

The Helper

BY RANDY HURST

As we look toward Pentecost Sunday, it is inspiring to recall how Jesus prepared His disciples for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

In the last days before Jesus' crucifixion, He gathered His followers to give them His final instructions. They had been with Him for three years during His public ministry. He knew they were troubled when He told them that He would soon be leaving them.

Jesus had instructed the disciples concerning how to live as His witnesses in the world. But they were overwhelmed. How could they possibly obey all the commands He had given them? It was one thing to understand what Jesus required. It was another to accomplish His purpose for their lives.

The Helper

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Jesus knew that fear would overcome the disciples' best intentions. But He had chosen them. He had prayed for them. He knew that, in spite of their human weaknesses, they loved Him. And after three years of teaching, He shared a wonderful promise with them. He said, "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."¹

To the disciples, it seemed incredible to think that Jesus' leaving was to their advantage. Yet Jesus knew they would be more effective with the Spirit's presence in their lives than when He was physically present with them.

The Greek word used in the New Testament for Jesus' description of the Holy Spirit, *parakletos*, has been translated "Comforter." The title originally was used to describe a person who was called in to help someone, which is why some Bible versions translate the word as "Counselor" or "Advocate." But the simplest translation is "Helper."

Jesus said, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 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."²

Jesus was revealing a great mystery about God. Jesus had been with the disciples, and they knew how He had helped them. Now He promised them "another Helper." He was introducing them to the third Person of the Trinity — the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament writers taught about the Spirit of God, but the people could not understand the Holy Spirit until Jesus came and, even more, after Jesus returned to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit as the Father promised.

Jesus promised two things concerning what His followers' relationship with the Holy Spirit would be.

First was His permanence — the Spirit would be with them forever and abide (or remain) with them.

Second was His presence — the Holy Spirit would be in them.

This was certainly a mystery revealed. The Old Testament spoke often about the Holy Spirit coming on prophets, priests, judges and kings. But Jesus revealed that the Holy Spirit would come to be in His people.

God was with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In the Old Testament, God was with His people as they wandered in the wilderness, showing His presence in the cloud by day and fire by night.

But when Jesus, God the Son, became flesh and took on human form, God entered another relationship with man. The apostle

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SILENCE

296 million people
205 million don't know Jesus**
World's 3rd-largest unreached nation**
Break the silence

The Helper

Jesus taught that the Spirit would speak both for and about Him.

John wrote, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."³ Jesus was God not only with His people but also among them. Now Jesus was teaching His disciples that God the Holy Spirit would come and be in them.

God's relationship with His people progressed from being *with* them to being *among* them to finally being *in* them!

Jesus taught that the Spirit would speak both for and about Him. "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 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. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine;

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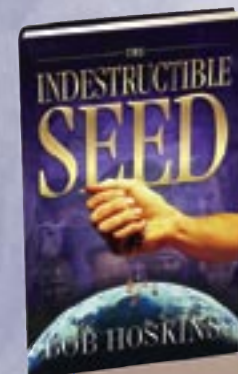
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The Bible clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person with attributes of personality. He corrects, helps and intercedes. He inspired the prophets to speak. His works are clearly described as being done by a Person.

therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.”⁴

Because the Holy Spirit brings glory to the Son⁵, many have difficulty understanding the Holy Spirit as a Person rather than merely a power or a force. The Bible clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person with attributes of personality. He corrects, helps and intercedes. He inspired the prophets to speak. His works are clearly described as being done by a Person.

The Holy Spirit is also divine. Characteristics only used of God are attributed to the Holy Spirit. He is present everywhere. He knows all things, is all-powerful and is eternal, without beginning or end. He is described as working in creation and doing miracles. And Jesus commanded that believers are to be baptized in the Holy Spirit’s name along with those of the Father and the Son.

In Jesus’ final instructions to His disciples, He gave further revelation concerning the Holy Spirit: “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. 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.”⁶

“And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”⁷

Jesus’ teaching concerning the Holy Spirit in the final hours before His death prepared His disciples for life following His ascension.

The promised Helper came on the Day of Pentecost. That same day the apostle Peter preached, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”⁸

That promise includes us — His followers today! **tpe**

RANDY HURST is commissioner on evangelism for the Assemblies of God. Look for part two next week: *Counting on the Supernatural*
E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

¹John 16:7; ²John 14:16,17; ³John 1:14; ⁴John 16:12-15; ⁵John 16:14; ⁶John 14:23-26; ⁷John 16:8-11; ⁸Acts 2:38,39 (All Scriptures NASB.)

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