

# John 14

## Van Parunak

### Overview

This chapter should begin at 13:36, with Peter's question, followed by those of Thomas, Philip, and Judas. In each case,

- a disciple asks a question that picks up on some minutia of the previous statement,
- the Lord speaks first to the disciple who asked the question,
- then moves from singular (“thou” or “he”) to plural (“you”) to draw a more general lesson.

These questions pick up and develop the themes introduced in ch. 13, in reverse order.

- The last theme in ch. 13 was the Lord's departure to heavenly glory. Peter asks about this, and the Lord explains that he is preparing a way for Peter to share in this glory.
- The second theme in ch. 13 was Judas' betrayal. The questions by Thomas and Philip contribute to this: to Thomas the Lord makes clear the division between those on the Way and those who do not find it, and to Philip he introduces the teaching of the Comforter, whose role is to help us in our daily struggle with the world.
- The first theme in ch. 13 was the Lord's loving service to his disciples, as an example of how they were to love one another. Judas question deals with the special relation that we have with the Lord, and the answer emphasizes the Lord's love for us. (But note also the emphasis on the world in this section.)

(This might be a good place to review the handout.)

### 13: 36-14:4, Peter: Where are you going?

Peter's question is the first, and deals with the third of the topics that the Lord introduced in the first part of ch. 13, his immanent departure to be with the Father. He told them that he would only be with them a little while longer, and Simon asks for more detail.

#### ***13:36a, Peter's Question***

**Lord, whither goest thou?**—The Lord had called Peter, with the rest, “little children” (33), and Peter's response shows the aptness of this description. He does not focus on the issue of loving other Christians, but is preoccupied with the announcement of the Lord's departure, and wants to know all of the details.

When the Lord first announced to the Jews that he was leaving (7:33, 34), they asked the same question (7:35, “whither will he go?”) But note the difference. They asked “among themselves.” Peter asked the Lord directly. The believer often has the same questions and doubts that the unbeliever has, but the difference is that he goes directly to the Lord for the answers.

The Lord first responds to Peter personally, then broadens his response to include the other disciples.

#### ***13:36b-38, Response to Peter personally***

**thou canst not follow me now.**—The Lord speaks of his coming death and departure from this world.

Not only *will* Peter not follow him there at this time, he *cannot*. It is impossible, for it is not God's purpose. This ought to have been an encouragement to Peter when he was challenged to confess Jesus in 18:17.

**thou shalt follow me afterwards.**—But Peter's time would come, and in fact the Lord says more about it when he “signif[ies] by what death he should glorify God” in 21:18-19.

**37 why cannot I follow thee now?**—Again, we hear the voice of a small child. “I want to come too. Why can't I come?”

**I will lay down my life for thy sake.**—Peter's language is precocious. Twice he has heard the Lord say, using exactly these words, that as the good shepherd, he will lay down his life for the sake of the sheep (10:11, 15), and John uses this expression in 1 John 3:16 to summarize the Lord's work. So on the one hand he has the direction backwards. It is the Lord who needs to die for the sheep, not the other way around. Peter cannot bear the sins of the Lord Jesus. Jesus must bear his sins.

But the expression appears one other time in the Bible, also in John, at 15:13, where laying down one's life for the sake of one's friends is a mark of the greatest love. Christ's death for us signifies redemption toward God, but also love toward us. As redemption, it is something we cannot do for others. But as love, it sets the highest example of love.

So far, the Lord has only used the expression of the sacrifice of the shepherd for the sheep, and so it is probably in this sense that Peter means the expression. He is going to protect the Lord. The Lord gently corrects this presumptuous boast.

**38 Jesus answered him.**—The Lord rebukes Peter for his proud boast.

**Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?**—Will this really come to pass? Will you have the strength of character to carry out that which you have proudly boasted?

In fact, the Lord's prophecy in 21:18,19 shows that Peter did die for the Lord, but only after he had been severely humbled. His words here suggest that he can, in his own strength, die for the Lord. He does not sufficiently appreciate his own frailty and weakness. His claim sounds powerful, but only makes his failure all the more striking.

**Verily, verily, I say unto thee.**—This introduction to Jesus' words is found only in John, where it appears 25 times. But we are told more than 60 times that “Jesus answered” or “Jesus said,” and only ten of these are marked with these words. These words single something out as meriting special attention. For example,

- 3:3, “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”
- 5:24, “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.
- 6:47, “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

So it is particularly noteworthy that he introduces a rebuke to Peter in these words.

**The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.**—Far from defending the Lord, Peter will in fact deny him.

## **14:1-4, Response to the Group**

Note the Lord's shift from “thou” to “your.” The chapter break is unfortunate. He is still dealing with the same question, “Where are you going?” (13:36), and now he actually gives an answer.

**14:1 Let not your heart be troubled.**—Though Peter was the first to voice concern over the Lord's announcement of his departure, surely the others were disturbed as well. And when they heard the Lord predict Peter's denial, they would be further upset, for his aggressive and vocal nature made him a natural leader of the group. If the Lord is about to leave, and Peter about to abandon the little group, what hope can they have? In accepting Jesus as the Messiah, they have been put out of the synagogue (9:22). If he leaves, they will be spiritually adrift.

Their hearts are troubled, like the raging sea, the same word used to describe the Lord facing the death of Lazarus (11:33), or his own coming passion (12:27), or Judas' betrayal (13:21). As the man of sorrows, it was his place to be troubled—but he accepted this burden in order to deliver them, and he does not want them to suffer unnecessarily. The tense of the verb suggests that we should translate, “stop worrying.” They are already troubled; he would have them turn from their trouble.

**ye believe in God, believe also in me.**—The remedy to their trouble is to trust in God and in his Son. Abstract trust in God alone is not enough. It was never written of him that he “bare our griefs and carried our sorrows” (Isa 53). For that, we need to understand the work of the Lord Jesus, and refuse to pay again the price that he has already borne for us.

The comparison with believing in God is to remind them that their faith does not depend on his immediate presence. All their lives, as godly Jews, they have believed in God, though they never saw him. Now they must repose on him in the same way, even after he departs.

**2 In my Father's house.**—What is this “Father's house” of which he speaks? (See Notes)

Many people understand the “Father's house” as heaven. The Lord is going back to heaven to prepare a place for believers, and will come to take them back to heaven with himself. This interpretation rests on the description of heaven as God's “dwelling place,” as in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8:30, 39, 43, 49) and elsewhere (Psa 33:14; 123:1). But it falters on two observations.

1. Though heaven is God's *dwelling place*, the Bible nowhere calls heaven God's *house*. In fact, the point of Solomon's prayer, and many other passages related to it, is to contrast God's dwelling place (heaven) with his house (the temple).
2. Conversely, the phrase “house of God” (128x) or “house of the Lord” (213x) consistently and repeatedly refers to the sanctuary, and mostly to the tabernacle, Solomon's temple, or Ezra's rebuilt temple. Strikingly, the Lord Jesus uses this exact same phrase, “my Father's house,” in 2:16 in reference to the temple in Jerusalem.

People are perhaps reluctant to associate “my Father's house” with the temple because the temple has been destroyed, and has no place in NT worship. But the NT writers use the temple as a metaphor for the church:

- 1 Tim 3:15, But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.
- 1 Pet 4:17, For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?
- Ephesians 2:19-22 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; <sup>20</sup> And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; <sup>21</sup> In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: <sup>22</sup> In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.
- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God

dwelleth in you? <sup>17</sup> If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

- 2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

We can paraphrase the Lord's encouragement to them, thus: "You are fearful of being without spiritual support once I leave, because the temple has cast you out. But my Father's true house will never cast you out. I will replace the old Jewish temple with a far better one, the church, in which you will be secure."

**are many mansions.**—The word actually means "dwellings, lodgings," and does not necessarily imply an opulent house. Usage is of little help to understand this term, which appears in the NT only here and in v.23. But once we recognize the "Father's house" as a reference to the temple, the interpretation seems clear. 1 Kings 6:5ff records that Solomon built three stories of side rooms around the exterior of the holy place. Josephus (Antiquities 8.65-66) records that there were 30 on each level, or 90 in all, probably following the blueprint for the restoration temple in Ezek 41:5-7. Jer 35:4; 36:10 shows that these chambers were used as lodgings for key temple personnel. Neh 13:4-9 records their abuse in being assigned to an ungodly person, and their alternative use for storing offerings (also 12:44).

