



Lesson 8 July 25th, 2020

Wisdom: The Way, Truth, and Life

MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL

Study Scripture – John 14:1-14

Background Scripture – John 14:1-14

Key Verse:

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14:6

INTRODUCTION

The word of God often faces us in situations where our real self is exposed and revealed. We all like to think of ourselves as being pretty good. When we know that we are believers in Christ we are confident that we understand ourselves. But there really is nothing like a big shock to really expose who we really are. Three of the disciples of Jesus, Peter, Thomas, and Philip that we consider to be heavyweights are now faced with a shock and their individual reactions are very interesting. These three are held up as examples for they are like all the other disciples. These reactions led to great teachings by the Lord Jesus Christ and so we have benefited by the disciple's weaknesses and peculiar personalities. Their puzzlements are certainly not much different from ours.

Jesus used the plural as He spoke to the disciples so He confronted all of them with their individual weaknesses and ignorance. We see in them the problems which troubles all of us. We too have our concerns about ourselves and our position in Christ. We too want to be sure of everything about ourselves, about the Lord Jesus Christ, and about the Father. So this Study will certainly help us if we decide to accept who we really are and give up some of the pretenses that we have.

Our Study Scripture therefore examines the remedy or the way out of worry, distress and fear. It lays out a cure for the 'troubled hearts' that plagued the disciples at the time of Jesus' 'Upper Room' discourse, just before His death. Remember Jesus Himself came down from Heaven, became human, and experienced a 'troubled heart' on occasions, (John 13:21).

Just before the event in our Study Jesus had told them that He was giving them a New Commandment which was that they should love one another as He had loved them. But something that was massively important to God was not what preoccupied the disciples. They all were more interested in what one might consider the relatively minor though important statement that He was only going to be with them a little while longer and where He was going no one could follow immediately. It seems quite clear that us humans are more interested in things that might satisfy our curiosity than focusing on and be in obedience to the word of God especially to something like the new Commandment that we have love one for another.

This event was set in the context of the work of Messiah which Jesus had often spoken to them about. Jesus said plainly that now the Son of Man would be glorified and God would be glorified in Him.

But given their political position about the work of Messiah and what it would mean for them their focus was not really on any New Commandment. Peter therefore in his own familiar and straightforward fashion led the way on challenging the Lord Jesus Christ on His statement that no one, including Peter, certainly could follow Him Jesus where He was going. So Peter brashly questioned why he could not follow Jesus now for he would lay down his life for Jesus. This rash statement led to Jesus telling him that before the cock would crow he would deny Him Jesus three times. He would fall in fear when confronted by a young girl. He really did not properly understand himself.

In our Study Text therefore we are facing the fears, anxieties, and worries of the disciples. It is therefore to be noted that when we face fears, anxieties, and worries we too would tend to not pay attention to Commandments whether new or old, and whether or not they are of more importance than the things that we face which we think are of more importance.

So we will look at Peter's selective approach which leads of course now to his unhappiness. His problem was Jesus' statement that He is going away. We of course are also selective in the areas that we are willing to follow God in for we are generally only willing to do what Jesus asks if they are things with which we are comfortable.

The listening disciple Thomas notices Peter's discouragement because Jesus had told them He was leaving and so he wants things to be spelled out in advance. Thomas had another difficulty which was in Jesus' statement that where He was going they knew and the way they know. One writer states **"He wants a roadmap. Thomas isn't a guy that likes ambiguity. Thomas wants everything spelled out in advance. He wants to know how things would turn out. He wants to see it for himself. He wants all the details"**.

So as we study look at yourself. Are you that kind of person who if you suspect that the Spirit is leading you in a particular direction you will stop dead in your tracks if you do not know every single detail about where Jesus is leading you? It is very interesting to see how Jesus dealt with Thomas and how He will deal with your particular kind of personality.

Then we will look at Philip who is difficult to convince of anything. He was a practical man who wanted something practical. He wanted proof. He wanted to be sure that everything was giving him a good insight on the Father. Remember when Jesus asked Philip to feed the 5000 he looked around and asked Jesus the very practical question: ***"Where can we buy enough bread for all these people?"***

So are you like Peter, Thomas, or Philip? Or are you a mixture all three of them? Look at your spiritual life and how you react to the direction of the Holy Spirit and to what He calls you to do. Do you have similar questions to those these disciples had? We can and should be able to relate to all these disciples and see how Jesus gave them comfort. In so doing we will receive tremendous benefit in our times of distress.

