



THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GUIDANCE

Jesus had promised to send the Holy Spirit to be with His apostles after His departure. He had phrased this promise in such a way as to give the apostles the greatest assurance possible: "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" (16:7). He had also told them that the Spirit would convict the world concerning His deity, ministry, death, and resurrection (16:8–11). The Spirit was to show the world its sin in rejecting Jesus' message and its wickedness in condemning Him, the Righteous One of God. He would bring into clearer focus the judgment that had fallen upon them because of their refusal to receive the truth that He had brought them.

As a follow-up to this conversation, Jesus also promised His apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them and enable them to become ambassadors worthy of their task. He had not been able to reveal everything to them, but He had set their feet on the path of His truth. Upon His coming, the Spirit would reveal to them all the necessary additional truth. After Jesus' death, His resurrection, and the Day of Pentecost, the apostles would be in a position to understand the full revelation that the Lord wanted them to have.

John 16

"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" (vv. 12, 13).

taught them. They could not allow anything that Jesus had told them to slip from their minds. The Spirit would also reveal to them whatever they needed to know that they had not been ready to learn from Jesus. He had informed them, "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" (14:26).

How significant these words were to the apostles! They implied the authority the apostles were to be given. They were to be messengers, delivering the message provided by the Spirit. In addition, these words emphasized the completeness of the message that the apostles were to preach and teach. They would be guided "into *all* the truth" (emphasis mine)—the truth in its entirety. All the truth needed by the church in the first century and in all the following centuries would be revealed to them. Jude urged his hearers to strive for "the faith . . . once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3).

Specifically, what would the Spirit do for them when He came to them?

INTO ALL THE TRUTH

The Spirit would guide them "into all the truth." Jesus said, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth." The Greek includes the article ("the") here, stressing that Jesus and the Spirit were revealing "the" truth.

The help to be provided by the Holy Spirit was two-directional, looking both backward and forward. The Spirit would bring to the apostles' remembrance all that Jesus had

ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

The Holy Spirit was not to originate any doctrine, but was to speak only in accordance with God's will. Jesus said, "For He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak." The Spirit was not coming to glorify Himself, to speak "from" Himself, or to put into place His own plan. Rather, His purpose was to say what the Father had given to Him to say. As was true of Jesus, the Spirit would not teach anything on His own. During His early ministry, Jesus had said, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (5:30). The Spirit's role was to uphold and elaborate upon Jesus' mission that had fulfilled the will of the Father.

The Spirit would not devise anything that He taught. Rather, He was to unfold the truth in a broader and fuller sense than Jesus had been able to do because of the apostles' inadequacy to receive so much information. They could not have withstood the burden of the full truth at the time when Jesus was speaking to them. The truth that Jesus and the Spirit brought to the world was the same body of truth; however, the Spirit followed Jesus, making the revelation fuller. He was sent to abide with the church and sustain the truth in the world.

IN KEEPING WITH GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

The Holy Spirit would disclose to the apostles what the future held. Jesus said, "And He will disclose to you what is to come." The eternal purpose of God was being put fully into place. Through the long years of the patriarchal and Mosaical ages, God had worked to bring in His great plan. Now, in the fullness of time (see Galatians 4:4), the Messiah was about to offer the supreme sacrifice for all sin, for all time, for all people. This ultimate sacrifice would make it possible for God finally to say in reality, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). Every sacrifice of the

Old Testament times would find its fulfillment in the sacrifice of Jesus. The Holy Spirit was coming to make clear what the Son had done, to reveal what must take place according to God's ongoing plan for the world, and to maintain the Lordship of Jesus throughout the Christian age.

CONCLUSION

The Spirit would keep the truth before the world and in the hands of the church, as well as providing guidance for the church through the days that lay ahead. He would also reveal the future that the church could hope for and expect. The church, having been "cleansed . . . by the washing of water with the word," was to be sanctified by the truth. This sanctification is what will enable Christ to present to Himself, at the end of time, the church in all her glory. Through its adherence to the Word, the church will be prepared to meet the Lord, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; He desires to find her holy and blameless when He comes to receive her unto Himself (Ephesians 5:26, 27).

How Jesus' words must have encouraged the apostles! His announcement made them realize that they were not being left alone. The Holy Spirit was being sent to them to guide them into all the truth. He would continue revealing the message of God to the apostles, even as Jesus had, and would open their eyes to what the future held. Let us thank God for the coming of the Holy Spirit!
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"But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: 'Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. For . . . this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel'" (Acts 2:14-16).

"It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions" (Joel 2:28).