We can continue our paraphrase along the following lines:

"Do not be fearful that on my departure you will be excluded from spiritual fellowship. Trust in me as you trust in God. The temple, after all, is my Father's house, not the Pharisee's. It has many chambers. Currently they are occupied by the priestly hierarchy, whose rejection you fear. But I am going to prepare for you a temple far more elegant, with far more chambers, where you may dwell, and from which they will be excluded."

Heb vocabulary: *li\$kah* Neh 13:5 = *ni\$kah* v.7. Ezek 41:6 *cela*(, also 1 K 6:5.

**if it were not so, I would have told you.**—I would not leave you spiritual orphans. I would not lead you to the point where the temple rejects you, only to abandon you.

**I go to prepare a place for you.**—We naturally understand this "place" to be the "chambers" of the "temple." As we saw in Timothy, Peter, Ephesians, and Corinthians, the NT writers view the church as a temple, built up of the believers. Eph 2:11-22 in particular explains how our Lord has "prepared" this "place" (another example of Paul's drawing on John?)

- 2:12, like Tobiah, we were estranged from the privileges of fellowship with God, and had no right to a dwelling place in the temple.
- 13-17, by his death, Jesus has reconciled us to God. Nehemiah corrected the problem with Sanballat by casting him out and purifying the chambers. Christ corrected our problem by purifying us.
- vv. 18, 22 both refer to the role of the Spirit in establishing us as God's temple, and that was only possible because the Lord returned to the Father and asked him to send the comforter, John 14:16.

**3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself.**—There are two promises here, not one.

1. This place that he is preparing is for their immediate sustenance. It will provide for them during his absence (and has, now, for 2000 years), but it will not replace his physical presence.
2. He will one day return to bring them into his personal presence. Note that he does not say, "I

will come again and take you to that place,” but “I will come again and receive you unto myself.” The place is the church, and we enjoy that now. His return is something further.

**that where I am, there ye may be also.**—Here is the purpose of his return—not taking us to heaven, but bringing us into his presence.

**4 And whither I go ye know.**—He had told the Jews in 7:33, “I go unto him that sent me.” This is the seed teaching that grows into the repetitions in 8:21 and then 13:33, the saying that initiated this whole discussion. It is the Father whose justice he must satisfy by his sacrifice. It is the Father whom he must petition for the Holy Spirit.

**and the way ye know.**—There are two possible meanings here.

1. He must go to the Father through death. In 12:32 and 8:28, he had spoken of being “lifted up.” The synoptics remind us that no less than three times, on his way to Jerusalem, he had foretold his coming execution (e.g., Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34).
2. But in the sequel, he places more emphasis on what he has revealed when he said, “I will come again and receive you unto myself.” The way that they can go wherever he goes, is by cleaving to him. Reaching his destination is like our trip over the Jordan River: if you get on the bus, and the bus crosses the river, you make it across the river. If we are in Christ, we are with him wherever he goes.

## 5-7, Thomas: Where are you Going?

This question, with Philip's following, focuses on the theme of the believer's relation with the world of unbelievers. The response to Thomas's question emphasizes the fact of the difference, while the response to Philip's introduces the role of the Comforter in sustaining believers in a hostile world.

### 5, Thomas' Question

**5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not ...**—Respectfully, Thomas complains that he knows neither of the things that the Lord has said in v. 4 they should know. He repeats Peter's question (“whither thou goest”), and adds the additional detail that the Lord raises (“the way”).

### 6, Personal Response

**6 Jesus saith unto him.**—As before, the response begins to Thomas personally. The Lord answers both of Thomas' questions, twice over, once in the first half of his response, and once in the second, in chiasmic order.

## How can we know the way?

The Lord's initial and final words answer this directly:

**I am the way.**—Compare his words in 10:7,9, “I am the door.” He is the road, the path. Identity with him is the only way to get where they want to go.

**no man cometh ... but by me.**—This is the answer to Thomas' question about the way. The only way to the Father is by (*dia* + genitive, “through”) Jesus. He is the way.

This statement also points up the exclusiveness of Jesus as the way. He is not only the way, he is the only way. Those who do not come through him, cannot reach the goal. In fact, this is implicit in the use

of the article with the three titles in the first half of the verse. He is not a way, a truth, a life, but the way, the truth, the life. Zerwick article 178: “all other forms of truth or light or life pale into insignificance and as it were lose their title to be called by those names, before that Truth and light and Life which Christ is.”

This exclusiveness is the motive for associating this response of the Lord with the topic of the believer in the world. Throughout the gospel, we have seen a growing division between unbelievers and the Lord Jesus. Here it all comes to a head. He is the only way to God, and those who are not on the way are therefore lost.

**I am the truth.**—We should understand this title in connection with “the way.” In the Old Testament, and particularly for David, “the truth” characterized how one should conduct oneself. It was like the light shining on the way. Compare especially

- 1 Kings 2:4 That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their **way**, to walk before me in **truth** with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.
- Psalm 86:11 Teach me thy **way**, O LORD; I will walk in thy **truth**:
- Psalm 119:30 I have chosen the **way** of **truth**:

So the Lord sets himself forth not only as the unique path that leads to God, but also as the standard that directs our travel along this path.

Just as “I am the way” echoes “I am the door,” “I am the truth” echoes “I am the light of the world,” 8:12.

## **We know not whither thou goest.**

This time the second half contains the most direct answer to this question:

**unto the Father.**—This is the answer to Thomas' question about “whither thou goest.” He is going to the Father, and that is where they should desire to follow him.

**I am the life.**—Like “truth,” “life” is to be understood in connection with “way,” following OT examples. David and his son Solomon frequently talk about “the way [path] of life,” *Jr*x Prov 2:19; 5:6; 15:24; *drk* Prov 6:23; 10:17; cf. Jer 21:8. In this expression, “life” indicates the destination to which the road leads, just as in literal expressions such as “the way of Ephrath” (Gen 48:7), “the way of the Red Sea” (Num 21:4), “the way of the wilderness” (Josh 8:15). Cf. Plymouth Road, Ann Arbor Trail.

The Lord may have in mind specifically Psa 16:11, “Thou wilt shew me the **path** of **life**: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.” This reference would be particularly appropriate since v. 10 is a prophecy of the resurrection.

The Lord speaks of the goal as “the Father” and “the life.” These are closely identified in Psa 16:11. The OT often speaks of the Father as the source of life:

- Psalm 36:9 “For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.”
- Jeremiah 2:13 God calls himself “the fountain of living waters”

Once again, the Lord is drawing on previous “I am” claims, this time to his statement that “I am ... the life” at the tomb of Lazarus in 11:25.

Proverbs 10:17 captures all three elements of the Lord's claim: “He *is in* the **way** of [to] **life** that keepeth **instruction**: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.”

The warning in this Proverb about those who refuse reproof reinforces the Lord's words to Thomas, "No man cometh ... but by me." Or as Jeremiah 21:8 puts it, "Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death." The Lord brings, not peace, but a sword (Matt 10:34), a division between those who receive him and those who reject him.

## **7, Response to the Group**

Thomas wants to know the way and the goal. To him personally, the Lord says, "no man cometh unto the Father" (the goal) "but by me" (the way). Now he repeats this to the group as a whole:

**7 If ye had known me.**—This statement rearticulates Jesus as the way.

**ye should have known my Father also.**—This statement repeats that knowing the Father is the goal. This is why he can describe the goal of their journey as both "com[ing] unto the Father" and himself as "the life." Knowing them the essence of eternal life, 17:3.

The overall sentence is a contrary-to-fact condition, which assumes that they have not previously known him. In spite of other translations (which rest on a different textual base), this reading is to be preferred. We see from v.9 how shallow their knowledge still is at this point. Compare 8:19 and 16:3, which teach that the Jews did not know him or the Father. The disciples started out no better off than the Jews.

**from henceforth.**—Their present state of ignorance is about to come to an end. Strictly speaking, their illumination is still future, as Philip's following question shows, but keep in mind the Lord's attitude in 13:31. He views his glorification as accomplished, and describes the state of affairs that he will achieve through his sacrifice as though it were already in place. v. 20 shows that in fact it is still future, awaiting the coming of the Spirit.

