

*WHO OR WHAT
IS THE
COMFORTER?*



THE COMFORTER OR THE PARAKLETOS

■ The Comforter passages in the Gospel of John use the special word **parakletos**. Derived from **parakaleo**, the word is a verbal adjective that signifies to call to one's side for aid. The word was used to denote one who pleads another's cause before a judge, hence an advocate. This meaning is confirmed by the only other use of **parakletos**, where the context indicates the spirit and role of the advocate.

I John 2:1

■ But the noun is used in a variety of ways in both the New Testament and the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, where it denotes variously to console, to guide, to encourage, to comfort. All this range of ideas would appear to be included in the meaning of the term **parakletos**, but with an intensely personal aspect to the title, as the one who provides this succour and support.

THE PERSONAL ASPECT OF THE PARAKLETOS

- A particular difficulty of the passages in John concerning the **parakletos**, is the use of the masculine title in the Greek text. The **parakletos** is referred to consistently as an individual.

John 14:16-17, 26
John 15:26
John 16:7-8, 13-15.
- Trinitarians claim these references indicate support for the personality of the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity.
- This textual difficulty is usually addressed by applying the principle of personification, as with Wisdom in **Proverbs 8:20-30**. The idea suggested, is that the use of personification would encourage the disciples to see every miracle of the Comforter as the personal act of the risen Lord through the Spirit.

THE ANGEL of the PRESENCE

THE O.T. PARAKLETOS

- Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way...beware of him, and obey his voice...for my name is in him

Exodus 23:20-21

- My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest

Exodus 33:14

- In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy...the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest

Isaiah 63:9-14

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE O.T. PARAKLETOS

- To accompany them as the continuing presence of Yahweh in their midst.

Exodus 23:21, Exodus 33:14.

- To encourage them as their mentor and guide throughout their spiritual journey.

Exodus 15:13, Exodus 23:20.

- To empower them for their work of personal ministration among the congregation.

Isaiah 63:11, Numbers 11:24-25.

- To strengthen them with courage in adversity to fearlessly face their enemies.

Exodus 23:22, 27-30.

- To lead them into all truth by the miraculous revelation of divine law.

Deut 33:2-3, Neh 9:20, Acts 7:38, 53.

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE N.T. PARAKLETOS

- To accompany them as the continuing presence of Christ in their midst.

John 14:16-18

- To encourage them as their mentor and guide throughout their spiritual journey.

John 14:26.

- To empower them for their work of personal witness in declaring the risen Lord.

John 15:26-27.

- To strengthen them with courage in adversity to fearlessly face their enemies.

John 16:7-11.

- To lead them into all truth by the miraculous revelation of divine law.

John 16:13-15.

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE N.T. PARAKLETOS

To accompany them as the continuing presence of Christ in their midst. **John 14:16-18**

- The promise of the parakletos was given in the context of Christ's impending departure. The parakletos would bear the name of Christ as his representative, and his presence among them would continue to comfort and support them.

John 14:12-18, 26

- The timeframe for the work of the parakletos among them, was specified to be unto the end of the Aion.

John 14:16, Matthew 28:20.

This Aion related to the work of the apostles. The promise of Christ was therefore that the parakletos would 'never' leave them, but would remain with them as long as they lived.

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE N.T. PARAKLETOS

To encourage them as their mentor and guide throughout their spiritual journey. **John 14:26**

- The Acts of the Apostles is the documentary evidence of how the **parakletos** fulfilled this task in overshadowing all their labours.
- Throughout the record there are certain passages where the terms angel and Spirit are interchangeable:
**Acts 2:4, Acts 5:3, 9, Acts 7:51,
Acts 8:26, 29, 39.
Acts 10:3, 7, 14, 19, 22, 30.
Acts 12:7, 10, 23.
Acts 13:2, 4, Acts 15:28, Acts 16:6-7.**
- The **parakletos** was truly with them to open prison doors, cause earthquakes, smite opponents, assist their counsels, transport preachers, deflect their purpose when necessary, and bring to their exact remembrance things otherwise unknown.

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE N.T. PARAKLETOS

To empower them for their work of personal witness in declaring the risen Lord. **John 15:26-27**

- The promise of Christ was that their preaching witness to testify of him, would be authenticated by miraculous signs given in his name.

Mark 16:15-20.

The Lord was in heaven, but the **parakletos** bearing his Name, was with them on earth confirming their word with signs.

Acts 14:3.

- As eyewitnesses of the life, and teaching, and death, and resurrection and ascension of Christ they were convincing. With the blessing of the **parakletos** to bring all things to their remembrance, and to work wonders in Christ's name, they were irresistible.

John 14:12, Acts 5:32.

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE N.T. PARAKLETOS

To strengthen them with courage in adversity to fearlessly face their enemies. **John 16:7-11**

- The role of the **parakletos** as their advocate was to be uniquely revealed in the special assistance he would give them in their court trials. He would grant them such inspired utterance, that through them the world would truly be reprovved for sin and judged.

**Luke 21:12-15, Luke 12:11-12,
Mark 13:9-11.**

- This direct and urgent entreaty of the **parakletos** in their ears, turned the apostles and disciples into forthright accusers of their own judges from Jerusalem to Rome.

**Acts 4:6-10, Acts 5:27-32,
Acts 6:12-15.**

**Acts 23:11, Acts 27:23-24,
2 Timothy 4:16-17.**

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE N.T. PARAKLETOS

To lead them into all truth by the miraculous revelation of divine law. **John 16:13-15**

- Howbeit when he the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak and he will shew you things to come
All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.
John 16:13-15.

- The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.

Revelation 1:1.

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE N.T. PARAKLETOS

To lead them into all truth by the miraculous revelation of divine law. **John 16:13-15**

- The remarkable parallel between the final work of the parakletos and the last writing of the Scripture, identifies the parakletos with the special angel of the Lord

John 16:13-15, Revelation 1:1.

- Throughout the rest of the book the miraculous revelation of divine truth would be unfolded by the parakletos, who would be referred to as both the angel and the Spirit.

Revelation 1:17, 2: 7, 11, 17, 29

Revelation 14:13

Revelation 22:6-9, 16-17.

Here was a fitting conclusion to the work of the parakletos. The ecclesia is mature, the revelation complete. With his work finished, he calls upon Christ to return. The aion of the parakletos was about to end.