

## Hear what the Breath says

An advocate is one that speaks in favor, support, or defense of another. The Gospel of John chapters 14-16 records Jesus Christ teaching His disciples about His coming advocacy at His Father's right hand: "And I will ask **the Father**, and he will give you another **advocate**" (Jhn 14:16 NIV); "But **the Advocate, the Holy Spirit [Breath]**" (Jhn 14:26 NIV); "When **the Advocate** comes, whom I will send to you from **the Father—the Spirit [Breath]** of truth" (Jhn 15:26 NIV); "Unless I go away, **the Advocate** will not come to you" (Jhn 16:7 NIV). He was speaking figuratively of Himself as the Breath, "Though I have been speaking figuratively" (Jhn 16:25 NIV).

After having been seated at the right hand of the Father, John affirmed that He is indeed our Advocate, "And if any man sin, we have **an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ** the righteous" (1Jo 2:1). Paul stated that He is the Breath, "Now the Lord is that Spirit **[Breath]**" (2Co 3:17). And Jesus Himself spoke to seven churches, calling Himself "the Breath" to each one, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what **the Spirit [Breath] saith** unto the churches" (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22).

The Breath of God is called "the Advocate" because the Breath was sent down from heaven by the Advocate on the Day of Pentecost. God breathes into the hearts of whomever the Son confesses before Him. Since we have God's Breath by Christ's advocacy, the Breath itself is equated metaphorically with the Advocate Himself.

Salvation or eternal life is bodily resurrection from the dead at Christ's return to never die again. The Son of God formed the first man from the ground and breathed life into him, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**; and man became a living soul" (Gen 2:7). And the Son of God will return for God to form our bodies from the ground again and quicken by breathing into them, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam **was made a quickening spirit [breath]**" (1Co 15:45).

The popular salvation message today is that we simply believe some facts about Jesus are true, then we'll go to heaven after we die. But there's no such teaching in Scripture about going to heaven. And salvation isn't about us believing but about the Lord advocating for us before God. We're forgiven and right with God only if

we're one of those for whom the Son is advocating at His right hand. Our salvation—resurrection by God's Breath at His return—depends upon His advocacy.

Immersion in water is immersion into His name—no longer living for our name but for His, "**Repent, and be baptized** every one of you **in the name of Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive **the gift of the Holy Ghost [Breath]**" (Act 2:38). It's committing ourselves to His name unto death and even to die as He died, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death?**" (Rom 6:3). Jesus commended three of the churches in Asia for upholding His name: "for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted" (Rev 2:3); "thou holdest fast my name" (Rev 2:13); "hast not denied my name" (Rev 3:8).

When we confess or advocate His name before men, He advocates ours before His Father, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Mat 10:32). But if we're ashamed of Him or the message He preached, He will be ashamed of us when He returns, "For whosoever shall be **ashamed of me and of my words**, of him shall **the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come** in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and of the holy angels" (Luk 9:26). Paul wasn't ashamed of His message, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom 1:16).

Christ gives us plenty of opportunities to be true to our commitment by advocating His name before men. He tests our faithfulness by putting us in situations where there's a conflict of interest—to either be unashamed of Him and do what's in His interest, or ashamed and do what's in our own interest, "that the **trying of your faith [faithfulness]** worketh patience" (Jas 1:3), "That the **trial of your faith [faithfulness]**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory **at the appearing of Jesus Christ**" (1Pe 1:7).

We can believe some facts are true till the cows come home but will perish if we're proven to be ashamed of His name. At the end of each of His seven messages to the churches, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what **the Spirit [Breath] saith** unto the churches," He was essentially saying, "If you hear anything, you had better hear what I, the Breath, am saying to you—I'm the one advocating for you and will make the final decision if God will breathe life into you when I return."