

# The Holy Spirit “Substitutes”<sup>1</sup> for Jesus



SABBATH—MARCH 6

**READ FOR THIS WEEK’S STUDY:** John 13:31–16:33.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “ ‘But I [Jesus] tell you [the disciples] the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor [the Holy Spirit] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him [the Holy Spirit] to you’ ” (John 16:7, NIV).

**IMPORTANT THOUGHT:** Life without Jesus on earth would be empty. So when He left earth, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to take His place. Having the Holy Spirit was better for the disciples than when Jesus had been with them!

**THE HOLY SPIRIT WOULD CONTINUE AND ADD TO JESUS’ WORK** on earth. After the foot washing, the shadow of the Cross began to hang over the room where Jesus and His disciples were resting. Jesus’ last moments with them had come. The disciples began to understand that Jesus was about to leave them. In John 13–16, Jesus delivered a farewell speech to His disciples. In His speech, Jesus taught them how to live without His being with them just as the second generation of Christians<sup>2</sup> would have to live without the disciples.

We are living many centuries<sup>3</sup> after Jesus’ time. So it is important for us to understand that Jesus’ absence does not prevent us from becoming better Christians. We all can be as good as He wants us to be, even while He is not among us. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus will teach us how to be better Christians.

\*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, March 13.

<sup>1</sup>substitutes—to put in the place of another; to take the place of something or someone else. The Holy Spirit was put in the place of Jesus when Jesus went back to heaven.

<sup>2</sup>second generation of Christians—Christians who were not living before Jesus was crucified.

<sup>3</sup>centuries—hundreds of years.

## SUNDAY—MARCH 7

**GOING AWAY (John 13:31–14:31).**

Jesus waited until Judas left (John 13:28-30) before He began His farewell speech to His disciples. His speech was to encourage them and us.

**What problem did Jesus and His disciples have at this time? John 13:33, 36.**

**How did Jesus think His disciples would feel? John 14:18.**

Jesus was going away. The disciples were feeling left behind. How could they continue without Him? But Jesus made it clear that His going away to the Father would help them.

**How would the disciples be better off after Jesus went to the Father? John 14:12-14.**

There is one important way to understand how Jesus' going away would help the disciples. John 14:12 shows that the disciples would do greater (better) works than Jesus did. This idea seems foolish. How could anyone do greater works than Jesus did? But while on earth, Jesus had human limits. He could be in only one place at a time. When Jesus was with the disciples, the Father could be seen only in His person (John 14:9). But when

Jesus went to the Father, Jesus left this limit behind. Through the Holy Spirit, His disciples could show the character of God throughout the entire world (John 14:16, 17).

Jesus went to the Father and sent the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit can be anywhere at any time, millions of disciples have been where Jesus could not go. Through the works and the writings of the disciples, Jesus has become real to millions of people around the world. In a way, Jesus' disciples took His place in the world. The words and actions of Christians may be the only picture of Jesus some people will ever see.



**What we do for other people may be the only picture of Jesus they will ever see.**

**Think of the people you have seen and met in the past 24 hours. Would your influence help them to be more interested in knowing God?**

MONDAY—MARCH 8

**STAYING CONNECTED TO JESUS**  
(John 15:1–16:33).

**In John 15:1-8, Jesus shares the example of the vine and the branches. How does a person (a branch) “remain in the vine [Jesus]”? John 15:6, 7, 9, 10.**



**One way to stay connected to the Vine (Jesus) is to obey His commandments.**

The relationship of Jesus with the Father is the model (example) for the disciples' relationship with Jesus. Jesus loves the disciples the way the Father loves Jesus (John 15:9). But the disciples are to obey Jesus' commands just as Jesus obeys the commands of His Father (John 15:10).

**How were the disciples to have a relationship with Jesus after He went back to heaven? John 15:26, 27; John 16:7.**

The relationship of Jesus to the world is almost the same as the relationship of the disciples with unbelievers (John 15:18). The world's hate for the disciples is rooted in the world's hate for Jesus (John 15:22-25). The values of the world are often the opposite of God's values. So the disciples need to be ready to face the world's hate.

For the disciples, the experience of hate and suffering for Jesus' sake is negative (John 15:18-25; John 16:1-4). But blessings will come because Jesus has gone to the Father and has sent His Holy Spirit (John 15:26, 27; John 16:7-15).