The issue concerns "faith", what are we to believe. Note that Jesus words begin with *"Let not..."*, making it abundantly clear that the disciples as well as us hold in our hands what one writer calls **"the key to release from heart trouble"**.



We will therefore learn from Jesus' teachings revolving around three themes. The first is the theme of Heaven, the second is the theme of the way of salvation, and the third is the theme of the source of comfort.

Jesus' public ministry had ended with His official rejection by the 'Jews' and His few remaining days would be spent in teaching and fellowship with His disciples. His words on the occasion of the last gathering with all His disciples are recorded in chapters thirteen through seventeen and have become known as the "Upper Room Discourse". He knew that His 'hour' had come and assembled the disciples for a last Passover with them and today's Lesson comes from that occasion.

Jesus had shared the Feast of the Passover with the disciples, washed their feet, dealt with their pride, false ambitions, self-confidence and lack of humility. They were still preparing themselves to be leaders in what was to be the establishment of the 'kingdom of God' in great power and glory. They were still preoccupied with dreams of the glory awaiting them in the coming kingdom. However the usual festive 'Passover' mood soon became somber and worse. The disciples knew very well that Jesus was in mounting danger and that the High Priest, the chief priests and rulers of the Jews were determined to put Him to death. Jesus informed the gathering that one of the disciples would betray Him and Judas left shortly to carry out the dastardly deed. Except for John and perhaps Peter, the others did not know yet who the betrayer was, but they were troubled by the news that one of them would betray the Master. The Lord also announced that He was leaving them and that they could not follow Him. More than anything, the realization that Jesus was going to leave them was what they could not get out of their minds.

These men had left their jobs and families to follow Jesus in the hope that He was the promised Messiah. They were ecstatic a few days before when He rode into Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd but now He was talking about His death, not about His messianic kingdom. Jesus then rebuffed Peter's oath of allegiance and love by informing him that before daybreak, he would deny Jesus three times. Obviously some great trial was imminent. The disciples' world was turned upside down in a matter of hours. They were understandably worried and concerned and so the Lord's emphasis in of all of John 14, not just in the Study Text, is to comfort their troubled hearts, especially as they were to witness His brutal execution the next day.

Note His words provide comfort for all His people in all ages!

Jesus' aimed His words at addressing the fears and anxiety of the disciples. Note however that Jesus' words were not intended to give them immediate comfort. This was not a "fast relief" or "quick relief" pill. Instead, this was intended to produce eternal joy. The words recorded in chapter 14 (indeed, in 13-17) are intended to minister to the troubled spirits of the disciples—but not to give them immediate comfort.

Jesus' words have great relevance to us today when we are in any kind of trouble and are confused and perplexed by what we hear and what we face. Remember that no one is immune to feeling troubled at times when they are exposed to pressure and danger. The apostles went through times of great peril and they too trembled. Even Jesus was "*deeply troubled in spirit*". Jesus was troubled because of what lay before Him, and the Eleven were "troubled" because they did not understand what lay before them.



Our Lesson shows that Jesus' earthly life with His disciples was intended to produce a temporary though exceptional relationship. The more permanent relationship with Him would follow His soon coming death, burial, resurrection and return to His Father in Heaven. The physical relationship was good but soon they would have to come to relate to Him in a very different way. They would have to come into the same relationship with Him that He had with His heavenly Father.

We too are invited to focus on the permanent, spiritual relationship with Jesus and the Father. The reason for this is that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. There is only one Way, the Truth is a single thing and it is He, and the real-Life men so desperately want is only to be found in the Son.

Today we look at how Jesus provided a cure for troubled hearts, how He ruled out fear and despair and replaced them with faith and hope. Since we all face a great deal of stress in life, these are useful instructions to manage stress. It even teaches us how to deal with the dreadful facts about death and how to turn our fearful thoughts about death into comforting thoughts. As we read the Text, let us pay special attention to the fact that in these fourteen verses there are fourteen references to the Father. At the same time note that every time Jesus speaks of the Father, He places Himself right with Him and pictures Himself as being united with the Father.

So while our Lord's words in the Upper Room are intended to comfort and encourage His disciples later on, they are also words that apply to Christians today. Whose spirit does not find comfort in these words:

"let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. There are many dwelling places in my Father's house. Otherwise, I would have told you ..."?

