



The Gospel of John - Chapter Fourteen

III John 13:1-20:31 - The Farewell Discourse and the Passion Narrative (continues)

III.a John 13:1-17:26 - The cleansing and instruction of the new messianic community and Jesus' final prayer (continues)

III.a.i John 13:1-14:31 - The Last Supper (continues/concludes)

Summary of Chapter Fourteen

Jesus does not want his followers to be anxious and gives them assurance that he is going into heaven to prepare a place for them and that he will return for them. Thomas misunderstands Jesus' message and asks Jesus the way to where he is going, to which Jesus replies 'I am the way'.

Philip then joins in the conversation by asking Jesus to show them the Father. For his lack of understanding of who Jesus really is, Philip is admonished for he is clearly told again that all those who have seen Jesus have seen the Father since both are one. Once believers come to understand this then they can ask for anything in Jesus' name and it will be done.

Jesus then promises the gift of the Holy Spirit that he will ask the Father to send to those who believe in Jesus. The Spirit will then indwell believers reminding them of what Jesus has taught and helping to interpret what it means for their own lives.

III.a.i.5 John 14:1-14 - Jesus the Way to the Father

This passage is the first main part of Jesus' Farewell Discourse where he gives his most passionate and important instructions to his disciples and all subsequent disciples. Here, Jesus is not consumed with his own coming agony, but rather turns his attention to his disciples and their needs.

Jesus not only reveals the Father, he takes his disciples to the Father. In this way, Jesus comforts, encourages, admonishes, and coaches while he gives testimony to

his role and the events of his upcoming passion. He warns them not only of his impending death, but also of the trials they will face in building the Kingdom.

Jesus reveals that he is the way, the role of the Holy Spirit, the importance of his disciples' connectivity to him to produce faith and fruit; and that, even in persecution, believers will always be comforted as they remain in him.

¹ 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

John 14:1

Do not let your hearts be troubled; refer also to v.27. Your is plural. Jesus had been speaking directly to Peter, but now he broadens his focus to include the other disciples. The prediction of Peter's denial would have shaken all of them. Peter did not always have the right answers, but his fierce loyalty to Jesus was very clear. If he is going to deny Jesus, what hope was there for the rest of them?

Believe in God is translated as an imperative or command, but the Greek could also be rendered as a statement, 'You believe in God'. The imperative is probably better in light of the previous sentence. What troubles the disciples is Jesus' imminent departure (13:36).

Believe, in keeping with OT usage denotes personal, relational trust. For example: <<*Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken"*>> (Isaiah 28:16 NLT). They can place their full trust in Jesus: believe also in me. They are called to continue to believe and trust in the Father and the Son without regard to their current personal situation.

² In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am going.'

John 14:2-4

In light of the context, Jesus is going to the Father, it is best to understand my Father's house as referring to heaven. In keeping with this image, the many dwelling-places or rooms, Greek *monē*, are places to live within that large house. There will be room not just for Peter, or indeed for the other ten disciples; there will be room for everyone who places their hope and trust in Jesus.

The translation 'rooms' is not meant to convey the idea of small spaces, but only to keep consistency in the metaphor of heaven as God's house; hence dwelling-places is preferred in this translation. In a similar passage, Jesus speaks of his followers being received into the 'eternal dwellings' <<*And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes*>> (Luke 16:9), and: <<*But, as it*

is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him'>> (1 Corinthians 2:9).

I go to prepare a place for you. Jesus did so through his death, resurrection and ascension, for these enable them to be united to him and, in him, with the Father; his going to the Father is itself part of the preparation of a place for them. Not only is Jesus returning to heaven but he is promising a place there for those who will follow him in this life and then in a time yet to come, for he directly refers to his Second Coming: I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. Jesus confirms this statement elsewhere: <<*For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done*>> (Matthew 16:27), and: <<*See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work*>> (Revelation 22:12); which Paul explains as: <<*For all of us must appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil*>> (2 Corinthians 5:10).

And you know the way to the place where I am going. Jesus has just explained where he is going and why, i.e. for the sake of his disciples, so that their relationship with him can continue. The way is to keep trusting in Jesus and what he has taught them to do. This answers Peter's question in 13:36.

