

The Holy Spirit in the Gospel and Writings of John

1. We left the apostles and Jesus at the beginning of the intensive section John records in chapters 14-16. The Paraclete, the One who comes when summoned, the Helper, the One who walks beside – HE will come in a special way once Jesus leaves.
2. We also reminded each other that Jesus is not gone, that he is still present, but not physically. We are spiritual beings so his being present spiritually is NOT less than being present physically. If he was trapped in human form, he could not be a universal Messiah. He moved and left room for the Spirit to come, truly making this a universal faith.
3. [John 14:21-24] Be careful how you use these verses. A text without a context is a pretext and this text is often used in combination with something Paul said to the church in Galatia or perhaps to Titus as he labors in Crete. Then, the proof-texter runs back here and demands obedience to his or her interpretation of Paul's words. Paul's words were inspired by God and given to the churches and situations he addressed, but Jesus is talking about something else here: HIS words which were given by the Holy Spirit and it is the words that Jesus spoke which will judge us in the last day (Matthew 25).
4. The two great commands He gave us were to love God and love each other. Why would we need the Holy Spirit for two such simple commands? Because they aren't simple. We are 2000+ years north of the cross and we still haven't managed it.
5. [John 14:26] So we must be reminded and we must remind each other. This verse should also make us pause when we are about to react with anything other than love: is the spirit in us one of anger, fear, competition, self interest...or love?
6. Skipping ahead a bit to Acts, please remember that the churches were being torn apart by arguments about how Jewish the Gentile Christians had to be to be acceptable to God. The leaders of the church in Jerusalem could have come down any of a dozen different ways on this question but, instead, said this [Acts 15:19,28-29] Note

that they didn't address the fight...because the Holy Spirit was not in that fight. The Holy Spirit is here to remind us of the way Jesus treated people and to move us forward in love. Rules and ruts get in the way.

7. Jesus tells them that everything is going to be new now [Revelation 21:5]. When the Holy Spirit comes in, we change the way we do things so that love can abound (as it did in Acts 6 when a new situation arose. They made a new solution).
8. Then Jesus tells them that he will leave them a kind of peace which is not found in the world – one that is not dependent on what people say or do or how we are treated. He is about to illustrate that to them by allowing himself to be arrested, flogged, humiliated, and crucified. And his demeanor – peaceful, in control, remembering to love at all times.
9. [John 15:18-21] Why would anyone hate Jesus? He never mistreated anyone. He loved all and treated them with great kindness...but the God He showed them was not the God they wanted. And therein lies the crux of the matter: when people don't get the God they want, they create one that likes what they like and hates what they hate. Voltaire said it best: "In the beginning, God created man in His own image, and man has been trying to repay the favor ever since."
10. [John 16:2,3] These are harsh words indeed but we can think of ISIS and other extremists who have done just that. Christians suffer terrible persecution all over the world (but not much here...yet). Let us also remember there are other ways of killing someone. Religious people have attacked ministers, shepherds, and teachers and "killed" their spirit, "killed" their ability to teach and serve, and "killed" their hearts. And they do it in the name of a Jesus they really don't know at all. Look at [Revelation 12:10-12]. If you join the slanderers, you have joined Team Satan.
11. Jesus warns those who follow him that their greatest opposition will not be unbelievers and pagans; their greatest opposition will arise from those who believe THEY are the spokespeople of God. In Acts 6, Stephen stands before a religious court, the highest court of the Jewish people, staffed only by those who are accepted as the most

religious, the most pure in the faith. All Stephen does is remind them of their history of rejecting God and their response is not love but stones and death.

12. When Stephen looks up, he sees something very interesting...Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. You might not catch it at first so here it is: when Jesus is pictured in heaven, he is pictured as sitting at the right hand of God...except when He sees the death of his people. In Acts and Revelation, we see him standing.

13. Knowing this, and knowing that the Spirit is promised to be with us 24/7 the rest of our lives, and knowing that the Spirit is there to help us whenever we choose to live in love and grace, mercy and peace...how can we fail? We can only fail when we forget or when we elevate another god higher than Jesus.

14. A reading of John and then Revelation reminds us to be careful which spirit we listen to. There are other spirits named in scripture:

- a. Spirits of haughtiness
- b. ...of emulation
- c. ...of fear
- d. ...of error
- e. ...jealousy
- f. ...promiscuity
- g. ...bondage
- h. ...heaviness
- i. ...unclean spirits
- j. ...foul spirits
- k. ...unruly spirits
- l. ...perverse spirits
- m. ...deceiving spirits
- n. ...deafness and remaining mute (spiritual, not physical)

15. [John 16:8-11] Don't back the losing team.