Let us turn, then, to this assuring, comforting Text to find peace for our souls in these troubled times.

THE TEXT

Verse 1. *Let not your heart be troubled:* The scene was the Upper Room, Jesus and His disciples were celebrating Passover, the 'Last Supper'. These were the last hours of Jesus' earthly ministry; in a few short hours He would undergo the excruciating ordeal of crucifixion. Judas had already been dismissed from the group to go and do his dirty deed. It was a time when one could reasonably expect that the disciples would seek to comfort and console Jesus; however, we see that it is Jesus who is the one that is comforting His disciples.

Of course the disciples were understandably perplexed, for their Friend and Master who had provided for and protected them for the last three years and for whom they had left family and business was about to leave them. They had no illusions about the fact that the rulers of Israel would seek to destroy them and so Jesus' words about leaving them struck terror in their hearts. It is clear that the disciples to this point had not fully grasped the 'Suffering Servant' aspect of Messiah's ministry. The 'two' on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-27) showed the typical lack of understanding and their misconceptions about Messiah. They spilled out their true feelings to the 'cloaked' Jesus saying:

"But we had trusted that He was the One who was about to redeem Israel. And besides all this, today is the third day since these things were done." Luke 24:21.



No wonder Jesus had to again teach them the great doctrines we will look at today, to comfort their troubled spirits. Jesus knew that His final hour was approaching, but for the disciples their lives were about to take a drastic turn, as they were about to face the harsh reality of truly following Jesus. Thus Jesus' opening comment, "*let not your heart be troubled...*"

The use of the plural ('your') indicates that Jesus was speaking to all the disciples and not just Peter. His "Let not" tells them that they had the key to minimizing their stress and that they themselves, individually, could do something about the problem of their troubled hearts. They could let the 'troubled heart' condition continue or they could prevent it from happening. So we are told that there is a way to respond to distress.

Note that Jesus did not say that it was wrong for them to be troubled, or that they should be cheerful and behave macho, with a confident spirit. He told them how they could overcome the problem of the troubled heart. Remember that in chapter 11:33 we are told that at Lazarus's tomb Jesus groaned in the spirit and was troubled. In chapter 12:27 when the Greeks came to ask Him questions and Jesus therefore knew that the time of His Cross was approaching He said that His soul was troubled. At the Last Supper in chapter 13:21 when Jesus spoke of the one who would betray Him He said that He was troubled in spirit. So we know that Jesus experienced life as a real man. He was made like us and He experienced what we experience except that He was without sin. The word He used for "trouble" described the surging of waters on the sea in the midst of a storm. So Jesus just like us experienced real trouble in the spirit.

"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me ". When the disciples see events unfold that lead to Jesus' execution, their natural reaction will be to lose *heart* (John 14:27). Jesus anticipates this reaction with a call to belief. He connects belief in God with belief in Himself. The verb translated "believe" used twice, can be understood in at least two ways. One way sees Jesus as making two statements of fact: "You believe in God and you believe in me." On the other hand, some students propose that the second phrase should be seen as an imperative. Therefore Jesus was saying, "Since you believe in God, you must also believe in me." In this understanding, Jesus is urging the disciples to exercise reliant trust in Himself as a logical extension of trusting the Father (John 3:15, 16).

Either way, Jesus is clearly defining faith in Himself on the same level as faith in God. For the faithful people of Israel, there was no greater truth than that God is one (Deuteronomy 6:4). There can be no other implication: Jesus asserts that He is divine, that He is God. Faith in God and in Jesus is more than just affirming a truth. To place trust in Jesus is to place trust in God. Despite the different ways to interpret what Jesus meant, whether He was asking a question or making a statement, does not alter the basic indication from Jesus, that they did believe in God the Father and that they should similarly believe in Him. Remember that the disciples would now be under immense temptation to not believe in Jesus as the Christ. So Jesus was telling them, that just as they believed in God the Father even though they did not see Him or were able to touch Him, in the same way they would have to believe in Him, Jesus; even though He would go away and be "unseen". *'Also'* is intended to link the way the disciples believe in the Father with the way they must now believe in the Son. Though they would not see Him, they should realize that He would be with them in as real a way, just as when He was actually with them in the flesh. Actually, His presence would be even more real when He was away. He would make the necessary provision. It was very important for Jesus to use this opportunity to



indicate the intimate and indissoluble union of the Father with the Son, as expressed in verses 7 to 12. Both the Father and the Son would be with them and be much closer to them that they could imagine.

