

JOHN, THE GOSPEL OF BELIEF

John 14: *Good News/Bad News*

A The assurance (1-4)

John 14:1 “Don’t be troubled. You trust God, now trust in me. **2** There are many rooms in my Father’s home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. If this were not so, I would tell you plainly. **3** When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. **4** And you know where I am going and how to get there.”

B The Way (5-7)

John 14:5 “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We haven’t any idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?” **6** Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. **7** If you had known who I am, then you would have known who my Father is. From now on you know him and have seen him!”

C The Father (8-11)

John 14:8 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied.” **9** Jesus replied, “Philip, don’t you even yet know who I am, even after all the time I have been with you? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking to see him? **10** Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I say are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. **11** Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of what you have seen me do.

D The power (12-14)

John 14:12 “The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. **13** You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, because the work of the Son brings glory to the Father. **14** Yes, ask [me] anything in my name, and I will do it!

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E The Counselor (15-21)

John 14:15 “If you love me, obey my commandments. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you. **17** He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you do, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. **18** No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. **19** In just a little while the world will not see me again, but you will. For I will live again, and you will, too. **20** When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. **21** Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them, and I will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of them.”

F The Spirit’s role (22-26)

John 14:22 Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, “Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?” **23** Jesus replied, “All those who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and live with them. **24** Anyone who doesn’t love me will not do what I say. And remember, my words are not my own. This message is from the Father who sent me. **25** I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. **26** But when the Father sends the Counselor as my representative—and by the Counselor I mean the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself have told you.

G The return (27-31)

John 14:27 “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn’t like the peace the world gives. So don’t be troubled or afraid. **28** Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really love me, you will be very happy for me, because now I can go to the Father, who is greater than I am. **29** I have told you these things before they happen so that you will believe when they do happen. **30** “I don’t have much more time to talk to you, because the prince of this world approaches. He has no power over me, **31** but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let’s be going.

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Jesus, the Way to the Father (14:1–14)

The disciples were completely bewildered and discouraged. Jesus had said He was going away (7:34; 8:21; 12:8, 35; 13:33), that He would die (12:32–33), that one of the Twelve was a traitor (13:21), that Peter would disown Him three times (13:38), that Satan was at work against all of them (Luke 22:31–32), and that all the disciples would fall away (Matt. 26:31). The cumulative weight of these revelations must have greatly depressed them.¹

Do not let your hearts be troubled, He said. “Troubled” is *tarassethō* (“stirred, agitated”) from the same verb translated “troubled” in 11:33; 13:21; 14:27. One’s heart is the center of his personality. Each believer is responsible for the condition of his heart (cf. Prov. 3:1, 3, 5; 4:23; 20:9). By a firm trust in God the Father and Jesus the Son, they could relieve their soul-sorrow and be sustained in their coming tests. When Jesus said, **Trust in God; trust also in Me**, He was probably giving commands, not making statements (see NIV marg.).

14:3–4. **I will come back** refers here, not to the Resurrection or to a believer’s death, but to the Rapture of the church when Christ will return for His sheep (cf. 1 Thes. 4:13–18) and they will be **with** Him (cf. John 17:24). Jesus said nothing about the nature of the place where He was going. It is sufficient that believers will be with the Father and Jesus (cf. 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 1 Thes. 4:17).

They would remain puzzled until His death and resurrection and until the advent of the Spirit. They had all the information but they could not put it together.

Jesus’ words, **I am the Way and the Truth and the Life**, are the sixth of Jesus’ seven “I am” statements in the Gospel of John (6:48; 8:12; 10:9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1). Jesus is the “Way” because He is the “Truth” and the “Life.” As the Father is Truth and Life, Jesus is the embodiment of God so people can come to the Father (cf. 1:4, 14, 18; 11:25). By His words, **No one comes to the Father except through Me**, Jesus stressed that salvation, contrary to what many people think, is *not* obtainable through many ways. Only one Way exists (cf. Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus is the only access to the Father because He is the only One from the Father (cf. John 1:1–2, 51; 3:13).

14:8–9. **Philip** expressed a universal desire of mankind: to see God (cf. Ex. 33:18).

Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father (cf. John 12:45), is one of the most staggering claims He ever made. The Father is in Jesus and Jesus perfectly reveals Him (1:18). Hence no theophany was necessary, for by seeing Jesus they *were* seeing **the Father!**

One of the key elements in John’s Gospel is the stress on the signs as gracious pointers to faith (cf. 5:36; 10:25, 38; 11:47; 12:37; 20:30–31).

14:12–14. The apostles would not necessarily do more stupendous miracles than Jesus did (e.g., feeding 5,000) but their outreach would be greater (e.g., Peter in one sermon had 3,000 converts). This was possible **because** Jesus had gone **to the Father** and had sent the Spirit. Miracles are important, but some evangelists have done **even greater things than these** by preaching the good news to many thousands of people.