Heaven is experienced even now through the believer's union with the Father and the Son and the Spirit. However, this present union with God that occurs as the Father, Son and Spirit abide in the believer only comes to its complete fulfilment at the Second Coming, when the believer is taken by Jesus to be where he is. While the ultimate goal is the Father, this passage, and in fact the whole Gospel, is centred on Christ, it is his Father's house, and Jesus says he will come again to take them to be with him.

⁵ Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can 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 except through me. ⁷ If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'

John 14:5-7

Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? That Thomas is asking this question rather than demanding a response indicates a disciple's heart and also a willingness to display his ignorance before his teacher. Such honesty and humility is to be applauded. However, his lack of understanding also seems to indicate that he believes that Jesus is talking about an earthly location rather than his return to heaven, showing that misunderstandings were still occurring and would do until after they had received the gift of the Spirit.

Jesus as the one way to the Father fulfils the OT symbols and teachings that show the exclusiveness of God's claim, such as the curtain in the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:33) barring access to God's presence from all except the Levitical high priest (Leviticus Chapter 16), the rejection of human inventions as means to approach

God: <<*And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord*>> (Leviticus 10:2), and the choice of Aaron alone to represent Israel before God in his sanctuary: <<*And the staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout; thus I will put a stop to the complaints of the Israelites that they continually make against you*>> (Numbers 17:5). Jesus is the only way to God: <<*There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved*>> (Acts 4:12), and he alone can provide access to God. NT authors also write about the way offered now through Jesus: <<*I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture*>> (John 10:9), <<*So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father*>> (Ephesians 2:17-18), and: <<*Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh)*>> (Hebrews 10:19-20).

Jesus as the truth fulfils the teaching of the OT: <<*The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*>> (John 1:17), and reveals the true God: <<*And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth*>> (John 1:14).

Jesus alone is the life who fulfils the OT promises of life given by God (11:25-26), having life in himself (1:4 and 5:26), and he is thus able to confer eternal life to all those who believe in him (3:16). This is the sixth I am statement that makes a claim to deity. There is a list of all seven statements in the Supplementary Material on the web site.

No one comes to the Father except through me. Jesus is here stating quite plainly that there is no other faith or belief system that will bring people into communion with God and offer them everlasting life in his presence.

If you know me, you will know my Father also. Since God and the Son are one, then Jesus makes the Father known through revelation of himself. The statement is written in the future tense but since Jesus goes on to say: From now on you do know him and have seen him it becomes clear that the future started with the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and the coming of his Spirit.

By stating my Father Jesus is not talking in terms of a biological father-son relationship but something far more intimate than even the best of human relationships could ever be. To be a father one must have an offspring. Jesus is eternally Son; he is not just Son at his incarnation. Such was the faith of the ancient church, as expressed in the Nicene Creed, which refers to Jesus Christ as 'the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, very God from very God'. So the Father is understood as the source of Jesus not just in his incarnation and mission, but in his eternal being as Son.

⁸ Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.'⁹ Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"?'¹⁰ Do you not

believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

John 14:8-11

Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied. Philip apparently asks for some sort of appearance by God. In the OT, Moses asked for and was given a limited vision of God's glory (Exodus 24:10 and 33:18). Isaiah, too, received a vision of God: <<*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple*>> (Isaiah 6:1), refer also to Ezekiel 1:26-28. Philip seems to have had in mind a similar experience to that of Isaiah and he had the right mindset to wish to see such a revelation. However, he still had much to learn about his master for Jesus is the greater fulfilment of these limited OT events. In keeping with OT teaching, Jesus denied the possibility of a direct vision of God (1:18, 5:37 and 6:46), yet he makes the stunning assertion that those who have seen him have seen the Father, a clear claim to deity. Philip's request shows that he has not yet understood the point of Jesus' coming, namely, to reveal the Father.

Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Philip has not truly realised who Jesus is because at the centre of Jesus' teaching is his relationship to the Father. Once someone comes to understand the nature of this relationship then they know that it is Jesus who reveals God the Father in his own nature and character. Jesus had already said that those who have seen him have seen God: <<*And whoever sees me sees him who sent me*>> (John 12:45), yet so many fail to grasp what they see and hear: <<*In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God*>> (2 Corinthians 4:4). Paul continues the theme of Jesus being the image of God: <<*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited*>> (Philippians 2:5-6), and: <<*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation*>> (Colossians 1:15).

