

- (2) Therefore unbelievers are not able to receive the Holy Spirit ("the Spirit of truth, whom the world is not able to receive")
- (3) Christ's disciples have an experiential knowledge of the Holy Spirit ("you are knowing Him")
- (4) Therefore Christ's disciples are able to receive the Holy Spirit. In fact, they 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 into heaven, Christ's disciples will receive the Holy Spirit in the capacity of Comforter and Helper, and He will remain in (or among) them always ("He will give you another Comforter (or Helper), in order that He may be with you always -- the Spirit of truth . . . He . . . shall be in (or among) you")

What was our Lord telling His disciples? That the Holy Spirit, whom they already knew, whom they had already received, whom they had experienced in various capacities, who was already remaining with them, would be remaining with them forever; and since our Lord would soon be leaving them, He was sending the Holy Spirit to them in a new relationship; namely, that of a Comforter and Helper after Christ's departure.

To put it another way, the Spirit of God, who was already related to them in various ways, would come to them in a new relationship to comfort and help them after their Master was gone.

Incidentally, those who wish to stress the change of preposition in verse 17 from "with" to "in" and to assert that "with" refers to the Holy Spirit's relationship to the disciples in the past and present, whereas "in" refers to His relationship to the disciples in the future, should take special note of the fact that in verse 16 the future relationship of the Holy Spirit to the disciples is expressed in terms of "with" ("He will give you another Comforter, in order that He may be with you always -- the Spirit of truth"). This usage should caution against making theological distinctions purely on the basis of prepositional differences!

A second observation that appears to be in order relates to the distinction made in the two quotations mentioned earlier between the temporary character of the Spirit's relationships to Old Testament saints, and the permanent character of His relationships to New Testament saints, especially as highlighted by David's prayer that the Holy Spirit not be taken from him.

Actually, the only evidence cited for the temporary character of the Holy Spirit's relationships to Old Testament believers (other than references to filling) is that found in Psalm 51:11 and I Samuel 16:14.

Psalm 51:11 reads: "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me ( וְרוּחַ קְדֹשְׁךָ אַל־תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי )."

I Samuel 16:14 says: "But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul ( וְרוּחַ יְהוָה סָרָה מֵעַם שָׂאוּל )."