

I Am the Way and the Truth and the Life

John 14:1-6

John 14:1-6 ^{NAU} "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ "And you know the way where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

This is in the immediate context of Jesus Christ himself troubling the heart of Peter as we saw the last time we were together.

John 13:36-38 ³⁶ Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." ³⁷ Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." ³⁸ Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.

The child of God can find himself in times of trouble from time to time for a variety of reasons. In Peter's case it was the realization that he was not as devoted a follower of Christ as he thought he might be when trials came his way.

Our Lord dropped a bomb on Peter but immediately comforts him with the reality that God is the one who is sovereign and in control. And in the context of Jesus about to go to the cross our Lord reassures both Peter and the rest of his disciples that their grief will be temporary as God's plan unfolds for their good and His glory.

Later in this same gospel Jesus encourages the hearts of these disciples with these words.

^{NAU} **John 16:22** "Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one *will* take your joy away from you.

As we come to verse one of our text Jesus says a very interesting thing. Believe in God, believe also in Me. This is said with the caveat that their hearts should not be troubled in light of this command from our Lord.

The implication is that because God is Almighty, He is also the One who brings peace to His people amidst the storms of life. But more than that, especially in the context of this section of Scripture, this peace is directly connected to the event that is to be shortly played out at the cross, where three days from that

time the peace that Christ secured in his blood will secure the futures of these disciples as well as all who believe.

This why Jesus concludes this section with the words he gives his disciples in **John 14:27-28** ²⁷ "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. ²⁸ "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

This whole section of chapter 14 is addressing Christ leaving the disciples through his death, but through this redemptive atoning work at the cross it doesn't end in the grave, but ends with a return to the Father on behalf of his people.

But we don't want to miss the elephant in the room with verse one. **John 14:1** believe in God, believe also in Me. Jesus makes it clear that a belief in Jesus Christ is synonymous with a belief in God, which is to say that Jesus is God. To believe in one is to believe in the other as both share in deity.

Earlier in this gospel Jesus placed himself in the exact same position as the Father and the Jews fully understood the implication of his words.

John 10:27-30 ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ "I and the Father are one."

No one but God can give eternal life to his people and yet Jesus tells these Jews that it is he who gives eternal life to his sheep and that no one can snatch them out of his hand, but so as to drive home the point of how powerful his hand is he equates it with the Father's hand who will also secure the salvation of his sheep. And then Jesus sums up their relationship with, I and the Father are one.

This statement is not suggesting that the Father and the Son are one in persons, but one in nature, that of God. The Son is not the Father, the Father is not the Holy Spirit and the Spirit is not the Son. There is only one God but he has revealed himself in his word as three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, all equal in power and glory.

And so, Jesus comforts his disciples that despite him having to leave them as he leaves this world for three days (as he will lay dead in the tomb) it is only temporary. In fact, in our text in verse two Jesus reveals big plans for the disciples in light of his death and subsequent resurrection and ascension back to the Father.

John 14:2-3 ² "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Merrill C. Tenney in his commentary on this verse reveals the absolute irony of this statement to these distraught disciples. "He required... that they believe Him against all odds. He was doomed to death, the death that overtakes all men. Nevertheless He had the audacity to demand that they make Him an object of faith."

In other words, despite him dying on a cross they must trust that he will go and continue the work the Father gave him and that is to prepare a future home for them, which necessarily means he will continue his life to accomplish this.

So, let's break this down verse. When Jesus makes the statement, in my Father's house, what are we to understand of this? The Father's house is juxtaposed with the theme of this entire chapter which is Jesus leaving this world and going back to the Father.

This is confirmed later in this gospel.

^{ESV} **John 16:5** But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'

So, in essence Jesus is saying that he is going back to the Father's house, a metaphor for the dwelling place of the Father in the present heaven. Keep in mind, God doesn't need a house to dwell in.

Acts 17:24-25 ²⁴ "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things;

When God created the physical universe he also created all things both visible and invisible that are designed for a physical universe.

Colossians 1:16 ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Simply because something is invisible does not make it any less physical which must necessarily include every part of God's creation needing to exist in a universe that is bound by time, space and matter. God is not bound by time, space and matter, since he is the One who created this environment for his creation, which by the way, includes heaven.

Heaven is a creation of God that did not exist prior to Him creating the universe. So, why did he create this place called heaven? He created it for creatures who would share in his glory. This would include angels, though invisible to our eyes in most cases, are necessarily creatures that are bound to time, space and matter. We also know that animals also live in heaven around the throne of God, as heavenly horses were dispatched to retrieve Elijah, for example, to bring him to God in heaven.

We also have the cherubim and seraphim who are a class of beings that are designated as animals in both old and new testaments. In fact, I've written a book on these creatures and their place in the Kingdom of God.

My point is that though Jesus describes his destination after this death on the cross as the Father's house, he is referring to an actual place, that includes time, space and matter, called heaven, that was created for a variety of creatures that were not initially designed to live on this earth. Though I argue in my book, they will one day join you and me in Christ on the future heaven, what God describes as new heavens and a new earth that the prophet Isaiah, along with the apostles Peter and John describe.

Isaiah 65:17 ¹⁷ "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.

2 Peter 3:13 ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away,

But what does Jesus mean when he makes the statement about the Father's house that "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." **John 14:2**

Again, this takes us back to the reality that heaven is a place, the soon to be destination for the physical body of Jesus Christ, albeit glorified body. So, is Jesus talking about a construction project that he is about to embark on when he goes back to heaven as goes to prepare a place for his people in the midst of many dwelling places, what some translations call mansions?