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Jesus is calling upon Philip to use his sight to understand what he has witnessed over the past three years. Physical sight is involved in observing Jesus, but this form of seeing is the least significant element, since even the opponents had that. Intellectual insight is important, because Philip is supposed to draw out the implications of what he has seen and heard in Jesus. But again this is not enough, for even the opponents have seen the implications but have rejected them. The third type of sight is needed, that which comes only through faith: <<*So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord – for we walk by faith, not by sight*>> (2 Corinthians 5:6-7).

The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Again, Jesus makes the point that what he says

comes directly from God and that the miracles that have been performed have been undertaken, not only by the will of God, but in his name and by his power.

Believe me. Jesus then speaks to all the disciples saying they should trust his claim or, if need be, go to the evidence of the deeds he has done in their presence.

I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Although there is a complete mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, the Father and the Son remain distinct persons within the Trinity, as does the Holy Spirit: <<***Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit***>> (Matthew 28:19), and: <<***The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you***>> (2 Corinthians 13:13), and the three of them still constitute only one divine being in three persons.

The works themselves includes the miracles of Jesus and also the other actions and teachings that he did and gave.

Believe me, but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. While signs in John are characteristically miracles that attest to Jesus' identity as the Christ and Son of God, and that lead unbelievers to faith, Jesus' works include both his miracles and his other activities and teachings, including the whole of his ministry.

¹² Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.

John 14:12

The works that I do. In John's Gospel, the term works, Greek *ergon*, both in singular and in plural, is a broader term than signs as just noted. These are all manifestations of the activity of God the Father, for Jesus said: <<***the Father who dwells in me does his works***>> (v.10). Here Jesus is teaching his disciples to imitate the things he did in his life and ministry.

The disciples' **greater works** will be possible because Jesus is **going to the Father**, subsequent to his finished work on the Cross; this indicates that the **greater works** will be possible because of the power of the Holy Spirit who would be sent after Jesus goes to the Father. This ability is not just something given to the eleven remaining disciples but will be made available to all future disciples as well: **the one who believes in me.**

The expression **greater works** could also be translated more broadly as 'greater things', since the Greek *meizona* is simply a neuter adjective and the noun works, Greek *erga* is plural, is not included here as it is in the earlier part of the verse. These **greater works** include evangelism, teaching, and deeds of mercy and compassion; in short, the entire ministry of the church to the entire world, beginning from Pentecost. Jesus implies that anything is possible for those who have total faith in Jesus as God: <<***Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, "Be taken up and thrown into the sea", and if you do not doubt in your heart,***>>

but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you>> (Mark 11:23).

It should be noted that on the day of Pentecost alone, more believers were added to Jesus' followers than during his entire earthly ministry up to that time: *<<So those who welcomed his message were baptised, and that day about three thousand persons were added>>* (Acts 2:41). These works are greater not because they are more amazing miracles but because they will be greater in their worldwide scope, they will result in the transformation of individual lives and, indeed, of whole cultures and societies.

It must be remembered that salvation is not by works but by the grace of God alone. It is faith in God's promises that has its natural outlet through the works of the church. Or as Paul puts it: *<<For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love>>* (Galatians 5:6).

¹³ I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 14:13

I will do whatever you ask in my name. This is in line with Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount: *<<Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you>>* (Matthew 7:7). This theme will be repeated throughout the farewell discourse. Praying in Jesus' name does not refer to some magic formula added to the end of a prayer. It means to pray in keeping with his character and concerns and, indeed, in union with him. The disciples, through their union with Christ, are taken up into his agenda. This agenda, as throughout his ministry, is to bring glory to the Father. This verse has been understood by some Christians to be a blanket promise that Jesus will give them whatever they want. Such idolatry of the self is the very opposite of eternal life. The offer is really a great promise for the advance of God's purposes in oneself, in the church and in the world.

Praying in Jesus' name means praying in a way consistent with his character and his will, for a person's name in the ancient world represented what the person was like; it also means coming to God in the authority of Jesus. Probably both senses are intended here. Adding 'in Jesus' name' at the end of every prayer is neither required nor wrong. Effective prayer must ask for and desire what Jesus delights in. Refer also to the comments made on 1 John 5:15.

So that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If one prays in accord with what Jesus desires, and such prayers can only come with the guidance of the Holy Spirit: *<<Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words>>* (Romans 8:26), and: *<<But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit>>* (Jude 20), then glory will come to God the Father through the name of his Son.

