

INTRODUCTION

Read John 14: 16 - 26, 16: 7 - 15

WORDS OF JESUS TO HIS DISCIPLES

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another to be your Advocate, who will be with you forever – the Spirit of Truth.
John 14: 16 NEB

I have told you all this while I am still here with you; but your Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything, and will call to mind all that I have told you.
John 14: 26 NEB

In Greek the word for the Holy Spirit the Father sent is *parakletos*.



The literal meaning is - *one called to the side of or one called to assist as a friend in a court of witness* – hence the closest word linguistically in translation is – *advocate*.

WORDS OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

2 Timothy 4: 16

Another Advocate means - the gift of God's Holy Spirit sent to represent the Lord Jesus Christ on earth, to plead for and to witness to His cause.

For the believers, He was sent to teach, intercede for and empower them with authority, even miracle working power, as Christ's witnesses before magistrates and kings.

Matthew 10: 19, 20 (Luke 12: 11, 12)

JESUS' FAREWELL TO HIS TROUBLED DISCIPLES

The text John 14: 16 in different versions includes other titles for the Holy Spirit –

Comforter – Counsellor – Helper – Intercessor – Strengtheners – Standby

In the first English translation, the word *Comforter*, meaning *Strengtheners*, was used. These words in the various translations, however, do fit the troubled context of the situation.

Jesus had already told His disciples He was going away.

(John 8: 21a)

The Lord knew His grief-stricken disciples were in need of the support of inner strength.

Do not let your hearts be troubled.

John 14: 1a

CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION



The Lord had also told them He would be mocked, crucified and rise again on the third day.

Matthew 20: 18, 19

THE PROMISED GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 15: 26, 27 NEB

John 16: 7, 8 NEB

However, when He comes Who is the Spirit of Truth, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but will tell only what He hears; and He will make known to you the things that are coming. He will glorify Me.

John 16: 13, 14a NEB

The disciples did *not* understand Jesus' words about His coming death and resurrection; but the one thing they did understand was the meaning of the legal term – advocate. They knew the support an advocate would provide for the office had long been part of their culture in the city gates of the Children of Israel.

THE CITY GATES

At the entrance of the city gates she (Wisdom) speaks.

Proverbs 1: 21b

In the lands of the Bible, legal matters had for centuries been decided in the city gates. Here the elders sat as witnesses and people gathered in the market gateways of their communities.

(Genesis 19:1)

These were the open-air town halls, where the legal processes of government took place. It was in the city or town gates that decisions concerning the right of redemption, inheritance and property, for example, were settled before the advocate pleading the case.



THE BOOK OF JOB

Job, famed for his wisdom and perseverance, lived before Abraham.

His story provides an example of the importance of the city gates and also reveals a knowledge of legal terms in those times.

In this ancient account of personal disaster, Job in replying to his friends, known as Job's Comforters, used words well-known in a courtroom.

Before his suffering began Job was a respected elder who sat in the gate of his community.

Job 29: 7

ABRAHAM BUYS A BURIAL PLACE

Read Genesis Chapter 23

As a stranger and a sojourner in the Promised Land, Abraham owned no territory in Canaan.

A sad event in the life of Abraham provides an example of a legal transaction before witnesses taking place at the city gate. On the death of his wife, Sarah, he made request to the sons of Heth at the city gate of Kiriath-arba (Hebron), for a certain burial site.

On the conclusion of the transaction and payment to Ephron, the cave and the field there became –

Genesis 23: 18

RIGHT OF REDEMPTION

Read Ruth 4: 1 - 11a

At Bethlehem's city gate, an account before witnesses is given of the transfer of land through the right of redemption.

Boaz was a near kinsman who acted as advocate in befriending the widow Naomi and Ruth, her daughter-in-law. To preserve the family line and inheritance, the legal transaction was decided by the elders as witnesses in the city gate, Boaz not having the prior claim as the nearest kinsman redeemer to buy back the property.

After the land was redeemed, Ruth, the Moabitess, married Boaz. He was the great-grandfather of King David.

THE WORK OF AN ADVOCATE

In the gates of the Children of Israel, it was the ancient custom for the elders to discuss and debate all legal proceedings. These courts in the gates of Israel were in existence many years before the Temple in Jerusalem was built or the synagogues came into being.

The people of Israel understood advocacy.

The one pleading the truth and rightness of the cause (the advocate) would be supported by witnesses testifying against the false witnesses on the opposing side. In these open-air law courts there were no grey areas – the case was either lost or won!

