaks, i.e., the hour of his death and resurrection.¹⁷

Summary

While today we have a written account of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection, one must remember the disciples, though Jesus told them what would happen, didn’t know the details we have the privilege of knowing today. To hear Jesus speak about going away, as he says in 16:10 “because I go to the Father, you will see me no longer,” could have been very confusing to them. But, in just a short time, Jesus was going to be arrested, put on trial, sentenced and die on a cross.

While Jesus knew the heartbreak and trauma he was going to put his disciples through, these verses about the Holy Spirit were a gift to his disciples. As Andrew Knowles reminds us in his commentary, “In all the turmoil and heartache of leaving them, Jesus gives his friends his peace. ‘Peace’ is the everyday Jewish greeting—‘shalom’. But Jesus doesn’t use the word lightly. He gives them God’s own peace; the settled conviction that God is in control, and that all will be well.”¹⁸

Jesus gives them peace through the gift of the Holy Spirit, which, by the grace of God, those who believe in God and his eternal love and grace can also rely on today.

¹⁷ Beasley-Murray, George Raymond. *John*. Nashville: T. Nelson, 2000.

¹⁸ Knowles, Andrew. *The Bible Guide*. Oxford: Lion, 2006.

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