¹⁴ If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

John 14:14

If you ask me gives warrant for praying directly to Jesus. Many other verses encourage prayer to God the Father, e.g. <<*You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name*>> (John 15:16).

III.a.i.6 John 14:15-31 - The Promise of the Holy Spirit

This passage continues Jesus' Farewell Discourse where he gives his most passionate and important instructions about love and the Holy Spirit. As the betrayers of Jesus encircle him, what does he do? Jesus encourages and comforts his followers and continues his mission.

Jesus then turns to the all important and encompassing reason why he is here. The most hideous torture ever conceived to produce the greatest amount of pain awaits him, and he was experiencing betrayal all the time. He was going through the most heinous emotional pain a person could experience all at once in this passage. Yet, he turns his attention to his disciples and encourages them to keep going and not to be afraid, giving them examples and characterisations of love.

¹⁵ 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

John 14:15

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. Jesus' words echo the demands of the Deuteronomic covenant, for example: <<*You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments*>> (Deuteronomy 5:10), and: <<*So now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? Only to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord your God and his decrees that I am commanding you today, for your own well-being*>> (Deuteronomy 10:12-13), and reflect his unique authority. True love manifests itself in willing obedience, living a life that emulates the walk of Jesus, who only ever did and said what his Father instructed him to do and say: <<*whoever says, 'I abide in him', ought to walk just as he walked*>> (1 John 2:6), which is what John's friend Gaius did: <<*I was overjoyed when some of the friends arrived and testified to your faithfulness to the truth, namely, how you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth*>> (3 John 3-4).

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. ¹⁷ This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

John 14:16-17

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate. It is the Son who makes the request but the Father who gives the Spirit, just as he had promised: <<*Then afterwards I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit*>> (Joel 2:28-29). Jesus could even have asked the Father to protect him from those who would later crucify him and he knew that the Father would do as he asked: <<*Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?*>> (Matthew 26:53).

The Holy Spirit (v.26), the Spirit of truth who will guide the disciples into all truth (16:13), will serve as another Advocate, Counsellor, or 'helping Presence', Greek *parakletos*. He will indwell Jesus' followers forever, functioning as Jesus' emissary in his physical absence. The promise of the divine presence with Jesus' followers in vv.15-24 includes the Spirit (vv.15-17), Jesus (vv.18-21), and the Father (vv.22-24).

By using the term another Advocate, it seems that Jesus also considered himself to be an Advocate, which John confirms in: <<*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*>> (1 John 2:1).

Whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. The Holy Spirit's dwelling is with the believers, for he is in them and is known by them, but unbelievers cannot know him because the world is neither holy nor of the truth, as Paul confirms: <<*Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are discerned spiritually*>> (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The present tense you know him seems puzzling at first since Jesus has not yet requested the Father to send the Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit, although a distinct person, will be Jesus' representative on earth in his absence, fulfilling the role that Jesus had done for the Father and thus he is known by the disciples. It is one of the mysteries of the Godhead how each person is revealed by the others.

He abides with you, and he will be in you. This does not mean that there was no work of the Spirit of God within believers prior to this time, refer also to the comments made on 7:39, but rather that the Holy Spirit will be in believers in a new and more powerful sense after Pentecost. As the divine presence among believers the Advocate enables them to be God's presence in the world. He is with them and in them glorifying Jesus by revealing the truth about him to believers. In this way, the community, by the presence of the Advocate, bears witness to Jesus and thus continues Jesus' own mission of judgment and life-giving.

John speaks of the Advocate in relation to the Father, the Son, the disciples and the world. The Father is the source of the Advocate, and Jesus is the one who sends the Advocate by asking the Father to send him. Thus both the Son and the Advocate have the same source, the Father; but the Son has a role in the historical sending of the Advocate. Both Jesus and the Advocate play distinct but related roles in the revelation of the Father and the giving of life.

¹⁸ ‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.

John 14:18

I will not leave you orphaned carries the sense of the disciples not being abandoned by Jesus when he departs. They will not have the natural vulnerabilities that orphans experience for the Spirit will be with them. This is what God had promised his people long before: <<*I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel*>> (1 Kings 6:13). This promise is now transferred onto Gentile believers in Christ also.

