

This difference of kind may be found in certain statements made by our Lord and recorded in John's gospel following Christ's announcement of His coming departure to the Father's house. These statements are as follows:

John 14:16 -- "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter.

John 14:18 -- "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you."

John 14:25-26 -- "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 15:26 -- "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me."

John 16:6-7 -- "But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

Now let us put ourselves into the historical situation. Christ was about to depart from His disciples. They were filled with sorrow at the thought of losing their Master, of no longer having Him there with them. And they were also filled with apprehension and fear, and felt almost lost at the prospect of being without their Leader. How could they carry on without His presence, without His direction and truth and example?

And so Christ promised them that He would send the Holy Spirit to them as a Comforter and Helper, both to comfort them in their loss of His physical presence, and to help them in their need of wisdom, guidance, and direction after His departure.

With this historical setting in mind, let us take a closer look at John 14:16-17 (using a very literal translation), and draw some truths from this passage.

"And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Comforter (or Helper), in order that He may be with you always (ἵνα ἢ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) -- the Spirit of truth, whom the world is not able to receive because it is neither beholding Him or knowing Him (οὐ θεωρεῖ αὐτὸ οὐδὲ γινώσκει). You are knowing Him (ὁμοῦς γινώσκετε αὐτό), because He is remaining with you (παρ' ὑμῶν μένει), and is (or shall be) in (or among) you (καὶ ἐν ὑμῶν ἐστίν [or ἔσται])."

What truths may be learned from this passage? The following suggest themselves:

- (1) Unbelievers have no experiential knowledge of the Holy Spirit ("the world . . . is neither beholding Him or knowing Him")