**ye know him, and have seen him.**—14:23 shows how the change takes place, with the coming of the HS, 14:16-20.

## **8-21, Philip: Show us the Father**

The response to Thomas highlighted the division between the world and the believers, those who come to the Father by way of the Son, and those who seek some other way. Now Philip picks up on the Lord's statement about knowing the Father, and in response the Lord amplifies this distinction.

### **8, Philip's Question**

**Philip.**—Philip is the Lord's fourth disciple, after Andrew, John, and Peter (1:43). Some were brought by others, but the Lord proactively sought him out. The Lord called him immediately after his baptism, before he returned to Galilee. He is the one to whom the Lord addressed the question of how to feed the 5000 in 6:5, and it was to him that the Greeks came in 12:21 with their desire to see Jesus. He seems to have been of some stature among the Twelve.

**Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.**—Just as Thomas questioned the Lord's statement that they knew where and how he was going, so Philip questions the Lord's claim in v.7, "Ye have seen him." Impatiently, Philip responds, "No, we haven't."

In itself, the desire to see God is a noble one. The heart of Eden's curse was being shut out of the garden, away from the Lord's presence, and many OT saints were marked by their visions of God. Some saw him directly:

- Moses, at the burning bush (Exod 3:6 ) and again on Mount Sinai (33:20, 23—only God's back parts)
- Manoah and his wife (Judg 13:21-22)

Others saw him in a vision:

- Jacob, Gen 32:30
- David, Psa 63:3
- Micaiah, 1 Kings 22:19
- Isaiah, Isa 6:1
- Ezekiel, Ezek 1:28

Compare the Psalmist's desire,

Psa 17:15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

So Philip's desire is appropriate. It should be enough for any of us to see the Lord. His shortcoming is not realizing that in the Lord Jesus, he already enjoyed this privilege!

### **9-10a, Personal Response**

**Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?**—The Lord's disappointment perhaps reflects his choice of Philip and the care he has invested in his training. Yet it is often the case that those who seem to have had ample time to learn, yet remain in surprising ignorance. Compare the frustration expressed by the author of Hebrews,

5:11-12, Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

**he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.**—Compare 12:45, “he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.” Throughout the gospel, the Lord has been emphasizing that he ministers on behalf of the Father, on the Father's authority. Looking back, John summarizes this relationship in 1:18, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.” Philip has failed to grasp the depth of the identity between the Lord Jesus and the Father.

**how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?**—A rather sharp rebuke. This is how Abimelech rebuked Isaac for trying to pass off Rebekah as his sister in Gen 26:9, and how Paul rebuked those who deny the resurrection in 1 Cor 15:12.

**10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?**—The Lord had already stated this relationship in 10:38 to the Jews. Philip wasn't listening.

Note the echoes in 9-10, and indeed throughout the upper room discourse, of our Lord's earlier teachings to the Jews. The truth hasn't changed, but now he is providing more context for it in instructing the disciples.

### **10b-21, Response to the Group**

Once again, the Lord shifts from singular “thou” to plural “you.” The argument has three sections:



- 10-11, reminder of his unity with the Father, manifested in his words and works
- 12-14, promise to the believer of powerful works and words
- 15-21, promise to the obeyer of the Holy Spirit, bringing unity with the Lord

Both of these promises support his claim of unity with the Father by showing how the nature of unity, in their future union with him. In effect, he says, “he that has seen you, has seen me.”

## 10b-11, His Unity with the Father

**the words ... the works.**—The rest of v. 10 *denies* that his *words* come from *himself*, and *affirms* that his *works* come from the *Father*. We are left to fill in the blanks, that his works are not from himself, and that his words are from the Father. 8:28 completes the matrix:

		Substance	
		Words	Works
Origin	Not from Son	14:10 the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself	8:28 I do nothing of myself
	But from Father	8:28 as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.	14:10 the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works

The bottom line is that everything he does, word and work, is not the expression of himself, but of the Father.

This twofold emphasis on words and works becomes the basis of his claim:

**11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me.**—That is, believe my words in 10:38, in which I stated this to be the case. Note the shift in verb from v. 10: “believest” is singular, but “believe” is plural.

**or else believe me for the very works' sake.**—This was in fact the argument that he gave the Jews in 10:38:

John 10:37-38 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

Thus he is challenging them to show their distinction from the Jews by acknowledging what the Jews denied, his unity with the Father.

## 12-14, Promise to the believer

**12 Verily, verily.**—This seems to mark a strong division.

**He that believeth on me.**—This and the next section each begin with a condition that sets them apart from the world. In this case, the condition is believing on him.

The promise involves both the believer's works and his words, and in both cases depends on the Lord's intervention.

First we consider the believer's works. These are of two kinds: those similar to the Lord's miracles, and those of a greater degree.

**the works that I do shall he do also.**—In the book of Acts we find the disciples raising the dead, healing the sick, and casting out demons, the same kinds of works that the Lord did. In fact, we don't have to wait for Acts. According to Luke 10:17, they had already done works of the same kind as he did.

**greater works than these shall he do.**—Some commentators explain “greater” as “more numerous.” But it seems the Lord has a qualitative difference in mind. The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost ushered in an era of far greater miracles than the disciples had seen.

Consider in particular the work of conversion. The Lord's rebuke to Philip reflects his frustration at the limits of what he could do with his disciples in the era before the coming of the Spirit. But after Pentecost, not only were these disciples transformed, but they were able to be the channel for transforming the lives of those to whom they preached. The spirituality that they produced in their converts was far greater than what the Lord accomplished in his. This is not to belittle what the Lord did, but simply to recognize the impact of the gift of the Spirit, which he will detail in the next section.

**because I go unto my Father.**—He is anticipating v. 16, and 16:7. The Spirit cannot come until he returns to the Father, and it is the Spirit's coming that will make these “greater works” possible.

Now he turns from their works to their words, in a chiasmic promise that surrounds the purpose with the promise.

**13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.**—Their words will be powerful. They have the ability to make requests in the Lord's name.

It is important to remember what it means to ask for something “in my name.” The promise is not simply that adding the words, “in Jesus' name,” to the end of a prayer guarantees that it will be granted. As often, there are biblical parallels that help us understand the meaning of the expression.

- When Jezebel sought to secure the vineyard of Naboth for Ahab, “she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed *them* with his seal” (1 Kings 21:8)
- When Haman persuaded Ahasuerus to slay the Jews, “in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring” (Est 3:12)
- When Esther reversed Haman's action, Mordecai “wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed *it* with the king's ring” (Est 8:10) (cf. v.8).

To write something “in the king's name” is to write it on his behalf, as though it came from him. In every case such a letter is sealed with the king's seal—effectively, signed by him. All of us in business have had the experience of writing something for the boss to sign, giving expression to his desires.

Here the Lord is giving us permission to approach the Father on his behalf, signing our prayers with his name. To do this, we must be sure that what we are asking is something that the Lord would ask. The promise to those who pray “in my name” is thus the same as the promise in 1 John 5:14 to those who ask “according to his will.”

**that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**—Here is the foundation for this promise. By his obedience, the Son has earned glory from the Father. He now gives us the right to lay claim to that glory, to come to the Father and plead the merits of the Son.

**14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.**—A chiasmic repetition of 13a, marking the unity of this segment as dealing with the believer's words, alongside the promise concerning our works in v. 12.

What does the promise of 12-14 have to do with the unity of the Son with the Father? Both the works that they will do and the power of the words that they will utter are derived from the Son's relation to

the Father. They can do the works only “because I go unto my Father,” and their prayers will be heard “that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” The Son can grant these blessings to us because he is one with the Father. That unity is manifested not only by his words and works, but by ours as well.

There is a deeper implication in this promise as well. In 10:38, he claimed that his works showed his unity with the Father (“the Father is in me, and I in him”). What conclusion, then, should we draw from his promise that we will do greater works than his? These works show our unity with the Father as well, and he will make this explicit in climax of the next promise, in v. 20.

We must speak reverently and cautiously here. Our Lord is one with the Father on two levels. As the eternal Word, he *is* God (1:1; 20:28). As the Messiah, a man empowered by God's Spirit (Isa 42:1), he is *in* the Father, and the Father in him. It is amazing and humbling to contemplate that we participate in this second aspect of divine unity, as v. 20 will make clear. But the distinctive language of 1:1 is never applied to us, and the NT writers clearly see the Lord's deity as something above, and distinct from, our union with him (cf. the pervasive use of “Lord” as his title). So it would be wrong to conclude either that we participate in the first unity, or that the second unity is all that there is to the deity of our Lord.