I am coming to you most likely means that Jesus will appear to the disciples after his resurrection (Chapters 20-21). Some interpreters have taken this as a reference to the Holy Spirit’s coming, which Jesus does promise (vv.16-17), but both Jesus and John always use precise wording in maintaining a distinction between Jesus and the Spirit.

¹⁹ In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.

John 14:19

In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Jesus had given this message to the Jews earlier: <<*Jesus then said, ‘I will be with you a little while longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. You will search for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come’*>> (John 7:33-34), but here he speaks directly to those who believe in him. The fact that the disciples will see him suggests his coming spiritual presence with them is not in view, and the fact that the world will not see him rules out the Second Coming. So, most likely, he is speaking of his appearance after the resurrection, at which time he will impart the Spirit to them (20:22).

Because I live, you also will live. They will live because they will be united to him by the Spirit and thus come to share in the life of him who is resurrection and life. All of this is made possible by Jesus’ own death and resurrection.

²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

John 14:20

The day referred to is the day of resurrection that inaugurates on earth a qualitatively new form of life, eternal life. The phrase on that day echoes OT hopes, for it is used 111 times in the Prophets to refer to the day of God’s great acts of judgment and salvation. Here the salvation is expressed in terms of knowledge and union. The intimacy that exists between the Father and the Son has been the subject of Jesus’ revelation. Jesus has called upon his disciples to accept this truth about him in faith (vv.10-11), and now he promises that after the resurrection the disciples will come to realise it, they will know it. Like faith, this knowledge is not just an intellectual grasping of a truth. It comes from a participation in the divine reality itself, for it is said they will share in that relationship because they will be in the Son and he in them.

You will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Jesus will repeat this statement in his prayer later in the evening: <<*I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me*>> (John 17:20-21).

²¹ They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

John 14:21

They who have my commandments and keep them, i.e. follows and obeys them. Obedience to Christ is an indication of genuine love for him: <<*but whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. By this we may be sure that we are in him: whoever says, 'I abide in him', ought to walk just as he walked*>> (1 John 2:5-6). This union is not simply a matter of shared ideas or feelings but of shared life. The love is reciprocal: those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them. This verse does not deny the love God has for all his creatures, but rather speaks of the fulfilment of that love in a qualitatively new way for those who are in the Son. Believers are those who have entered into the same reciprocity of love that unites the Father and the Son. It also clearly states that those who become Jesus' disciples will have a revelation of him, not seeing him physically or merely knowing about him, but knowing him through their mutual relationship.

²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, 'Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?'

John 14:22

The Judas referred to here is most likely <<*Judas son of James*>> mentioned in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13, and not Judas the half brother of Jesus in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3.

Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world? The term used for reveal is Greek *emphanizo*, and is used in the Septuagint for the theophany Moses received on Sinai: <<*Moses said, 'Show me your glory, I pray'*>> (Exodus 33:18). Judas seems to be confused because he is looking for another theophany that will startle the world, but Jesus is only speaking of revealing himself to his disciples.

²³ Jesus answered him, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.'

John 14:23-24

Jesus answered him. As is often the case, Jesus does not seem to address the question directly, yet in fact he goes to the heart of the issue. Judas has spoken of the contrast between believers and the world, and Jesus describes the disciple as one who loves him: Those who love me will keep my word. Jesus is referring not to simply holding onto his teaching, but to actually acting in accordance with it, as he himself has responded to the Father. His teaching is not just interesting thoughts about God and the world. Rather, he has revealed God and opened the way to share God's own life. To obey his teaching is to adopt God's pattern of life. However, it is conditional and the condition for such obedience is love for Jesus. The commands of Jesus are not a set of rules like traffic law; they are a description of a pattern of life that reflects God's own life transposed into human circumstances.

Those who love me will keep my word is a confident statement by Jesus that all true believers will follow his teaching. However, believers who still battle with some of the temptations of life should not despair or fear they are not true believers because of it. God knows the heart of each person and he knows those who are his. He will not lose any that belong to him just because they fail from time to time as the story of Peter will soon show.

After describing the ones to whom he will show himself, Jesus speaks of the showing itself: my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Instead of describing a spectacular theophany, Jesus speaks of dwelling with his disciples. The future intimacy in heaven will begin already here on earth. The great prophetic hope of a time when God would dwell with his people: *<<I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary among them for evermore. My dwelling-place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people>>* (Ezekiel 37:26-27), and: *<<Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! For lo, I will come and dwell in your midst, says the Lord>>* (Zechariah 2:10), has come to pass in the incarnation and the dwelling Jesus mentions here.