Verse 2. *In my Father's house are many mansions:* Jesus spells out what belief in the Father and in Him meant for them. The word for “mansions” means either the act of dwelling in any place (Joh14:23, “we will make our abode with him”), or it means “the place where one dwells” or dwelling places. Jesus’ point here is not that Heaven is a grand place, though it certainly is, but that God has provided room for all members of His kingdom. The picture that Jesus painted of Heaven is a huge building with many rooms or suites of rooms in which people reside. The emphasis is not only on the luxury of the House but its large size to accommodate all believers. Other revelation about Heaven stresses its opulence (Rev. 21:1—22:5). The imagery of a dwelling place ('rooms') is taken from the oriental house in which the sons and daughters have apartments under the same roof as their parents.

Note that one such as Jesus and the Father would not prepare a dwelling place for another person if they were not confident that that person would come to the dwelling place. So this was tremendous reassurance that they had a secured future with friends in high places. Some like to quote this verse in a materialistic sense but as noted earlier the word translated ‘mansions’ refers to ‘lodging-places’; ‘places to stay’ and not to elaborate houses. In comforting the disciples, Jesus would have their minds directed to the heavenly reality and not focused on the earthly events that would soon transpire.

I go to prepare a place for you... this does not mean to imply that heaven, in a physical sense, was not prepared before this, but that Jesus' life, teachings, and death allows sinful mankind to approach and dwell with a holy God. Jesus goes before believers as their guide and forerunner (Heb. 6:20).

Note that the glories and blessedness of Heaven are brought before us in the New Testament under a variety of representations. Heaven is called a 'country' (Luke 19:12; Heb. 11:16); this tells of its vastness. It is called a 'city' (Heb. 11:10; Rev. 21[]); this intimates the large number of its inhabitants. It is called a 'kingdom' (II Peter 1:11); this suggests its orderliness. It is called 'paradise' (Luke 23:43; Rev. 2:7); this emphasizes its delights. It is called the 'Father's house,' which speaks of its intimacy.

Jesus assured His disciples that if heaven were, otherwise, He "would have told" them in what way it was different. This assurance recalls verse one, where Jesus urged them to trust Him. Our Lord previously spoke of His departure as including His death, His resurrection and His ascension (13:31-32, 36). Consequently, all of that are in view when He spoke about going to prepare a place for believers. His death and resurrection, as well as His ascension and return to heaven, would prepare a place for them. The '*place,*' which is the Father's house or heaven, already existed when Jesus spoke these words. Jesus would not go to heaven to *create* a place for believers there. Rather, everything that He would do, from His death to His return to heaven, would constitute preparation for believers to join Him there ultimately. The idea that Jesus is presently constructing dwelling places for believers in heaven, and has been doing so for two thousand years, is not what Jesus meant here, though this is how some have understood Him. Jesus' *going* (i.e., to the Cross), itself, prepared the place.



Jesus only speaks the truth and we can take comfort in the times of greatest distress, because He also has the power to perform what the truth proclaims and the power to bring every promise to fruition.

Verse 3. *I will come again, and receive you unto myself;* **The** greatest comfort would be to know that Jesus would not only go to prepare a place for them, but that He would return to receive them, so that never again would they be separation.

...where I am, there you may be also... Heaven is where Jesus is (John 17:24)! Heaven is really face-to-face fellowship with the Triune God! The New Testament indicates this fellowship occurs at death,

(2 Cor. 5:8) and or at the Second Coming, (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The Bible is surprisingly silent about afterlife. There is a place awaiting all the saints of God, a personal reception by Jesus and a guarantee that we will forever be with Lord (Acts 7:55-56). What could be more comforting? Even in the face of death, the truth and promises of God are the underpinning for the weary souls.

Jesus spoke of a personal return. He was not saying that an angel or anybody else will come, but that He will return and take His people to be with Him. This is a promise from the lips of Jesus Himself. He will come, receive believers unto Himself. This will answer all their fears of persecution and their fear of death. These are most comforting words. They have encouraged believers throughout the centuries and will encourage believers in the future.