## 15-21, Promise to the Obeyer

Again, we have a condition, followed by a promise. This time the sequence is repeated in a summary at the end of the paragraph. The promise now shows us what lies behind the power granted to us in the previous section. By going to the Father, he will procure for us the Holy Spirit. The culmination of this section is v. 20, which promises us the same reciprocal indwelling that characterizes our Lord's union with the Father.

### 15-20, Detail

**15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.**—Now the condition is love for him, as demonstrated in obedience.

**16 And I will pray the Father.**—Like the promises about our works and our words in 12-14, this promise also depends on his relation with the Father. The Spirit is given to us on the Son's request.

**and he shall give you another Comforter.**—We should pay attention to two words in this promise.

- Greek has two words that are often translated “another.” One, *heteros*, emphasizes the contrast between two things, and might better be rendered “different.” The other, used here, recognizes that the things are numerically distinct, but not incompatible. Compare Paul's use of the two terms in Gal 1:6,7, where he describes another *heteros* Gospel that is not another *allos*, that is, not just distinct, but conflicting. The Comforter whom the Lord promises is an additional comforter to the Lord. Thus we see the distinction of the Spirit from the Son within the tri-unity of Father, Son, and Spirit.
- He is called a “comforter.” We would be more likely to translate the word today as “advocate” or “representative” in the legal sense. It describes one person who represents another. John is the only NT writer to use this title, and he uses it of two individuals.
  - Here, the Holy Spirit as our *paraklhtos* defends us from Satan's opposition in the world, before unbelievers. He is the Father's representative to us, strengthening and guiding us.
  - In 1 John 2:1, the Lord Jesus as our *paraklhtos* defends us from Satan's accusations in the heavenly courtroom, before the Father. He is our representative in heaven's court.

**that he may abide with you for ever.**—The Spirit's ministry is eternal. He will never leave us. This is

why he can serve as “the earnest of our inheritance,” Eph 1:14.

**17 Even the Spirit of truth.**—So-called because he guides us into the knowledge of the truth, 16:13. Just as Jesus is the truth and the life, so his Spirit is the Spirit of truth (here) and the Spirit of Life (Rom 8:2).

**whom the world cannot receive.**—Compare Paul's statement in 1 Cor 2:14,

the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

Though the verb is different (*lambanw* here, *dexomai* in 1 Cor), the concept is the same. See additional note. The difference in verb is due to a general preference between John and Paul.

Paul's words echo the two following clauses as well:

**because it seeth him not.**—Cf. Paul's “spiritually discerned.” The world cannot perceive him. As with the wind in ch. 3, they may see the result of his actions, but do not attribute them to him.

**neither knoweth him.**—Cf. Paul's “neither can he know them.” If they cannot see the Spirit, they certainly cannot have any understanding of him.

**but ye know him.**—Given what we have read of them so far, we may doubt this, but he goes on to explain:

**for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**—This is a central text for the change in the Spirit's operation with the new covenant.

- The first clause describes the Spirit's operations under the Old Covenant: he was *with* God's people. He is often spoken of as being upon someone, whether a lawgiver (Moses, Num 11:17), or a judge (Gideon, Judg 6:34), or a king (Saul, 1 Sam 10:10), or a prophet (Isaiah in 59:21), or even the Messiah (Isa 42:1). In the OT, pagan kings might speak of God's spirit being in someone (Pharaoh of Joseph in Gen 41:38; Belshazzar of Daniel in 5:14), but the biblical writers themselves carefully avoid such an attribution.<sup>1</sup> Apparently, as the Lord's disciples, the eleven partook of this imposition of the Spirit. If they knew the OT, they should recognize that there is a Spirit of God who works with men.
- But the promise of the new covenant is that “I will put my spirit *within* you,” Ezek 36:27. This they have not yet experienced, but will on the day of Pentecost.

**18 I will not leave you comfortless.**—Literally, “orphaned.” He continues the metaphor of himself as their parent that he began in 13:33 when he called them “little children.”

**I will come to you.**—To what does this coming refer? There are three candidates.

- 14:3 promised a coming at which he would receive his disciples to himself, so that they would never be separate from him again. That must be his return to earth at the end of this age.
- It is unlikely that this is a reference to that coming, since otherwise we would be orphans throughout this age, and we are certainly not depicted that way in the rest of the NT. It might refer to his resurrection appearances. Certainly, he often told his disciples of his coming resurrection. Yet it seems strange to introduce that here, when his focus has been on the coming of the Spirit.
- We will see a third coming of the Lord, distinct from either of these, in 14:23. Since the Spirit

---

<sup>1</sup> One possible exception is Num 27:18 of Joshua, “a man in whom is the spirit,” but *ruax* here is anarthrous, as in Josh 2:11; 5:1, and probably refers to courage, per Milgrom on Numbers.

that indwells us is both the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God, his presence in us amounts to the dwelling of the Father and the Son with us.

Commentators go back and forth over whether this refers to the resurrection, or to the coming of the Spirit. Alford and Westcott seem to be on the right track when they observe that both here and in v.3, “come” is not future, but present, which emphasizes a continuing, ongoing activity. “I am coming to you, in my resurrection, in the giving of the Spirit, at the end of the age. Far from being orphaned, your whole experience will be one of my continual coming to you.” The following verses in particular combine allusions to the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit.

The next three statements deal with three verbs that describe the effect of his coming. Each of these verbs refers to more than one of the phases of his coming:

	Resurrection	Pentecost	Parousia
<b>See</b>	<b>Eye-witness encounters with the disciples:</b> 1 Cor 15:4-8 (repeatedly, “he was <b>seen</b> ”)	<b>Overcoming spiritual blindness,</b> 2 Cor 4:3-6 ; 2 Cor 3:18 “we all, with open face <b>beholding</b> as in a glass the glory of the Lord;”; 1 Cor 13:12 “now we <b>see</b> through a glass, darkly”; Acts 7:55 “he, being full of the Holy Ghost, ... <b>saw</b> ... Jesus standing on the right hand of God”	<b>Full vision of Jesus:</b> 1 John 3:2 “we shall <b>see</b> him as he is,” 1 Cor 13:12 “now we <b>see</b> through a glass, darkly, but then face to face”.
<b>Live</b>	?	<b>HS baptism into the body of Christ:</b> Romans 6:3 so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ... 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also <i>in the likeness of his resurrection:</i>	<b>Resurrection/Transformation:</b> 1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be <b>made alive</b> . 1Co 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Col 3:3 For ye are dead, and your <b>life</b> is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, <i>who is our life</i> , shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.
<b>Know</b>	<b>Rekindled belief:</b> Jn 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: (But not of mutual indwelling of Father and Son)	<b>Spiritual knowledge:</b> 2 Cor 4:6 God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to <i>give</i> the light of the <b>knowledge</b> of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 13:12 “now I <b>know</b> in part”	<b>Full knowledge:</b> 1 Cor 13:12 ... then shall I <b>know</b> even as also I am <b>known</b> .

**19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more.**—As he prophesied in 8:21 to the Jews.

**but ye see me.**—At first glance, this seems contrary to 13:33, which stated that they would face the same frustration as the Jews in seeking him and not finding him. But 16:16 resolves the issue:

A little while, and ye shall not see me [per 13:33, like the Jews]: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

Both the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit qualify for “a little while.” None of the resurrection appearances were to unbelievers. All were to his followers. Similarly, the experience of the Spirit is restricted to believers (Rom 8:9).

16:16 explains the reason that they will see him: “because I go to the Father.” In comparison with 14:12 and 16:7, this focuses our attention on Pentecost, and guards against understanding the coming purely of the resurrection.

**because I live, ye shall live also.**—This phrase is central to understanding the Lord's work for us. We are saved by participating in his experience. We are dead with him, buried with him, and now alive with him. This may be the source of Paul's concepts in Rom 6:8 and context. John has already anticipated this in 6:57, which in turn lays the foundation for the next verse:

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

This verse has suggested to some commentators that the Lord's promise "I am coming to you" is focused on the resurrection. But the means by which we share in his resurrection is our baptism by the Spirit into his body, as Rom 6 makes clear. And in fact, it is difficult to think of any place where the Lord's resurrection alone leads to life for the disciples. So once again, the advent of the Spirit together is included in his promise, "I am coming to you."