Why was it better for Jesus to go away? 1. He would send the Holy Spirit, who could be everywhere all the time. 2. Through the disciples' work, the work of Jesus would be spread throughout the world and would influence every person and place. 3. The love the disciples would have through the Holy Spirit (John 15:12-15) would have great power in the world (John 13:34, 35). 4. Jesus' absence would help the disciples give a strong basis to disciples who would live after them (John 15:1-8).

**Read John 14:21, 23 and John 15:10-14. What connection does God show between love and His commandments? In your own experience, how have you seen the close connection between love and the commandments? What is the connection between love and the commandments and “remaining in the vine”?**

## TUESDAY—MARCH 9

**SEEDS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 1:32, 33; John 3:5-8; John 4:23, 24; John 6:63; John 7:37-39).**

There are eleven sets of verses in the book of John that discuss the nature and work of the Holy Spirit. Five of these sets are located in the first half of John. These five sets talk about the Holy Spirit only briefly. It is as if John were using these five sets to plant seeds in the reader’s mind that would grow in the fertile soil of Jesus’ farewell speech (John 13–16).

**What can we learn about the work of the Holy Spirit from John 1:32, 33; John 3:5-8; John 4:23, 24; John 6:63; and John 7:37-39?**

The Holy Spirit makes several appearances in the first half of John’s book. But there is little information about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit made it possible for John the Baptist to recognize Jesus at the Jordan River (John 1:32, 33). The Holy Spirit is a very important part of our work in God’s kingdom (John 3:5, 6). We cannot control the Holy Spirit’s work. But we can see the Holy Spirit’s influence on people (John 3:8). Worship is no longer limited to special places or temples. Worship is not limited to any special group of people (John 4:23, 24). The Holy Spirit is available in every place

and to any kind of person through Jesus’ words (John 6:63).

The Holy Spirit’s work becomes clear only when we think of the Cross (John 7:39). So John 7:37-39 prepares the reader for the clearer information about the Holy Spirit’s work that comes in Jesus’ farewell speech (John 13–16). John 20:22 shows that the promise of John 7:39 began to be fulfilled right after Jesus finished His work on the cross.

In John 14–16, the name for the Holy Spirit comes from the Greek noun<sup>4</sup> *paraclete*. *Paraclete* is translated as “Comforter” or “Counselor.” The root meaning of *paraclete* is a person who is called to stand beside a person to help that person. So the word *paraclete* can be used to show a defense lawyer at a trial helping another person (lawyers also are called counselors). Or *paraclete* can mean someone who comes to comfort another person who is very sad. Both of these meanings of the word *paraclete* fit well with John 14–16.

## WEDNESDAY—MARCH 10

**JUST LIKE JESUS  
(John 14:16, 17, 26, 27).**

**Read carefully John 14:15-21. What is John 14:15-21 saying? How does John 14:15-21 connect the Holy Spirit to the commandments? Why would the Holy Spirit and the commandments be so closely connected?**

<sup>4</sup>noun—a word that names a person, place, or thing.

Jesus calls the Holy Spirit “‘another Counselor’ ” (John 14:16, NIV; italics given). This means the Holy Spirit is not *the* Counselor (or Comforter). The Greek language shows that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are *almost* the same. The Holy Spirit is *another* Counselor almost the same as Jesus. Jesus is the Counselor.

The disciples were feeling depressed, because Jesus had said He was going away (John 13:33, 36; John 14:2-5). So Jesus promised them that they would not be left as “orphans” (John 14:18, NIV). Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus would continue to be with them. The Holy Spirit would do the same things for them that Jesus did when He was on earth. Jesus’ promises about the Holy Spirit are really for people who have come after the disciples. They are the people who have come to believe through the words of the Gospels.<sup>5</sup> These people have not been with Jesus or with anyone who knew Jesus while He was on earth.

“Jesus was limited in human form. He could not be in every place in person. So He would go to the Father and send the Holy Spirit. Then no person could have an advantage because of where he or she lived or because he or she had known Jesus when He lived on earth. By the Holy Spirit, Jesus could be reached by all people. So Jesus would be nearer to them than if He had not gone to heaven.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.



**Jesus could not be everywhere all the time. But the Holy Spirit can be everywhere all the time.**

Jesus also calls the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of truth” (John 14:17). The person and work of the Holy Spirit are true and real. We can trust the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not guide us away from the truth about Jesus or the truth about ourselves. The truth about ourselves can be painful to hear. But the truth about ourselves is necessary for spiritual growth. Only people who are determined to follow and obey truth will receive the Holy Spirit (John 14:15, 16, 21). And how can we understand obedience without the commandments?