Home, Greek *monē*, also room or dwelling-place, is the same word used in a different context in v.2. Just as the Father and the Son now make their home with Christians in this age, Jesus is preparing for them a place in heaven where they will one day live with God (vv.2-3). On the theme of God's dwelling among his people, refer to comments on 1:14.

Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. In this passage, as throughout the Gospel, John speaks of the dependency of the Son upon the Father. The Father, in love, sent the Son, and so those who receive the Son in love will receive this love of the Father. For the word that they obey in love is not the Son's but that of the Father himself: the word that you hear is not mine. Jesus' word is not the word of a mere human teacher that can be debated and modified; it comes from the Father: but is from the Father who sent me, and thus is and expresses ultimate reality. Those who do not love and obey the Son reject the Father himself: *<<No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also>>* (1 John 2:23).

²⁵ ‘I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

John 14:25-26

I have said these things to you while I am still with you. While in the future the Father and the Son will make their dwelling with the true disciple (v.23), in the meantime Jesus is still with them, giving them further words to receive and obey. Jesus realises that there is no way the disciples can yet understand what he has just been explaining to them, so he goes on to comfort them with the promise of an interpreter.

The Advocate, whom the Father will send in my name. As already noted, it is the Father who gives the Spirit but he does so in the name of the Son, so that the Son now continues in communion with his believers as they receive his Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will teach you uses the masculine Greek pronoun *ekeinos*, ‘he’, instead of the neuter pronoun *ekeino*, ‘it’, which would have been expected for grammatical agreement with the grammatically neuter antecedent *Pneuma* or Spirit. Many interpreters have seen this as a deliberate choice on John’s part, indicating an awareness of the distinct personhood of the Holy Spirit, although others disagree, suggesting that the pronoun is masculine in order to agree with the masculine noun Advocate earlier in the sentence. John follows the same usage in 15:26 and 16:13-14.

That he will teach the disciples everything and remind you of all that I have said to you is an important promise regarding the disciples’ future role in writing the words of Scripture; refer also 16:13-15. Jesus’ promise here is specifically to these disciples, who would become the apostles after Pentecost, although there is of course a broader teaching and guiding ministry of the Holy Spirit generally in the lives of believers, as is taught elsewhere in Scripture: <<***For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God***>> (Romans 8:14), and: <<***Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law***>> (Galatians 5:16-18).

The Holy Spirit will teach and remind. In John, to remember something means both to recall it and understand it. Teaching and reminding probably should not be seen as two separate activities but instead as two ways of speaking of the same thing, so v.26 is perhaps better translated as ***‘that one will teach you everything, that is, he will remind you of everything which I said to you’***.

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. This statement both echoes and fulfils OT prophecy: *<<I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary among them for evermore>>* (Ezekiel 37:26). The expression peace, Hebrew *shalom*, has a much richer connotation than the English word does since it conveyed not merely the absence of conflict and turmoil but also the notion of positive blessing, especially in terms of a right relationship with God: *<<The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace>>* (Numbers 6:24-26), *<<May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!>>* (Psalm 29:11), and: *<<The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts>>* (Haggai 2:9 ESV); and also, as a result, the idea that ‘all is well’ in one’s life. This may be manifested most clearly amid persecution and tribulation.

The peace that Jesus offers is the gift of calmness and confidence that comes from a union with God and faith in him and his purposes: *<<True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin>>* (Malachi 2:6 NIV), *<<And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus>>* (Philippians 4:7), *<<And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful>>* (Colossians 3:15), *<<Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with all of you>>* (2 Thessalonians 3:16), and: *<<Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ>>* (Philemon 3).

I do not give to you as the world gives. The world’s idea of peace is something that comes through the destruction of its enemies, and consists of physical and emotional comfort. The peace that Jesus gives is grounded in God and not in circumstances. It is the peace that Jesus himself has exhibited in this Gospel and is exhibiting in this farewell discourse, even while he knows he is about to be killed. Soon he will speak of the continued trouble his disciples will experience in the world (15:18–16:4), but they will simply be living out what he himself has already been experiencing. Disciples will share Jesus’ troubles, but they will also have his peace, for they will share in his own relationship with the Father. Therefore, Jesus goes on to say: Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid, adding the concept of fear to his opening statement in this chapter. This statement is as valid today as it was then.