Note however the clear statement that where Jesus is, is where heaven is. One very wise person said:

“You do not go to Heaven to find Christ. You go to Christ to find Heaven.”

Verses 4 - 5. *... and the way ye know...* Jesus’ statement certainly elicited a response with the disciple that we call the doubting one. Thomas spoke first. Here he should be called honest Thomas. At least he was logical. If he did not know where Jesus was going, they would not know the way. Thomas’ statement reveals a mind preoccupied with one’s own notions and preconceptions; these often block one’s ability to plainly see the truth. Thus when Jesus said to them, you know where I’m going and you know exactly how to get there, their reaction was natural. They claimed not to know where He was going, though they actually knew the way.

“From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day,” Matthew 16:21. (Luke 9:22, Luke 18:31-33.)

So it is not that Jesus had not spoken plainly about these things, Thomas however, was not operating on the same wavelength. He had put certain teachings out of his mind and so he and the other disciples demonstrated a lack of understanding.

Jesus’ answer is expressed in three terms often used in the Old Testament.

Verse 6. Jesus’ response was gentle and comforting with no rebuke but a simple statement.

I am the way... In the Old Testament, biblical faith was spoken of as a lifestyle path (Deut. 5:32-33; 31:29; Ps. 27:11; Isa. 35:8). The title of the early church was “the Way” (Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 24:14,22). Jesus was emphasizing that He was and is the only way to God. Note that Jesus is responding to Thomas’s question about “the way” so Jesus is responding and His answer has to do with the way. So Jesus is speaking about the way to the Father and therefore He will say **“No man cometh to the father except by me”**. So the statement **“I am the way”** is really the most important thing Jesus is saying.



The other statements about **“truth”** and **“life”** are really designed to stress this fact about Jesus being the way to the Father. One writer cautions us on this matter, the statement of Jesus: **“Notice he doesn't say, “I show the way”. There are people who think of the Lord Jesus as simply a person who shows all of us the way. He's a man such as we are but he managed to succeed a little better than most of us do in spiritual things. And so he shows us the way. There is an element of truth in this because of course the New Testament says he is an example for us. But there's far more in this than a way shower.**

Or perhaps one might read this as, “I know the way”. There are those who feel that Jesus' religious experience is so great that he knows things by virtue of the experience that he had. He's not really the second person of the Trinity, he's not really a divine person, but a human person who knows a great deal more than the rest of us about divine things because he lived closer to the one true God. But the Lord Jesus does not say, “I know the truth” though he does. He doesn't say, “I show the way”, though he does. He knows the way, he show the way, but more than that, he is the way”.

...the truth... The term "truth" in Greek philosophy had the connotation of "truth" versus "falsehood" or "reality" versus "illusion." In the Old Testament truth was "faithfulness" or "loyalty". "Truth" and "life" characterize "the way." The term "truth" is often used in John to describe divine activity.

Truth presents things as they truly are; Jesus is then the source of all truth and communicates the truth of salvation and of God and of all eternal things in the most perfect manner. Moses through the law was only able to present a shadow of that truth. Though the law was perfect, its purpose was to direct us to the one who gave the law and through whom salvation comes. *“The Law of Jehovah is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making the simple wise.”* Psalms 19:7

“For the Law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the Only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” John 1:17, 18. This truth opposes all false religion. Those who embrace this truth which exposes the deeds of an evil heart, receives peace for they have a pure conscience. Jesus is all that the above Text emphasizes. He is the truth. And to know the truth is to know the way of salvation.

... the life... the 'life' (Gr.=zoā), Jesus is the life that not only saves us from death, but He destroys death itself. *“Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection and the Life! He who believes in Me, though he die, yet he shall live.”* John 11:25

And one writer adds an explanation: **“I'm the life”. Not I am the living one, though he is the living one, not I am life, others of course live. He's not all life. But, “I am the life”. That is the life whereby we may truly live. So to accept the truth, receive the life, is to be on the way. That's a magnificent statement of course”.**

In Chapter 11 Jesus had demonstrated His absolute authority and sovereignty by restoring to life one who had been dead for four days and whose body had already begun to decay. The ability to give life is God's alone, thus in this awesome demonstration of power the divine nature of Jesus was displayed.

...no one comes to the Father but by Me... a shock and offence to false religions! It is very restrictive but also very obvious that Jesus believed that only through a personal relationship



with Himself can one know God (1 John 5:10-12). This has often been called the exclusivistic scandal of Christianity. There is no middle ground here.