We don't have time to get into all the details of what this present heaven may look like, but Scripture is pretty clear that the present heaven is much more physical in nature than many are willing to concede. Moses was commanded by God to build the tabernacle in the desert after the pattern he was shown on mountain. What pattern? And what was the original that was the pattern for the copy?

^{NIV} **Hebrews 8:5** They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

We also have the statement made to the thief on the cross that as both Jesus and he were to die that very day, their spirits would live on.

Luke 23:43 ⁴³ And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

Obviously, Paradise is a place where both Jesus and the thief were destined that very day. The Greek word for Paradise designates a well-groomed garden or Park; not some ethereal or other-worldly state of mind, but a real place for real people as well as animals as I mentioned earlier.

^{NAU} **2 Kings 6:17** Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Where did these horses and chariots of fire come from? The same place they went back to.

2 Kings 2:11-12 ¹¹ As they were going along and talking, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. ¹² Elisha saw *it* and cried out, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw Elijah no more.

And so, when Jesus describes the Father's house with many dwelling places, he is describing a heaven that is designed for God's creatures including man to dwell with their God as they are absent from the body but present with the Lord.

But what does Jesus mean that he goes to prepare a place for them? Commentators are divided on this. Some suggest that Jesus is preparing or making ready a place for them in the sense that through his atoning work on their behalf he is securing their place in the kingdom of God through his life, death and resurrection so as to have access to the Father through his redemptive work.

This would certainly be true, but in preparing for them a place in heaven Jesus also seems to answer where this place ultimately resides. Look at verse three.

John 14:3 ³ "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Let's break this verse down. At the beginning of verse 3 Jesus is the subject who prepares a place. But the end of verse 3 tells us that the place he prepares is where he resides. Okay, so far so good. But the middle of the verse speaks of coming back to receive these disciples so that they can be where Jesus is.

What is this coming back referring to? And where is he coming from?

This could actually be taken in a couple of ways. Jesus was going to leave them through his death. We know that the spirit of Jesus immediately returned to the Father that day as both he and the thief were together in the presence of the Father. In this scenario, Jesus could be saying to his disciples, that I go to my Father through my sacrificial death that opens the way to unfettered access to the presence of God, as seen in the curtain in the temple being torn from top to bottom in Matthew 27:51.

So, when Jesus says that I go to prepare a place for you, but I will come again, and receive you to Myself; he could be referring to coming back to them from heaven in his resurrection three days after his death. The problem with this scenario is that when Jesus says, he will come again, with the intent for them to be where he is in his resurrection, he's coming back to the sin-filled cursed world, only to leave in the next forty days.

So, this can't be the ultimate destination for the disciples as Jesus comes again to receive them to himself. What is more likely is that Jesus is giving them a glimpse into the future home that he goes to make ready for them with the intent to bring them to the place where Jesus will also be at that time.

This coming back to receive or take to himself would line up closer to the coming back they were reminded of when he ascended back to the Father, forty days after his resurrection.

Acts 1:11 ¹¹ They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

In this scenario when does Jesus come back in just the same way as they watched him go into heaven? It would be the day he comes back to receive his people to himself in their resurrection.

John 6:39 ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

And, of course, Christ's coming back for his disciples on the last day would include taking them to himself to be where he is, which would include the place he designs to tabernacle among them forever.

Revelation 21:1-3 ^{NAU} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

The new heavens and the new earth will be established on the last day, also known as the day of the Lord, the day of God's judgment on sinful mankind, the same day Jesus comes back to receive us into his presence through the resurrection.

2 Peter 3:12-13 ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

But of course, the disciples, who didn't understand many of the basic aspects of Christ's redemptive ministry at this point in their lives, were probably not understanding the second coming of Christ in light of the fact that they are wrapped up in his first coming, coming to an end. So, our Lord continues to try and encourage them.

John 14:4-5 ⁴ "And you know the way where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?"

Here Thomas makes my point that they didn't understand many of the basic aspects to Christ's redemptive ministry.

In light of Jesus explaining that he goes to prepare a place for them, he repeats the process by which that will take place, assuming they can fathom what he is saying.

John 14:4 ⁴ "And you know the way where I am going."

Well, it turns out they don't know the way or the road that Jesus must travel to accomplish the Father's will to redeem a people for himself.

John 14:5 ⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?"

In baseball parlance Thomas just set Jesus up for the perfect pitch as he knocks it out of the park with those words that every born-again believer glories in.

John 14:6 ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Remember this is all about going to the Father's house for Jesus. It was always the goal of Jesus to accomplish the Father's will. And what was that will?

John 6:39 ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

In a nutshell Jesus is explaining to these disciples that there is only one way to the Father and that is through the cross. But the cross is not the final part of the redemptive will of the Father as the Father must receive the Son back to Himself before Jesus can receive the disciples to himself.

^{NAU} **Mark 16:19** So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

John 14:6 ⁶ Jesus said to him, ... no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Of course, the world would take umbrage to this truth as they would say, all roads lead to God. But in the end God alone determines the road and that road is the One Jesus has been placed on by the Father for His people.

Matthew 7:13-14 ¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

We'll close here today but let me end with a quick commentary on those words from Jesus, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. And I'll let the word of God do the commentary itself.

"I am the way"

^{NAU} **John 10:9** "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

The apostle Paul would sum it up this way.

^{NAU} **Ephesians 2:18** for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

As to the "truth" the apostle John gives us the best commentary of who the truth is.

^{NAU} **John 1:14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

"I am the Life"

Jesus himself is the best commentator on this truth.

^{NAU} **John 11:25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,