Zechariah 8: 16

THE HOLY SPIRIT, AS *ANOTHER ADVOCATE*, WAS SENT TO –

* To plead for and witness to the Lord Jesus Christ on earth.

The Spirit of Truth, He will bear witness to Me.

John 15: 26b NEB

* Empower believers to witness to Jesus.

John 15: 27 NEB

* Intercede and plead for the believers.

Romans 8: 26

The disciples were reassured to know that the Holy Spirit as *Another Advocate* would intercede for them on earth.



The Apostle John in his pastoral letter wrote about the intercessory work of Jesus as our Advocate in heaven.

My little children, I write you these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone should sin, we have an Advocate (One Who will intercede for us) with the Father – Jesus Christ.

1 John 2: 1a

THE POWER OF PENTECOST

Read Acts 2: 1 - 8

After Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension, the meaning of *Another Advocate* became clearer with the coming of the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost - like a mighty rushing wind and tongues of fire.



Acts 1: 8

The believers were thus enabled to spread the Gospel; the Good News of Salvation through Christ, the Son of God. As Saviour, Jesus had given His life, a sinless crucified sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 3: 23 A.V.

The Lord won the victory against Satan on the Cross when His blood was shed.

John 3: 16

Jesus on earth was only in one place at a time, but the Holy Spirit lives in every believer.

He lives and makes His home in us: by the Holy Spirit Whom He has given us.

1 John 3: 24b

The first Christians, with Christ within, were thus motivated to witness, to gossip the message of the Gospel from Jerusalem to the utmost parts of the Roman world and beyond. These first believers were to witness by the power of the Holy Spirit against Satan, his evil spirit forces and opposing unbelieving witnesses. Persecution followed.

PERSECUTION AND MARTYRDOM

The blood of Your witness (martyr) Stephen was shed.

Acts 22: 20a

It was because of the persecution in Jerusalem, after the martyrdom of Stephen, that the believers were scattered. In those first centuries there was mounting persecution and many Christians were imprisoned or died for their faith.

The ascended Jesus spoke these words to the Apostle John –

Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed (martyred) in your midst.

Revelation 2: 13b

Even so Christ's followers, strengthened by the Holy Spirit as *Another Advocate*, continued to witness and so spread the glad tidings of the Gospel message. Despite severe persecution throughout the Roman Empire, the number of believers increased and the Church grew. The final outcome has to be the certain triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For I will build My church and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.

Matthew 16: 18b

It is an interesting fact that the battle is again - in the gates!

In Christ's prayerful service - failure is not an option!

CHRIST'S WITNESSES

There are many verses in the New Testament, especially in Acts, about the believers' witness, their testimony to their repentance and faith in Christ Jesus.

Acts 4: 33 A.V.

We are witnesses of everything He (Christ) did in both the land of Judea and in Jerusalem.

Acts 10: 39a

Acts 13: 31

PAUL AND SILAS IN PRISON

Read Acts 16: 25 - 34

PAUL'S WITNESS IN JERUSALEM

Read Acts Chapter 22

Acts 22: 15

Acts 23: 11

WORDS OF PAUL TO KING AGRIPPA

Read Acts 26: 13 - 19

Acts 26: 16

WORDS OF THE APOSTLE JOHN

1 John 4: 14

I saw the souls of those who had been slain (beheaded) for their witnessing to Jesus and for the Word of God.

Revelation 20: 4a



CONCLUSION

Greater numbers of believers have been killed for their witness to Christ during the last hundred years than in the first centuries. Nevertheless, the zealous and courageous witness of the early Church has sadly been partly lost and this is especially true in the more opulent western churches.

Perhaps many Christians, in more recent times, have forgotten or never understood the historic background of the word - Advocate.

Understand the meaning and impact of *Another Advocate* and you will realize the Holy Spirit's work has an added and inspiring dimension – encapsulating all the titles of –

Comforter, Counsellor, Helper, Intercessor, Strengtheners and Standby.

How wonderful to know the blessing of the Gifts and the Fruit of the Holy Spirit as He witnesses to Jesus and glorifies Him through the believers! He is the guarantee of God's promises. Telling unbelievers how Jesus has changed your life and what He means to you is the most natural and effective way to witness.

With humble prayer, the Holy Spirit, as *Another Advocate*, will water even the sowing of small seeds of witness in Jesus' name - as you in the fellowship of all believers are guided and have opportunity.

What an energising and awesome force of
power and peace in us!

What an encouragement to witness with confidence for the Lord!

Are we such witnesses today?



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