This verse compares the sharing of life between the Father and the Son with the sharing of life between the Son and his people. The same parallel is developed in the next verse, and elsewhere in John:

**20 At that day, ye shall know.**—What day is in view? Again, it is difficult to restrict this to the resurrection. Their apprehension was still limited, until the Spirit came 49 days later. It was resurrection plus Pentecost, not the resurrection alone, that empowered them to bear witness to the risen Lord.

**that I am in my Father.**—Not only is Jesus in the Father, but the Father is in him (17:21, "thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee").

**and ye in me, and I in you.**—Thus the same relation exists between us and the Lord Jesus as between him and the Father. Symbolically, Father:Son::Son:Believers. Earlier (10:38; 14:11), the Lord taught that he and the Father were "in" one another. Now he brings the believers into that union of mutual indwelling.

This idea that our relation with the Lord mirrors his with the Father is a powerful and persistent theme in John. It applies to five relationships: Unity (here), Life, Mission, Glory, and Love (see notes for further detail). Here is one verse for each of the other four.

Life, 6:57 As the living Father hath sent me, and **I live by the Father**: so he that eateth me, **even he shall live by me**.

Mission, 20:21 as *my Father hath sent me*, even so **send I you**.

Glory, 17:22 And the glory which **thou gavest me I have given them**

Love, John 15:10 If **ye keep my** commandments, ye shall **abide in my** love; even as **I have kept my Father's** commandments, and **abide in his** love.

For now, we focus on the relationship of being in one another. This is apparently the source for Paul's notion of being "in Christ." Once again, John (who probably writes later than Paul) is concerned to show that Paul's doctrine is based in the earthly teachings of Christ (which came before Paul). Paul often speaks of the believer as being "in Christ" (repeatedly in Eph 1), and also recognizes that "Christ in you" is "the hope of glory" (Col 1:27).

This indwelling is the relationship in view here, and it is taught also in ch 17, where it is linked with the notion of unity:

17:21 That they all may be one; as **thou, Father, art in me**, and **I in thee**, that **they also may be one in us**:

17:22 that they may be one, even as we are one: 23 **I in them**, and **thou in me**.

This concept is developed in several ways in Scripture.

- The Lord will explain this notion of being “in” one another more fully in the next chapter, where he will illustrate it with the relation between a vine and a branch of the vine.
- Later, in Ephesians 5, Paul uses the “one flesh” relationship of man and wife to describe our union with Christ, inspired by God's declaration in Gen 2:24, based on the creation of woman from man's rib, that “the two shall be one flesh.”
- This concept is the basis of the very graphic metaphor of the church as the body of Christ in 1 Cor 12, with one person being the hand, another the foot, and so forth.

## **21, Summary**

Now he summarizes 15-20 by repeating the condition and the promise.

**21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.**—This is the condition, love demonstrated by obedience.

Note that it is not enough just to have his commandments. It is a great spiritual privilege to have God's word. Many churches devote great attention to the purity of their doctrine, and this is important. But in itself, it is not enough. Cf. 13:17, “if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

**and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.**—As we love Christ, so he and the Father love us, leading to his manifestation of himself to us, a reference once again to his continual coming to his people, first in the resurrection, then in the sending of the Spirit, and ultimately in the Parousia.

Let's draw this back to Philip's question, “Show us the Father,” and paraphrase the response.

1. 10b-11, he who has seen me has seen the Father, because we are in one another, as my words and works make clear.
2. 12-14, this union that I enjoy with the Father is important for you. It is the basis on which I will enable you to do greater works than I do, and to speak authoritative words as I do.
3. In fact, just as my words and works show my union with the Father, your words and works will show your union with the Father and me.

“Philip, your desire to see the Father is fulfilled in me. Now the time has come for other people's desire to see me to be fulfilled in you. Do you remember those Greeks who came to you, wanting to see me? You and Andrew got so tangled up in questions of protocol that their desire went unfulfilled. But now the time has come for you to satisfy men's hunger to see me, even as I satisfy your hunger to see the Father. He who has seen me has seen the Father. In the same way, he who has seen you, has seen me.”

## **22-30, Judas: Nature of Private Manifestation**

**Judas ... not Iscariot.**—Probably the one who in the synoptics is called Lebbaeus or Thaddeus. “Judas” is the Greek form of the common Hebrew name “Judah.”

The theme of this section is the personal fellowship we enjoy with the Lord. Thus it takes us back to the first main theme of the Discourse, the one illustrated in the foot-washing.

## **22, Judas' Question**

As with the previous questions, this one grows directly out of what the Lord has just said (vv. 19, 21).

**Lord.**—Like the other questioners, he marks his question with respect.

The question has two aspects.

**how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us.**—What is the manner, the mechanism, of this manifestation to be? Will we see a vision? Will you send us a dream? Will you come physically and stand before us, as the Angel of the Lord did in the OT?

**and not unto the world?**—The Lord had said that he would manifest himself only to those who show their love of him by obedience. Judas recognizes that the rest are the world. What is the nature of their exclusion?

### **23-24a, Personal Response (“a man”)**

The Lord's personal response is a close paraphrase of v. 21, the summary of the last section:

	<b>v. 21</b>	<b>vv. 23-24</b>
Our love for the Lord	he it is that <b>loveth</b> me:	If a man <b>love</b> me, ... 24 He that <b>loveth</b> me not ...
Sign of our love: obedience	He that hath my commandments, and <b>keepeth</b> them,	... he will <b>keep</b> my words: ... <b>keepeth</b> not my sayings:
The love of God for us	and he that loveth me shall be <b>loved of my Father,</b>	and <b>my Father will love him,</b>
	and I will love him,	
Sign of his love: manifestation	and will <b>manifest myself to him.</b>	and we will <b>come unto him, and make our abode with him.</b>

This analysis shows that there are two main themes:

- Our love for God, shown by obedience
- God's love for us, shown by the manifestation of himself to us.

### **Our Love Shown by Obedience**

This section responds to the second aspect of Judas' question, the omission of the world. The Lord emphasizes the distinction between the obeyers and the world. The first and last lines make this point chiasmically. Things to note:

- Pairing of positive and negative. Conditionals are tricky things logically. “If A then B” does not necessarily mean “If B then A.” For example, “If the car starts, it has gas,” but “If the car has gas, it may not start (if the battery is dead.” But we can assert the logical equivalence of two propositions by stating it both ways, or (what is the same thing) by negating the first way. “If A then B” and “If not A then not B” means “A if and only if B” (you are a believer if and only if you have the Holy Spirit). So the Lord is asserting, not just that love leads to obedience, but that lack of love leads to disobedience. In other words, loving the Lord Jesus and keeping his commandments are identical with one another.
- In comparison with v. 21, note the two things that we are to keep:



- my commandments *entolais* (21)
- my words *logos* (singular) (23, 24—"sayings" is the same Greek word)

In 23-24, the Lord is raising the stakes. We can see the difference between these expressions in the story of David's mighty men in 2 Sam 23:13-17. David would never have commanded his men to risk their lives on a personal whim like this. But so great was their love for him that they took the mere words of his mouth as their guidance.

Though the two imply each other, there is still a causal relation between them. The Lord says, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (23), but never, "If you keep my commandments, love me." The love comes first, and issues forth in obedience.

## God's Love Shown by Manifestation

Now the Lord deals with the first part of Judas' question, the means of manifestation to the believer.

**my Father will love him.**—Just as our obedience results from our love for the Lord, his blessings to us stem from his love for us. The focus here is on the Father's love, not mentioning explicitly the Son's (as was done in v.21).

15:10 and 16:27 show that the Father's love here is to be understood as resulting from our love for him. Yet at the same time, God's love for us is presented in Paul as the root of our salvation:

- 1 John 4:10 "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins."
- 1 John 4:19 "we love him, because he first loved us"
- Rom 5:8 "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"
- Eph 2:4-5, "his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins"
- 2 Thes 2:13 initiates the discussion of election by addressing believers as "brethren beloved of the Lord," which when compared with Rom 8:29-30 and 1 Pet 1:2-4 refers to his foreknowledge.

Similarly, though the Father loves the Son because of his obedience (10:17 "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again"; 15:10), he also loves him "before the foundation of the world," John 17:24.

So which comes first: God's love for us (as in these verses), or our love for him?