In My name (vv. 13–14) is not a magical formula of invocation. But the prayers of believers, as Christ’s representatives doing His business, will be answered. John expanded this teaching in his first epistle. He wrote, “If we ask anything according to His will ... we have what we asked of Him” (1 John 5:14–15). To **ask Me for anything in My name** means to ask according to His will (cf. “in My name” in John 15:16; 16:23–24, 26).

The goal of answered prayers is to **bring glory to the Father**. Also bearing fruit glorifies the Father (John 15:8).

14:16–17. This is the first of several passages on the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room Discourse. Up to this point in John’s Gospel, little has been said about the Holy Spirit. The words to Nicodemus (3:5–8) were private and 7:39 pointed ahead to Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is **to be the Counselor** (*paraklētos*; also used in 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; for its meaning see comments on 16:7). In a sense He has now replaced Jesus’ physical presence; and He mediates God to believers. The Spirit is in a believer **forever** (cf. Rom. 8:9). He is also **the Spirit of Truth** (lit., “Spirit of *the* truth”; cf. John 15:26; 16:13) and thus would guide the apostles.

Without a radio, radio waves go unnoticed. The Holy Spirit is unnoticed by the unsaved who have no spiritual life. The disciples had some experience with the Spirit (doubtless in preaching and miracle-working) but now His working would be much more intimate.

Why did Jesus say that the Holy Spirit **will be** (fut. tense) **in** them? Because in Old Testament times the Spirit came on some believers for special enablement, but after Pentecost He indwells every believer permanently (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13).

14:18–19. What did Jesus mean when He said, **I will come to you**? Was He referring to (1) His resurrection, (2) the Rapture, (3) the death of a believer, (4) a mystical experience, or (5) the Holy Spirit’s coming at Pentecost? Views 1 and 5 seem best. Verse 19 favors view 1 since the disciples did see Him after His resurrection. His resurrection is also the pledge of their resurrection (**Because I live, you also will live**; cf. 1 Cor. 15:20–21) and the foundation of a new life.

¹ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 322). Victor Books.

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14:22. **Judas (not Judas Iscariot)** may have been the same man called Thaddaeus (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18). He was puzzled that Jesus would manifest Himself to them **and not to the world** (cf. John 14:19a).

14:23–24. **Jesus** answered that He and the **Father** will not manifest themselves to those who are disobedient to His **teaching**. Obedience grows out of **love** for Jesus and His Word (cf. vv. 15, 21; 1 John 2:3; 3:22, 24; 5:3). And as a result, the Father and the Son abide (**make Our home**) **with him**. “Home” is *monēn*, the singular of plural *monai*, translated “rooms” in John 14:2.

The Spirit worked in their [apostles] minds, reminding them of His teaching and giving them insight into its meaning (cf. 2:22; 7:39; 20:9).

14:27. In New Testament times the normal way to say good-bye was **Peace** (*šālôm* in Heb.). In His death Jesus provided a legacy for His disciples: **My peace I give you**. They would have “peace with God” (Rom. 5:1) because their sins were forgiven and the “peace of God” (Phil. 4:7) would guard their lives. **The world** is unable to **give** this kind of peace. Fear of death (Heb. 2:14–15) and fear of the future are removed as Jesus’ followers trust in Him. Thus they need not **be troubled** (cf. John 11:33; 13:21; 14:1).

The details of the text argue that these two verses refer to the second advent of Jesus, when he comes to take his followers to be with him forever.²

The simplest explanation is best: *my Father’s house* refers to heaven, and in heaven are many *rooms*, many dwelling-places. The point is not the lavishness of each apartment, but the fact that such ample provision has been made that there is more than enough space for every one of Jesus’ disciples to join him in his Father’s home.

I am going there to prepare a place for you: the words presuppose that the ‘place’ exists before Jesus gets there. It is not that he arrives on the scene and then begins to prepare the place; rather, in the context of Johannine theology, it is the going itself, via the cross and resurrection, that prepares the place for Jesus’ disciples.

I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. Unlike some other passages that look to the parousia, this one focuses less on apocalyptic elements and the winding-up of the cosmos (cf. Mk. 13:24–27; 2 Thes. 2) than on the comfort to be enjoyed by believers in the presence of God (cf. 1 Thes. 4:15–18)—which is different again from those passages that offer solace to the believers on *their* death (e.g. 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23).

14:5. Thomas (cf. notes on 11:16; 20:24) appears in the Fourth Gospel as a loyal, even a courageous, disciple, but one who is liberally endowed with misapprehensions and doubts.

Jesus is the way to God, precisely because he is the truth of God (cf. notes on 1:14) and the life of God (cf. notes on 1:4; 3:15; 11:25). Jesus is the truth, because he embodies the supreme revelation of God—he himself ‘narrates’ God (1:18), says and does exclusively what the Father gives him to say and do (5:19ff; 8:29), indeed he is properly called ‘God’ (1:1, 18; 20:28). He is God’s gracious self-disclosure, his ‘Word’, made flesh (1:14). Jesus is the life (1:4), the one who has ‘life in himself’ (5:26), ‘the resurrection and the life’ (11:25), ‘the true God and eternal life’ (1 Jn. 5:20). Only because he is the truth and the life can Jesus be the way for others to come to God, the way for his disciples to attain the many dwelling-places in the Father’s house (vv. 2–3), and therefore the answer to Thomas’ question (v. 5).