The Scripture gives the plain assurance of eternal life to those who believe in Jesus. *No man cometh unto the Father: ...By any other doctrine, by any other merit, or by any other intercession than mine.*

"And there is salvation in no other One; for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Act 4:12.

To come to the Father means, to be accepted of Him; to come before His throne of grace and have one's petitions and prayers heard and to be granted eternal life. The statement reiterates that Jesus is the only way to the Father and to inherit eternal life. We cannot in our own strength or wisdom or power attain eternal life. We cannot by any means or merit of our own enter into God's kingdom; Jesus alone is the way, the truth, and the life. All three of these terms are related to lifestyle faith which is found only in personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus' statement here is extremely important. Most of the world's religions in some shape or form, teach the importance of finding one's way to God. The fact is there is only one way to God the Father and that is through knowing Jesus Christ. There is only one path, not multiple ways to God. This doctrine challenges all other world religions. Those who attempt to find God without Christ are heading for a Christ-less eternity. The statement is absolutely emphatic; it creates an impassable boundary for the proponents of religious tolerance. Jesus makes no apology to those agitated by His doctrine. As mentioned before, Jesus does not conceal the truth to satisfy the minds or emotions of men. The fact remains that Jesus' own statement declares Himself to be *'the way and the truth and the life'*. The destination is the Father, fellowship and communion with Him. The destination is a Person. There is only one true way to the Father. This is through Jesus. There is no other way.

Verse 7. *"If you had known me..."* This is a rebuke. Having followed Jesus throughout His ministry, the disciples believe that they know Him. But in knowing Him, they ought to know His *Father* as well. The Father is the one of whom Jesus has taught, whom He has served, to whom He has prayed, with whom He is fully united (John 1:18; 10:30; 1 John 2:23). But Thomas's words revealed a lack of this understanding.

Jesus does not mean to imply that they were not His true disciples, but that they had not yet come to a full and accurate understanding of who He was and for what purpose He came. In fact, it would not be until His death and resurrection that they would receive this full understanding and be empowered to continue the ministry of Christ and the preaching of the gospel to the glory of God. One's lack of faith or incomplete faith severely hinders one's ability to comprehend the plan of God. Therefore Jesus painstakingly brings His disciples into a deeper understanding of the word of God.

And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him... The rebuke gives way to a promise, however. From now on, the disciples do indeed *know* the Father. Jesus' resurrection will enable them to realize this even more fully. Seeing Jesus, they see God the Son, who is completely one with God the Father. Hearing this discourse of Jesus will enable the disciples to reach a new realization about the Father and the Son following the resurrection.

Without Christ's declaration of the Father, one cannot know God. Jesus explained that He is in unity with the Father and by seeing Him they had seen what God was like and had come to understand His nature. He and the Father are of the same essence, deity! The approaching trial,



death by crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, would be the ultimate turning point in the faith of His disciples. From that point forward they would understand the counsels of God, the purpose of the death of Christ, as demonstrated powerfully in resurrection. Jesus then says, now that you know me you know the Father. From henceforth and that is following the death and resurrection, you understand the counsel of God, because since you have seen and known me you have seen the Father and known the Father.

Verse 8. *Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father...* this apostle has appeared three times thus far in John's Gospel: twice bringing someone to Jesus (John 1:43–48; 12:20–22) and once offering a weak answer to a probing question (6:5–7). Prompted by Jesus' words about *the Father*, he expressed both a longing to see God and a failure to understand Jesus' teaching.

It seems strange that immediately after Jesus' explanation to Thomas, that Philip would ask the identical question - *show us the Father and it is enough for us*. Phillip's question is generally interpreted as coming from disciples that misunderstood the sense in which by seeing Jesus they had seen the Father. This was not a further enquiry as to who the Father was.

It was not wrong to ask for evidence; however Jesus goes on to explain that Philip had received ample evidence and in particular Jesus who is God incarnate is all the evidence that one should require. One writer describes Philip therefore has showing the anxiety of a man of unenlightened faith. So Jesus tells Philip to have a good look at Him and if he did not want to accept His words at least he should look at the works and he would see the hand of God in them.

Jesus takes this opportunity to firm up Philip's understanding, to increase his faith and set the expectations of all believers to come, to all those who have the same request. My words and my works are enough.