Both are clearly taught, so we must answer "both."

- Love answers to love. Even the unbelievers love those who love them (Luke 6:32, "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them."), and Wisdom in Prov 8:17 declares, "I love them that love me." A loving relationship feeds on itself; the more each member feels loved, the more that one loves. This reciprocity is in the nature of love, so it is not surprising that it shows up in God's love for us.
- What is unnatural is how to start love in the first place. Only God's spirit can enable us to love those who do not love us. Matt 5:43-48 sets this forth as a divine characteristic. Our daily newspapers show how rare this is. Whether it is Shi'a fighting Sunni over a centuries-old conflict, or a modern Jew bitterly hunting down the last of the Nazis to revenge the Holocaust, the natural response to hatred is more hatred.

So the answer to the paradox is to see love as a cycle of response that someone must start. God uniquely starts it, but then he participates in it along with us.

It is interesting that throughout the NT, references to God's initiating love in election and redemption refer to him as "God" (Rom 5:8; 8:39; John 3:16), while references to his participation in the ongoing cycle of love with us (as here) refer to him as Father (15:10; 16:17; Eph 2:4-5; Tit 3:4).<sup>2</sup> In his role as the sovereign creator, God breaks into our hopeless sinful condition and initiates love. As our Father, he participates in the ongoing cycle of love with us.

Now he moves to the final point of comparison with v.21. The promise there was that the Lord would manifest himself to us. Now the manifestation is broadened to include the Father as well.

**we will come unto him.**—Recall the promise of 14:3, 18, that the Lord would come. Now he promises that the Father will come as well. This is best understood of the Holy Spirit, who is both "the Spirit of your Father" (Matt 10:20) and "the spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:19; Rom 8:9; 1 Pet 1:11). Note in particular Rom 8:9, which describes the Spirit as "of God" and "of Christ" in the same breath.

**and make our abode with him.**—Not only is the manifestation broader than stated in v. 21 (including the Father as well as the Son), but it is more intimate. It is not a transient visit, but a permanent abiding. This promise is the seed from which the Lord will develop the teaching of 15:1-17.

### **24b-31a, Response to the Group**

This section falls into two parts, between 26 and 27. Through 26, the focus is on his words and the role of the coming Advocate in helping them understand them. From 27 on, the focus is on his departure, and his distinction from the world. Thus 24-26 continues the answer to the first part of Judas' question, while 27-31 continues his answer to the second part.

### **24b-26, The Teaching Advocate**

This section repeatedly emphasizes the Lord's words. He will manifest himself to those who keep his words, and in fact that manifestation, through the Spirit, has the effect of reinforcing those very words. Thus keeping his words is not only the condition we must fulfill if we would enjoy the coming of the Father and Son by the Spirit; it is the objective that that coming promotes in us.

The shift to the plural pronoun shows that he is looking ahead.

**the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.**—He repeats the claim to speak for the Father that he has made repeatedly (3:34; 7:16; 8:26, 28, 38; 12:49-50; 14:10). Both the condition and the promise of 23-24 are of the highest authority. They stem, not from him personally, but from the Father, whose representative he is.

He repeats this teaching for two reasons.

1. It amplifies the closing member of the inclusion about showing love through obedience. "Word" here is the same Greek word as "saying" in 24a. "The word that the world rejects is not mine, but the Father's."
2. It prepares them for the notion that as the Father sent him into the world, he will now send the Spirit. This seems to be the main theme of the section. "You want to know how I will manifest myself to you. I will do it through the Spirit, who will be my representative just as I have been the Father's representative."

---

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor 9:7 "God loveth a cheerful giver" is the only exception I can find, but this is a gently adopted quote from the LXX of Prov 22:8, which may explain why Paul retains "God."

**25 These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you.**—During his earthly ministry, he gave priority to teaching. Now he is about to return to the Father. What will become of his words? The coming of the Spirit answers that question.

**26 But the Comforter.**—Recalling the title “advocate” or “representative” that the Lord first gave him in v. 16.

**which is the Holy Ghost.**—John had promised his disciples that the Messiah would baptize them with the Holy Ghost. Now the Lord makes clear that the promised advocate is in fact this Holy Ghost.

**whom the Father will send in my name.**—That is, the Father sends the Spirit on Christ's authority and in fulfillment of his promise. Just as we pray to the Father in the name (on the authority) of Jesus, so the Father sends the Spirit as though he came from the Son.

**he shall teach you all things.**—We see here the importance of the title “Spirit of Truth” that the Lord gave him when he first mentioned his coming in 14:17. The Spirit is first of all a teacher.

This characterization of the Spirit looks both backward and forward.

It looks *back* to the OT promises of the New Covenant. This was the particular role assigned to him in Ezekiel 36,

Ezekiel 36:26-27 <sup>26</sup> A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

It looks *forward* to Paul's teaching of the work of the Spirit: 1 Cor 2:9-16.

**and bring all things to your remembrance.**—This promise is particularly important with reference to the writing of the NT. We do not have to fear lapses of memory on the part of the writers. Their recollections were guaranteed by the Lord through the HS.

**whatsoever I have said unto you.**—Here is the parallel with 24b. Just as the Son brought the Father's words to us (v. 24), so the Spirit recalls the Son's words to us. Neither speaks of himself. Each is subordinate to the one whom he represents.

It is critical to recognize the centrality of our Lord's words here. Having and keeping them is the *condition* of his coming in the Spirit, and also the *objective* of that coming, since the Spirit's role is to recall and explain the words of Christ. Recognizing this has at least two implications worth noting.

1. This teaching is the foundation for our emphasis on Bible exposition in our meetings together. God requires us to know and keep his word. Thus the study of God's word has always been important in the gatherings of God's people. First in the four things of Acts 2:42 was “the apostles' doctrine.”
2. A proper understanding of the Spirit's work sees him as holding up and explaining the things of Christ, not promoting himself or moving people away from the Word of God toward a more subjective experience. Those who would set aside the Word of God because they have the Spirit do not understand his role.

## **27-31a, Departure from the World**

The gift of the Spirit is particularly important in preparing them for his departure. He now turns explicitly to this departure. Each of the next five verses refers explicitly to his departure, and gives them a specific encouragement. In addition, four of them set his work in contrast with the world, thus

responding to the second aspect of Judas' question.

## **27, He will give them peace**

**27 Peace I leave with you.**—The reference to his departure is in the allusion to the common greeting, “peace be unto you.” In Modern Hebrew, the common greeting on both meeting and parting is *shalom*, “peace.” Compare the Jewish *shalom aleichem* and the Arabic *salam alaykoun*. It was used even by Gentile kings in their decrees: Dan 4:1; 6:25. It was a sign of greeting (John 20:19, 21, 26), and appears in NT epistle both as a greeting (Gal 1:3; Col 1:2, “grace to you, and peace”), and at the close (1 Pet 5:14, “peace be with you all”). We might paraphrase, “I’m saying goodbye to you now.” But he dwells on the greeting and amplifies it, showing how it goes far beyond the common use. He offers three distinctions.

1. He *leaves* this peace with them. The common Jewish expression was to *give* someone peace (as in the second clause). That could be ambiguous for coming or going. “Leave” clearly emphasizes that he is departing, but leaving something behind with them.
2. It is *his* peace that he gives. Many who greet us with “peace” have no true peace to give. Their own lives are in turmoil, and their greeting is like one starving man promising a meal to another. But the Lord Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He has real peace to give.
3. He does *not* give it *as the world gives*. Here is the contrast with the world. For the world, offering someone peace is just a formalism, a saying, and they often do not mean it. The Lord’s gift is genuine, caring, sincere.

**Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**—The Lord repeats his exhortation from v.1, and adds another. This combination echoes some interesting expressions from the OT, which shed light on its meaning here.

First, the word he adds, *deiliaw*, appears almost always in the OT as the second member of a paired exhortation not to fear: “fear not, neither be afraid.” There is an important difference between “fear not” and “fear not, neither be afraid.”

- “Fear not” by itself is commonly spoken by angels when accosting humans who are terrified at their appearance (e.g., Gen 27:17 to Hagar). It refers to the overwhelming awe that sinful people naturally feel in the presence of the Lord or his representatives.
- “Fear not, neither be afraid” is always used to urge the people to boldness as they set forth for war. Thus Moses exhorted the children of Israel (Deut 1:21; 31:6) and Joshua (Deut 31:8). The second term, and the one that the Lord adds to the end of his exhortation, refers specifically to the fear of physical harm or death.

