

and to help them in their need of wisdom and guidance after His departure.

Let's look closely at John 14:16-17 for a moment, and ask what truths may be learned from it. Let me suggest five:

(1) In verse 16 Jesus says that "the world . . . is neither beholding Him or knowing Him" (i.e., the Holy Spirit). This tells us that unbelievers have no experiential knowledge of the Holy Spirit. They do not behold or know Him.

(2) Therefore unbelievers are not able to receive the Holy Spirit -- "the Spirit of truth, whom the world is not able to receive" (verse 16).

(3) However, verse 17 tells us that Christ's disciples have an experiential knowledge of the Holy Spirit: "You are knowing him."

(4) Christ's disciples have already received the Holy Spirit and He is already remaining with them: "You are knowing Him, because He is remaining with you."

(5) After Christ's departure from them to heaven, the disciples will receive the Holy Spirit in the relationship of Comforter and Helper, and He will remain in (or among) them always: "He (the Father) will give you another Comforter (or Helper), in order that He may be with you always -- the Spirit of truth" (verse 16); "He will be in (or among) you." (verse 17).

What was the Lord telling His disciples? That the Holy Spirit, whom they already knew, whom they had already received, whom they had experienced, who was already remaining with them, would be remaining with them for ever; and that since the Lord would soon be leaving them, He was sending the Holy Spirit to them in a special relationship: namely, that of a Comforter and Helper. He was telling them that the Spirit of God, who was already related to them in various ways, would come to them in a special relationship, to comfort and help them after their Master was gone.

Incidentally, those who want to stress the change of preposition in verse 17 from "with" to "in," and say that "with" describes the past and present relationship of the Holy Spirit to Christ's immediate disciples, and "in" describes the future relationship, should note that verse 16 uses "with" to describe the future relationship: "I will ask the Father and He will give you another Comforter, in order that He may be WITH you always."

Now just a word about Psalm 51:11 and 1 Samuel 16:14.