

Bible - General Questions

Are there two Paracletes?

By Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Scripture tells us that God the Holy Spirit is the believer's *Paraclete* in this world, and God the Son is the believer's *Paraclete* at the Father's right hand.

"Another *Paraclete*"

When Jesus was about to go to the Cross, His disciples were filled with doubts and fears since He had told them that He was soon to leave them. Then the Lord spoke these words to them:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Jesus answered and said unto him, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the

Holy Ghost, 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 14:16-26).

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me" (John 15:26).

After His resurrection, as He was about to ascend to Heaven, Jesus reminded them once more of the coming of the Holy Spirit soon after He would leave them:

"Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

I will soon be leaving the world and returning to Heaven, Jesus tells them, but "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — the Spirit of truth..." The Greek word translated "Helper" (NKJV) or "Comforter" (KJV) is *parakletos*, meaning "one who is called alongside to help." In contemporary Greek usage, the word often had the meaning of "a helper in court," a person who spoke on behalf of another person before a judge — in other words, an intercessor. The word translated "another" in John 14:16 is *allos*, which means "another of the same kind." God the Holy Spirit is "another Helper" of the same kind as God the Son.

Our *Paraclete* in Heaven

Although the Gospels do not record Jesus ever referring to Himself directly as a *paraklete*, John in his epistles used the term to describe the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus Christ: "If anyone sins, we have an Advocate (*parakletos*) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

Hebrews 7:25 tells us that Jesus is able to save "to the uttermost" (a strong phrase meaning "utterly completely") all who come unto God through Him, "seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them."

Elsewhere, the writer to the Hebrews encourages believers to stand firm in this world, because we have access to the very throne of God through the intercession of Christ:

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Our *Paraclete* on Earth

As Jesus is our *Paraclete* in Heaven, God the indwelling Holy Spirit is our *Paraclete* on earth. In John 14 and 15, Jesus spoke to His disciples of the coming of the Holy Spirit in light of His impending physical absence from them, and the work He had given them to do in this world after His departure. In Romans chapter eight, Paul likewise gives us inspired words of comfort as we await Christ's imminent return while doing His work in this world:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance (verses 18-25).

In the context of today's question, note what follows:

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God (verses 26-27).

Double Comfort, Double Assurance

The intercessory work of the Comforter, the One who lives within us as the down-payment of our ultimate redemption (see also Ephesians 1:13-14), is the guarantee both of our present assurance and our future glory:

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (verses 28-31)

And in the verses that follow, Paul once again links our present assurance and future certainty to the intercession of the Son as well:

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (verses 32-41).

Although the work of the Son and the Holy Spirit involves much more than intercession (see recommended resources below), this aspect of their work on behalf of believers is of paramount importance in the plan and provision of God for His children. Two omniscient, omnipotent Persons of the Godhead intercede on behalf of every saint. God the Holy Spirit is the believer's Paraclete in this world, and God the Son is the believer's Paraclete at the Father's right hand.

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