An interesting feature of these double exhortations in Deut and Josh is that they are supported by the promise that “the Lord thy God is with thee; he will not leave thee nor forsake thee.” This is parallel to the Lord’s promise here of the Spirit.

Thus the promise of the Spirit, the word he adds, and the whole form of a double exhortation, echo the words of Moses as he is about to leave the children of Israel. As he exhorted them to carry on fearlessly, so the Lord, the prophet like unto Moses, exhorts his disciples 1400 years later.

But there is a difference between the Lord’s expression and Moses’. Moses’ first phrase was “fear not.” The Lord replaces the general term for fear with “be troubled.” And this leads to the second echo. The two word families, “be troubled” and the special word for “fear” at the end of the verse, appear only here and in Psa 55:4:

My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

Ps 55:12-14 show David's sense of betrayal by Ahithophel, on which the Lord no doubt meditated as he considered Judas. This Psalm would have been in his mind, and v. 4 would suggest his phrasing here.

At this point, we should recall what we observed about “troubled” earlier. This is distinctively John's word (7/17 uses in the NT). Apart from the physical troubling of the water in the pool at Bethesda in ch. 5, the verb appears in two contexts:

1. The Lord is described as “troubled” as he contemplates his coming death (11:33; 12:27; 13:21).
2. He exhorts his followers, “let not your heart be troubled.”

The Lord did not approach the cross calmly and without emotion. He was terrified of it, deeply troubled in his heart, burdened down under a sense of guilt with our sin in the presence of a holy God. Psa 55:4 perfectly explained his state of mind at this point. He undertook these sufferings so that we would not have to. This is the peace that he came to give us, and he could only give it to us by leaving us through the agony of Calvary,

Hebrews 2:14-15 that through death he might ... deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

## **28, He returns to the one who sent him**

**28 Ye have heard how I said unto you.**—In 14:3, “I go ... I come again.” This is the reference to his departure.

**If ye loved me, ye would rejoice.**—The form of the clause suggests that they did not in fact love him, at least not as they ought.

**because I said, I go unto the Father.**—Philip had desired to see the Father. If that was so desirable for them, would they not rejoice that he will have that opportunity? The contrast with the world is implicit in his desire to leave it and be with the Father.

Note that he says, not “my Father,” but “the Father,” leaving the door open for them to look forward to that experience themselves. This is the encouragement: his departure opens the way for them to enjoy the Father's presence.

Here is the root of Paul's insight, “to depart and to be with Christ ... is far better,” Phil 1:23. If they loved him, they would desire for him the joy of being with the Father.

**for my Father is greater than I.**—This verse has been the center of a great deal of controversy. It was a central proof-text for the Arians, who insisted that Christ was not equal with God, but a created being—cf. modern JW's. But it is essential to distinguish the Lord's divine *nature* from his *position* and mission. He does not say, “God is greater than I,” and in fact John explains his words to the Jews in 5:18 as making himself “equal with God.” As the Logos, he was God (1:1), but as the Son, sent by the Father and obedient to the Father, he was “a little lower than the angels” (Heb 2:9) and thus certainly lower than the Father.

## **29, He fulfills his prediction**

**29 And now I have told you.**—That is, of his coming departure.

**before it come to pass.**—The Lord here alludes to Moses' promise of the coming of a prophet like unto Moses (Deut 18:18). The mark of the true prophet was that what he foretold came to pass (Deut 18:21-22). The Lord here presents his prophecy of his coming death as the evidence for his place as the true

prophet.

**that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.**—Here is the blessing they can expect from his departure. Since it validates his prophecy, it will strengthen their belief.

### **30, He is victorious over the Prince of this World**

**30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you.**—Because the time remaining before he is taken from them is very short. This is thus the reference in this verse to his departure. After his resurrection, he did speak extensively with them (Acts 1:3).

**for the prince of this world cometh.**—Note the *title* and the *action* here ascribed to the Devil.

By *title*, he is called “the prince [*arxon* ruler] of this world,” as also in 12:31 and 16:11. Here is the reference to the world. Like Absalom (2 Sam 15:6), he “stole the hearts” of those who owed their allegiance to God, and thus has claimed rule over this present order. Such is the weakness of democracy! But his power indicates what a great foe he is, for we may be sure that the mass of people will side with him, support him, and do his will.

By *action*, he “cometh.” Luke 4:13 recorded that after the temptation in the wilderness, “the devil ... departed from him for a season.” His return is commonly understood to be in the garden, where the Lord wrestled with the task set before him, and accepted it. We do not properly understand the Lord's passion unless we recognize in it the final conflict between our Lord and Satan.

**and hath nothing in me.**—He may steal the hearts of other men; he will have no success with the Son of God. Thus the encouragement for us is that the Lord's death shows that he was undeterred in his service to the Father, and fully carried out his mission, in spite of Satan's opposition.

### **31, He demonstrates his love for the Father**

**31 But ... even so I do.**—That is, he moves on to the culmination of his work. This is the reference to his departure in this verse.

**that the world may know that I love the Father.**—Though he will not manifest himself to the world, he will reveal his love for the Father in a way that will leave them without excuse. Here is our encouragement: to behold the depth of the Savior's love for the Father.

**and as the Father gave me commandment.**—Once again, he emphasizes that he does what he does out of obedience to the Father.

## **14:31, Departure**

**Arise, let us go hence.**—These words have been understood in several different ways.

- Describing physical movement: here they leave the upper room, and work their way across the city, until in 18:1 they cross the Kidron.
- Preparatory to departure.
- Metaphorical (Calvin, Morris). “Strengthened by these considerations, let us move boldly on to the culmination.”

I prefer the last.

# Notes

## Role of 14:31

Two verses in ch. 13-18 describe movements of the Lord before his arrest. These are interpreted differently by various expositors.

<b>Expositor</b>	<b>John 14:31</b> But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.	<b>John 18:1</b> he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron
<b>Metaphorical or Literary Meaning</b>		
<b>Calvin</b>	Metaphorical, connected with previous clause	Physical movement
<b>Morris</b>	Punctuation of the discourse: shift from internal aspect of the passion to external.	Departure from the house
<b>Physical Movement</b>		
<b>Gill</b>	From Bethany, where he understands ch. 13-14 to have been spoken.	From Jerusalem
<b>Westcott</b>	Physical departure from the house; ch. 15-17 spoken along the way	Physical departure from the city
<b>Bruce</b>	Rising physically from the table, but not yet leaving the house; aspects of metaphor as well	Physical movement
<b>Henry</b>	Moving from the table to the drawing room	Out of the city
<b>Preparatory to Leaving</b>		
<b>Hendriksen</b>	Preparatory to leaving, but no departure until 18:1	From the city
<b>Constable</b>	Preparatory to leaving, but no departure until 18:1	Physical movement
<b>Alford</b>	Preparatory to leaving, but no departure until 18:1	No comment on movement

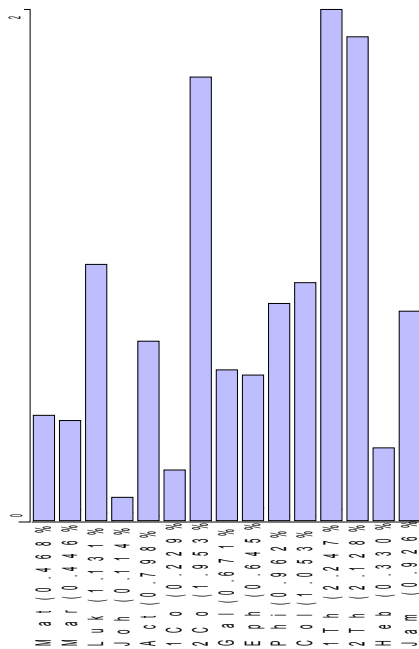
The command in 14:31 (“Arise, let us go hence” suggests that the disciples leave the upper room at this point and make their way toward the garden. But there is no description of their movement. We don't know whether 15-17 were spoken in the upper room, or on the way to the garden—and it probably doesn't matter.

What does matter is that 14:31 marks a shift in the discourse.

