

Voices: Believers in Christ have an edge

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We Christians living today possess an advantage even the first disciples of Christ did not have as they followed our Lord through Roman-occupied Israel.

It is also an advantage others living in our world today do not have, those who are unbelievers.

We believers have an edge.

We have an edge in better understanding, not only what is going on in this world of ours, but also in understanding and interpreting the Bible.

What is this edge?

During their last meal together, Jesus instructed his disciples to ask his father to send us an edge.

“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:15-17).

The Holy Spirit is the believer’s edge.

The Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives

His ministry has changed from ancient times.

In the Old Testament, his work was largely task-driven. In those days, the Holy Spirit “came upon” individuals. He was with Moses when he parted the Red Sea. He was with David when he slew the giant Goliath.

Then, the Holy Spirit equipped men and women with the power they needed to accomplish specific tasks.

Now, the Holy Spirit resides within us to guide us throughout our lifetimes.

It was the Old Testament prophet, Ezekiel, who first foresaw the day when God would reside within believers.

Ezekiel quoted God saying:

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

That prophecy was fulfilled about 550 years later on the day we call Pentecost. It was the 50th day after Jesus arose from the grave.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1-4).

Since that day, every new believer receives the Holy Spirit. God takes up residence within us and equips us to accomplish his will.

The Holy Spirit's role in our lives

Jesus called him *“another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth”* (John 14:16).

“Advocate” is derived from a Greek word that means to “come alongside.” God’s Spirit, in a sense, “comes alongside” us Christians as a helper, a teacher, a guide and an encourager.

If the Holy Spirit is “another” advocate, then who is our primary advocate?

John identified him also, in his first epistle.

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One (1 John 2:1).

Jesus Christ is our Advocate with our Father in heaven. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate within us, here on earth.

Jesus told his disciples:

“These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you” (John 14:25-26).

Our “Helper, the Holy Spirit,” has two basic jobs.

One is to teach us “all things.” That’s a broad responsibility. The Holy Spirit teaches us primarily by revealing truth as we study the Bible.

The second is to “remind us” of everything Jesus taught us. He does so moment by moment as we go about living our lives.

Like Elijah who heard the Lord speak, not in a powerful wind that tore mountains apart, nor in an earthquake, nor in the fire that came after. Elijah heard the Lord in a gentle whisper—a “still small voice” that gave guidance and direction (1 Kings 19).

That “gentle nudge” a Christian often senses to “do the righteous thing” is the Holy Spirit speaking to us in a “still, small voice.”

The Holy Spirit is also our source of peace in troubled times. Jesus put it this way:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27).

The “peace” Jesus gave to us is the Holy Spirit. Thanks to him, we have no need to fear.

Thanks to the Holy Spirit, we understand more clearly God’s word.

Thanks to the Holy Spirit, we may live our lives better in ways that honor and glorify the Lord.

The Holy Spirit truly is the believer’s edge.

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