**Read John 14:21 again. Jesus says that people who keep His commandments are people who love Him. He says He will make Himself known to these people. How has Jesus made Himself known to you?**

<sup>5</sup>Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the Gospels. The gospel is the good news of salvation.

THURSDAY—MARCH 11

**THE PERFECT GUIDE (John 15:26, 27; John 16:7-15).**

**What work does the Holy Spirit have to do? John 15:26?**

**In what three areas does the Holy Spirit make people believe? John 16:8-11. What two parts of the Holy Spirit’s work are mentioned in John 16:13? How are God’s commandments connected to what John 16:8-11, 13 says about the Holy Spirit’s work? How are verses from yesterday’s lesson related to John 16:8-11, 13?**

Jesus does not need the Holy Spirit to glorify Him. The Father glorified Jesus when the Father honored and promoted Jesus to the right side of the heavenly throne. The work of the Holy Spirit is to honor and glorify Jesus on earth. All the miracles and examples of the Holy Spirit honor and glorify Jesus. The work of the Holy Spirit is very important. But His work is not good if it takes our attention away from Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is Jesus’ Successor<sup>6</sup> and Representative<sup>7</sup> with the disciples and the world. In a way the Holy Spirit can be said to “replace

(substitute for)” Jesus. The Holy Spirit carries over the presence of Jesus to new Christians who never knew Jesus in person. Jesus could no longer teach in person. But the Holy Spirit could be everywhere for Him. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus would continue to be glorified.

Jesus convinced people of their sins. He offered them righteousness (holiness) and warned them of the Judgment Day.<sup>8</sup> The Holy Spirit also convinces people of their sins, offers them righteousness, and warns them of the Judgment Day. Many people refused to accept Jesus when He was on earth. Many people refuse to accept Him today. But the Holy Spirit continues to convince people of sin. And people continue to hear Jesus’ voice through the voice of the Holy Spirit.

It is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus is made real in our lives. When people surrender to the guidance and comfort of the Holy Spirit and have a close relationship with Jesus, they feel close to God.

**If someone were to ask you how the Holy Spirit has touched your life, how would you answer? What does your answer say about your relationship with Jesus? What changes might you need in your relationship with Him?**

<sup>6</sup>successor—someone who comes after someone else. The Holy Spirit came after Jesus went back to heaven.

<sup>7</sup>representative—someone who acts for another. The Holy Spirit acts for Jesus.

<sup>8</sup>Judgment Day—when God will give people who did not accept Jesus their final punishment, and people who did accept Jesus their final reward.

FRIDAY—MARCH 12

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** “As people study the works of God, the Holy Spirit helps them to believe and accept God’s works. This belief does not come from reasoning. If the mind has not become too dark to know God, if the eye is not too dim to see Him, if the ear is not too dull to hear His voice, then through the Holy Spirit, a person can understand and accept the spiritual truths in the Bible.”  
—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Christ’s (Jesus’) Object Lessons*, p. 24



The Holy Spirit helps us believe as we study God’s works.

“It is difficult to accept the Holy Spirit when He tells us we must repent.<sup>9</sup> Many people feel separated from God, because they know they are slaves to self and sin. They may want to repent, but they do not crucify self. They do not surrender themselves fully to Jesus. They

do not try to ask for God’s power to do God’s will. They are not willing to be like Jesus. They admit they are not perfect. But they do not give up their favorite sins. With each sin the old selfish nature becomes stronger.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 48.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When Jesus said “ ‘I [Jesus] will do whatever you [the disciples] ask in my name’ ” (John 14:13, NIV), what do you think He meant by “whatever”? How then would you interpret John 15:7?
2. What happens to Christians when they lose a major spiritual leader or mentor?<sup>10</sup> What can a person do to find new ways of receiving spiritual strength? How much loyalty should we give to a person, no matter how much that person has guided us spiritually?

**SUMMARY:** In John 13–16, Jesus taught His disciples how to live without Him. When followers of Jesus show their desire for the truth through prayerful obedience to Jesus’ commands, the Holy Spirit of truth comes to them. The Holy Spirit (1) reminds us of Jesus’ words and teachings (John 14:26), (2) guides us into all truth (John 14:17), (3) tells us what we need to know about the future (John 16:13), and (4) glorifies Jesus on this earth (John 16:15). But to people who have refused to accept Jesus’ commands, the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, offers righteousness (holiness), and warns of judgment (John 15:8-11).

<sup>9</sup>repent—to say we are sorry for our sins and to want to stop sinning.

<sup>10</sup>mentor—a trusted counselor or guide.