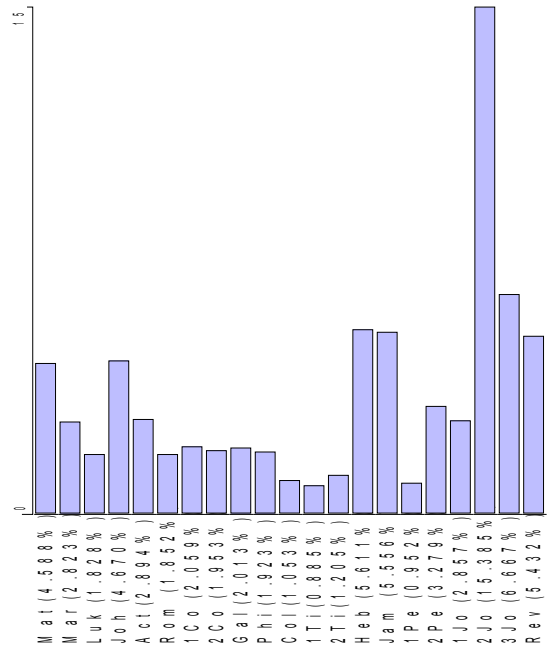
## *lambanw* and *dexomai*

- *lambanw* is by far the more common form, 1594 (NT 258) occurrences in the Greek Bible, compared with 118 (NT 56) for *dexomai*. Note that *dexomai* is much more a NT word (nearly half of its instances) than *lambanw* (only a sixth of its instances).
- Heb equivalents:
  - *lambanw*: *lqx* 847, *ns* 148, *lqd* 20, *hrd* 10, *)xz* 6, *tps* 3
  - *dexomai*: *lqx* 25, *rc* 6, *qbl* 4, *ns* 2
- The synoptics and general epistles make more use of *lambanw* than does Paul, while the distribution is just the opposite for *dexomai*. This (personal vocabulary) appears to be the main explanation.

	<i>lambanw</i>	<i>dexomai</i>
Paul	13% 34/258	23% 13/56
John	29% 75/258	2% 1/56



*Illustration 1: Distribution of dexomai*



*Illustration 2: Distribution of lambanw*

## **Father:Son::Son:Believer**

This idea that our relation with the Lord mirrors his with the Father is a powerful and persistent theme in John. It applies to five relationships:

### **Unity**

Discussed above on v. 20.

### **Life**

Just as the Son gains his life from the Father, so we gain our life from him:

6:57 As the living Father hath sent me, and **I live by the Father**: so he that eateth me, **even he shall live by me**.



## Mission

The Father sent the Son, and so the Son sends the believers.

17:18 As **thou hast sent me** into the world, even so **have I also sent them** into the world.

20:21 as *my* **Father hath sent me**, even so **send I you**.

## Glory

17:22 And the glory which **thou gavest me I have given them**;

We will need to inquire into the nature of this shared glory when we get to ch. 17, but the pattern Father:Son::Son:Believers is clear.

## Love

15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

## Other unrelated cases

Some other instances at first glance seem similar, but in fact follow a slightly different pattern.

17:23 that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.—here the point is that Father:Son::Father:Believers, not Father:Son::Son:Believers.

17:22 that they may be one, even as we are one.—This is Believer:Believer::Father:Son

17:26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.—Appears to be Father:Son::Father:Believers.

## Summary of the pattern

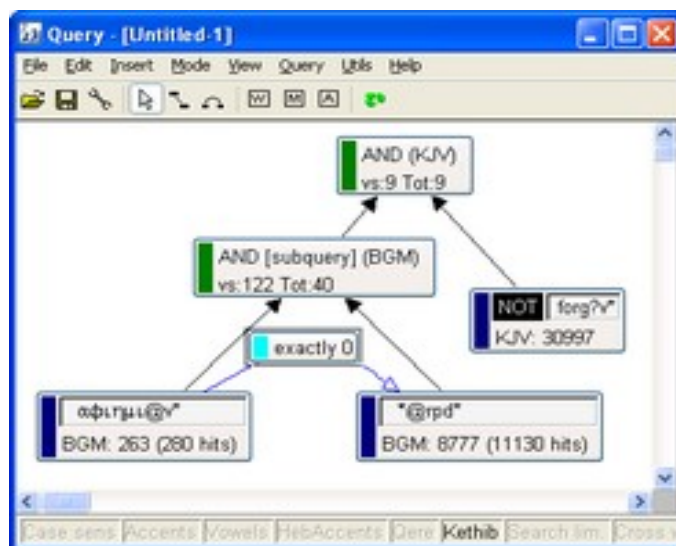
Christ is to us as the Father is to him. Thus our seeing him is like his seeing the Father, the point he is trying to make.

## Leaving something with someone

*afihmi* + dative is overwhelmingly used in the Greek Bible in the sense of “forgive to someone {their sins}.” But it does appear occasionally with nouns not meaning “sin.” Here are all the instances in the Greek Bible:

1. Your house is left to you desolate (double object), Matt 23:38; Lk 13:35
2. leave him your cloke, Matt 5:40
3. he left nothing, Heb 2:8

Here's the BibleWorks GSE query to check this:



## Paired exhortations to “fear not”

Hypothesis: *fobew* is general, and might refer to the awe one feels in the presence of God (cf. “fear not,” Gen 15:1 to Abraham; 27:17 to Hagar). But *deiliaw* is overwhelmingly used in preparing people for battle, and refers to the specific fear of harm and defeat in such a situation. Even in Maccabees, 2 Macc 15:8, Judas tells his troops not to do this, and 4 Macc 14:4 uses it of fear of death. This is what unbelievers feel when the Lord's judgment comes, Isa 13:7; Psa 13:5. This is the key to Sirach 34:14, “Whoso feareth *fobew* the Lord shall not fear *eulambeomai* nor be afraid *deiliaw*.” Psa 119:161 is one exception, where *deliaw* expresses the believer's fear of the Lord, but this is a minority translation (4x) of *pxd*, which 38x renders *fobos* or *fobew*. *Deiliaw* renders *pxd* 4x and *xtt* 4x, but *xtt* is 8x *httaw* and 17x *ptoew*.

Prohibitions to *tarassw*: Isa 8:12; Dan 5:10

First Word	Second Word	Verse	Context
fobew	deiliaw	Deut 1:21; 31:6	Moses to the children of Israel as they are about to enter the land
		Deut 31:8	Moses to Joshua in giving him a charge
		Jos 1:9	The Lord to Joshua
		Josh 8:1	Lord to Joshua before sending him to Ai after initial defeat
		Josh 10:25	Joshua to his captains after the defeat of the southern coalition, and before going against the north
	Psa 27:1	David in the face of his enemies encamping against him	
eulambeomai	deiliaw	Sir 34:14	General blessing to those who fear <i>fobew</i> the Lord
fobew	eulambeomai	Jer 5:22	What people should do before the Lord
fobew	tarassw	Isa 8:12	Believers should not do this as the unbelieving multitude around them do, in the face of the Assyrian invasion
		1 Pet 3:14	How we are not to feel before those who cause us to suffer for righteousness

## The Father’s House in 14:2 (Note added 1/14/2020)

The view of these verses outlined above was anticipated by R.H. Gundry, “In My Father’s House Are Many Monai.” *ZNW* 58 (1967) 68–72, which I had not seen. My view in 2007 rested on the Pauline image of the church as the new temple of God. But Hebrews emphasizes another perspective: the temple as anticipation of God’s heavenly resting place—a replica of Eden, to be restored in the heavenly city (Heb 12:22; 13:13) which will one day descend to earth (Revelation 21). And this place is said to be “prepared” ἐτοιμάζω G2090, like the Father’s house of which the Lord speaks:

Heb. 11:16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath **prepared** for them a city.

Rev. 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, **prepared** as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev 21:2 suggests that the choice between heaven and the church is not either-or. The heavenly city is the bride, which is the church. Hebrews in particular leads us to see a close relation between God's heavenly resting place and the society of saints:

Heb. 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

So perhaps it is best to keep both images in mind. The God who abode in the temple in the OT, now dwells in the spiritual temple of the church (Eph 2:22). This church should be seen as a colony of the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22), God's resting place, which one day will come to the New Earth (Rev 21-22). Our Lord's work with his Father, described in John 14:2-3, includes both sending the Spirit by which believers are incorporated into the church (John 16:7), and completing the heavenly work described in Heb 11:16, in keeping with his designation as "he who hath builded the house" (Heb 3:3).