Then as today, there are many who continue to demand sign after sign – Jesus says blessed is he who has not seen yet believe. Note belief in God comes by the will of God.

Jesus taught a new kind of reasoning to the disciples, for He explained that it is not seeing which leads to believing, but it is 'believing' that leads to seeing. The disciples who believed should have seen that the Father dwelt in Him, as He dwelt in the Father.

Verse 9. *Have I been so long time with you* (plural). Jesus response to Philip, how can you say such a thing? How can you act as if you do not know me and the Father? Jesus is God in the flesh and when we witness the work of Jesus, we witness the works of God, when we hear the words of Jesus, we hear the words of God, for they are one. Jesus emphatically stresses this point, that he is the physical embodiment of God. *"For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."* (Colossians 2:9).

To look on Jesus and see the Father is not intended in a physical sense; one cannot perceive the essence or substance of God with the natural eye, for God is Spirit and no man has ever seen God.

"No one has seen God at any time; the Only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." (John 1:18).

Jesus then is the manifestation of God. He Jesus, pre-existed all creation as the eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God and was God and by Him did all created things come into being,

(John 1:1-3, 14). Divine confirmation that Jesus was Messiah and had come to reveal the Father is overwhelming. The miracle of the incarnation was the preparation of a physical body for the



eternal Word, whereby He took on the form of a 'servant' setting aside His glory, (Phil.2:5-11) that He may dispense the duties of a faithful high priest and make lasting atonement for His people, (Heb. 2:17).

Verse 10. *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* Throughout the book of John there is an unmistakable emphasis that Jesus is God incarnate (v 11; 1:1-3, 14, 17, 18; 5:10-23, 26; 8:58; 9:35; 10:30, 38; 12:41; 17:1-5; 20; 28). This being the case we note here Jesus' own description of this incredible union or unity that He has with the Father. This relationship is unlike any other, for the Father is in Jesus and Jesus in the Father; they are utterly inseparable. Thus the words, works and the miracles as performed by Jesus are the works of the Father in Him.

Believers can then appeal to the works that He has performed as proof that the Father is in Him, for these works are things that only God can do. (John 10: 30-38; John 5:19; Mat. 11:27). These verses show Jesus in an inseparable and intimate union with God. (John 5:17,19; 5:36; 10:30.)

The *works* to which Jesus refers include miracles, sometimes called "signs" (John 4:46-54) pointing to the deity of Jesus. These works are from *the Father*. Miracles clearly indicate the work of God.

Verse 11. *Believe me that I am in the Father, ...* Jesus repeated the idea in the last verse, stating that there were two grounds on which they might believe; firstly they may believe His words and His testimony, or else they should believe the works that He performed. Either His own testimony was sufficient to convince them, or the many miracles which He performed; in healing the sick, raising the dead and other types of actions which fulfilled the prophecies about what Messiah.

... or else believe me for the very works' sake... otherwise believe because of the works themselves"; Jesus tells them to believe in His works (John 5:36; 10:25,38). His works fulfilled Old

Testament prophecy. His works reveal who He is! The Apostles, like all of us, had to grow in faith.

Verse 12. *He that believeth on me* - This promise has special reference to the apostles themselves. They were full of grief and despair at the thought of Jesus leaving them. Jesus in consoling them pointed to the great honor that would be given them and the assurance that God would never leave them, affording them the demonstration of His mighty power in their ministry.

All Christians have been given power to do greater works than the Lord Jesus, in the sense that since they have Christ within them, they can change lives mightily and grow the kingdom of God. This does not mean automatically that every Christian will have the power to raise the dead or necessarily restore sight to the blind.

The greatest miracle imaginable is to be used by God to change lives. Many have done just that and produced fruit in much greater numbers than existed at the time of Jesus' resurrection.

It is a general promise that greater works than He performed should be done by His followers, without specifying that all His followers would be instrumental in doing them.

The works that I do - The miracles of healing the sick, raising the dead, and others. This was done by the apostles in many instances. (See Act 5:15; 19:12; 13:11; 5:1-10.)



This does not limit God's ability to use other believers in a powerful way; the gifts of the Spirit are alive and active today. These gifts are not for the glory of man, but the glory of God; and for the edification and growth of the body of Christ.