Fear is something that all humans feel from time to time. It is a human design feature to warn us of danger. However, fear often has negative connotations and people who live their lives in a fearful state show that knowledge of God’s love is absent. Believers in Jesus may take comfort that as God’s life grows within them and as their hearts are healed, they enter into the inheritance of Jesus’ peace, which replaces their sinful fear.

²⁸ You heard me say to you, “I am going away, and I am coming to you.” If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

John 14:28-29

I am going away, and I am coming to you. Again, Jesus confirms both that he is leaving their physical presence but that he will return to them by the Holy Spirit that will soon be poured into their hearts.

If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father. The Greek construction of this phrase indicates that the disciples did not yet love Jesus in the truest sense. They believe that they love him but their focus is on themselves, for fear is centred on self and circumstance. Jesus’ great love and focus is the Father; thus the prospect of returning to him fills Jesus with joy. If the disciples shared this focus and really loved Jesus, that is, willed the best for him, they also would share this joy.

That the disciples were apparently not rejoicing that Jesus was going to the Father is often reflected in churches today when the response to a blessing or a healing on others is met with a response such as ‘why didn’t I get blessed or healed?’ Christian love is rejoicing in the goodness of God wherever it may manifest itself and irrespective of personal circumstances.

In saying that the Father is greater than I, Jesus means that the Father, as the one who sends and commands, is greater in authority or leadership than the Son. However, this does not mean that Jesus is inferior in his being and essence to the Father, as 1:1, 10:30 and 20:28 clearly indicate.

Arius, who lived in the 4th Century, and others who have held views similar to his since then have taken this verse as proof that Jesus is not divine. The majority of teachers in the church rejected this notion, and indeed it is not compatible with other material in this very Gospel. It has been clear from the first verse that the Son is one with God and yet distinct from God.

The issues raised by this verse are matters of significant debate today. The false teaching of Arius is still quite prevalent, and thus the issue of Jesus’ deity continues to be debated. But even among those who accept his oneness with God there is dispute over the nature of this relationship. Since the life of the church derives from and is to reflect the pattern of the life of God the question of hierarchy and equality within the Godhead has significant implications for the believer’s view both of God and of the life to which he calls them. Unfortunately, most of the debate seems to be between those promoting hierarchy on the one side and equality on the other. Few are wrestling with what seems to be the biblical picture of both hierarchy and equality. Fallen human society can understand hierarchy and equality separately, but to have them both at the same time is a concept found rarely if ever in fallen humanity.

And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe. Jesus' statement is one of several references to his foreknowledge in this section. The common OT idea that God and his true prophets are known by their ability to foretell events. For example: <<*I declared them to you from long ago, before they came to pass I announced them to you, so that you would not say, 'My idol did them, my carved image and my cast image commanded them'*>> (Isaiah 48:5), is seen to be true of Jesus.

³⁰ I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; ³¹ but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us be on our way.

John 14:30-31

The ruler of this world in its present fallen, sinful state is Satan: <<*Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out*>> (John 12:31), and: <<*We know that we are God's children, and that the whole world lies under the power of the evil one*>> (1 John 5:19). Those who do not follow Christ are not autonomous. They are serving Satan, whether they are aware of this or not. Satan is coming in the person of Judas and those with him, and this is why in a short time Jesus will no longer talk much with them. However, Jesus is not subject to Satan, for Satan has no power over or claim on Jesus. Satan cannot force Jesus to do anything, but Jesus willingly submits to the suffering that is to come, out of obedience to his Father.

I do as the Father has commanded me. Jesus' obedience to the Father signifies his love for the Father. And he wants to ensure that the world may know that I love the Father.

Rise, let us be on our way. The transition from v.31 to 15:1 is at times viewed as a 'literary seam', i.e. an indication that John's Gospel is pieced together from different sources. Some think it more likely that John is implying that Jesus and his followers were leaving the upper room, making their way to the Kidron Valley, and arriving in the Garden of Gethsemane (18:1), with the teaching in between occurring during the journey. Others believe that they stood to leave but that Jesus then moved onto a new thread of teaching before they left the room, concluding with his prayer in Chapter 17. None of the following teaching is dependent upon a particular location so it is better to focus on what is being said rather than where it was being said.