The meditation of Thomas à Kempis is often quoted: *Follow thou me. I am the way and the truth and the life. Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living. I am the way which thou must follow; the truth which thou must believe; the life for which thou must hope. I am the inviolable way; the infallible truth, the never-ending life. I am the straightest way; the sovereign truth; life true, life blessed, life uncreated.*

The clues to the expression’s meaning are two: first, the final clause, *because I am going to the Father*, and second, the parallel in 5:20: ‘For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even *greater things than these*’ (*meizona toutōn*, as in 14:12). The two clues point in the same direction. Jesus’ disciples will perform greater works because he is going to the Father: this cannot mean that they will have greater scope for their activity because he will have faded from the scene and relinquished the turf to them, but that the very basis for their greater works is his *going to the Father*. Their works become greater precisely because of the new order that has come about consequent on his going to the Father. Similarly, the context of 5:20 shows that the greater works the Father will show the Son, and that the Son will therefore manifest to his followers, are displays of resurrection and judgment (cf. 5:17, 24–26). This life-giving power of the Son depends in turn on the Son’s death, resurrection and exaltation.

In short, the works that the disciples perform after the resurrection are greater than those done by Jesus before his death insofar as the former belong to an age of clarity and power introduced by Jesus’ sacrifice and exaltation.

But Jesus is about to return to his Father, he is about to be glorified, and in the wake of his glorification his followers will know and make known all that Jesus is and does, and their every deed and word will belong to the new eschatological age that will then have dawned. The ‘signs’ and ‘works’ Jesus performed during his ministry *could not* fully accomplish their true end until *after* Jesus had risen from the dead and been exalted. Only at that point could they be seen for what they were. By contrast, the

² Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 488). Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

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works believers are given to do through the power of the eschatological Spirit, *after* Jesus' glorification, will be set in the framework of Jesus' death and triumph, and will therefore more immediately and truly reveal the Son. Thus *greater things* is constrained by salvation-historical realities. In consequence many more converts will be gathered into the messianic community, the nascent church, than were drawn in during Jesus' ministry (*cf.* 15:26–27; 17:20; 20:21, 29). The contrast itself, however, turns not on raw numbers but on the power and clarity that mushroom after the eschatological hinge has swung and the new day has dawned.

This demonstrates that the contrast in v. 12 is not finally between Jesus' works and his disciples' works but between the works of Jesus that he himself performed during the days of his flesh, and the works that he performs through his disciples after his death and exaltation.

For a brief introduction to the five Paraclete passages (14:16–17, 26; 15:26–27; 16:7–11, 12–15), especially their cohesiveness within these chapters, *cf.* the notes introducing 13:31ff.

14:15. Two links tie this verse to what precedes. (1) The prospect of doing 'greater things' anticipates the need for enabling power, the manifestation of God himself by his Spirit. This verse is moving the discussion toward vv. 16–17. (2) The obedience theme is of a piece with asking for things in Jesus' name (vv. 13–14). None of the promised fruitfulness will come to those who think they can manipulate the exalted Christ, or use him for their own ends.

Jesus has demonstrated his love for his own (13:1ff.), declared his love for them and commanded them to love one another (13:34–35); now for the first time in the Fourth Gospel he speaks of their love for him.

Although Jesus is never in the Fourth Gospel explicitly referred to as a *paraklētos*, the title is applied to him in 1 John 2:1 (niv 'one who speaks ... in our defence').

One of the Spirit's principal tasks, after Jesus is glorified, is to remind the disciples of Jesus' teaching and thus, in the new situation after the resurrection, to help them grasp its significance and thus to teach them what it meant.... The Spirit's ministry in this respect was not to bring qualitatively new revelation, but to complete, to fill out, the revelation brought by Jesus himself.

Peace is one of the fundamental characteristics of the messianic kingdom anticipated in the Old Testament (Nu. 6:26; Ps. 29:11; Is. 9:6–7; 52:7; 54:13; 57:19; Ezk. 37:26; Hg. 2:9) and fulfilled in the New (Acts 10:36; Rom. 1:7; 5:1; 14:17). 'The new order is simply the peace of God in the world' (Hoskyns, p. 461). At the individual level, this peace secures composure in the midst of trouble, and dissolves fear, as the final injunction of this verse demonstrates. This is the peace which garrisons our hearts and minds against the invasion of anxiety (Phil. 4:7), and rules or arbitrates in the hearts of God's people to maintain harmony amongst them (Col. 3:15).

The only interpretation that makes adequate sense of the context connects *for the Father is greater than I* with the main verb (as does the preceding option), but understands the logic of the *for* or *because* rather differently: If Jesus' disciples truly loved him, they would be glad that he is returning to his Father, *for* he is returning to the sphere where he belongs, to the glory he had with the Father before the world began (17:5), to the place where the Father is undiminished in glory, unquestionably greater than the Son in his incarnate state.