Greater works than these shall he do". The word "greater" refers to the extent of the effects of the miracles performed by the Apostles, not to the demonstration of power used to perform the miracles. Power comes only from Jesus and so the Apostles performed many miracles and even raised the dead on a few occasions. This does not demonstrate greater power than exercised by Jesus. The effects of the miracles performed by the Apostles had a far greater impact than that of Jesus, for His ministry was confined to Judea and relatively few witnessed the direct impact of these miracles. They well knew as Jesus had told them that He was the vine and they were the branches and the Father was the husbandman.

After the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the ministry of the Apostles, these transformed disciples, their works and miracles, were witnessed by many nations and by them countless people have come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. In the Book of Acts we learn that three thousand souls were added in one day on the day of Pentecost. So the word "greater" here is used, not to denote the absolute exertion of power, but the effect which the miracles would have on mankind. The word "works" probably means not merely miracles, but all the things that the Apostles did that made an impression on mankind, including their travels, their labors and their doctrine.

Because I go to my father... It was necessary that Jesus returned to the Father to be exalted, to receive the glory He had laid aside and to send the Holy Spirit, whose ministry would involve empowering the Apostles to spread the gospel, (John 14:26, 14:28; 16:7-14). The ascension of Jesus and His exaltation to the 'right hand' of God in Heaven signifies His position as head over all things in the church.

Verse 13. *Whatsoever ye shall ask...* Asking in the name of Christ means asking according to the will of Christ. One does not ask according to the flesh and expect God's blessing. The Spirit has been given to glorify God, not any human person. This verse has however been distorted and used for self-serving interests, manipulating the vulnerable and feeble faith of God's children. It is true of all Christians, that if we ask in faith and according to the will of God, He will hear us.

Many of our problems stem from wrong priorities; we may ask God, but we ask amiss, we may seek God, but only after seeking everything else. God must be first in everything that we do – *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you..."* Equally important is the manner in which we ask. We should not expect to receive of God, if we doubt His willingness or power to provide the things that we ask. The promises here could refer to God's provision of spreading the gospel. Thus to ask *in my name* is to ask on the account of Jesus, anything pertaining to the gospel in which He is glorified— literally we ask of the Father the things Jesus would ask and therefore it will be granted us, based on the merit of the Son. It must be stressed that God hears and answers prayers according to His will, that He may be glorified. The work of the Apostles was for the glory of God and anything that they asked for pertaining to the fulfillment of His will was granted. They endured suffering, despised the comfort and luxuries of the world, in order that they would faithfully spread the gospel, whereby people would be saved to glorify God.



Verse 14. *If ye shall ask any thing in my name...* Jesus repeated what He essentially said in the last verse, so as to cement it in their minds. He ultimately comforted them by assuring them that He would provide all the necessary resources to accomplish their task in His physical absence; without having Him physically standing by their side.

In my name... does not mean simply tacking this phrase on to the end of our prayers, but that the believer's prayer should be for Jesus' purposes and the good of the kingdom, not for selfish reasons. It means to rely on the merits of Jesus, not our own merit or worthiness. The believer's prayer should be in pursuit of God's glory. When we truly seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, God will lovingly provide all the temporal things for this life which we need and which He deems for our benefit without violating His will.

When you pray in Jesus' name it means you are coming to the Father as Jesus' representative who is doing His business. Jesus introduced the idea of representing Him in Verse 12. When we pray in Jesus' name, we claim to be acting for Him. Someone who prays that way will always ask only what is God's will, or what is subject to God's will, since that is always how Jesus related to His Father. It is impossible to truly pray "in Jesus' name" and ask for something contrary to God's will. These two acts are mutually contradictory.

CONCLUSION

In Jesus of Nazareth, we indeed see God! Fully human and fully divine, Jesus spoke and acted with authority that belongs to God alone. For this reason, His followers came to understand that Jesus is God.

To know Jesus is to know God. To reject Jesus is to reject God. To follow God's path of wisdom is to follow in the path of Jesus, to love and serve as He did.

Jesus has overcome troubles and fears and since we are in Him, we are over-comers. Where the Father dwells is a real place and there He has prepared a perfect home. Christ is the only way to this home of the Father and the only way to get there is to believe in Christ and have saving faith. Fellowship with the Father and Son is the most blessed and pleasant experience imaginable.

If you want to be in this New Heaven and New Earth, turn to and or remain in Christ.

