

John 14: Jesus' "Father" Theology

My Father's Home

John 14.2-3

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.

You believe in God; believe also in me.

My Father’s house has many rooms;

if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there
to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I will come back and take you to be with me
that you also may be where I am.

You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Emphatic Believing

“You believe in God; believe also in me.”

Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.

JOHN 5.23b, 24

- ❖ Remember that the word *believe* (or *belief*) is the key word in the Gospel of John, appearing more than 99 times and emphasizing belief in Jesus *as* (or in correlation to) believing in God. There is a considerable difference of opinion about the grammatical intention (indicative or imperative) of Jesus' use of “believe” in this sentence (e.g. *“You already believe (indicative) in God (indicative); now believe (imperative) in me”*), but what is apparent is that Jesus has spoken both another powerful Christological statement plus an emphatic belief statement.

❖ This Christological statement is important because it establishes a premise for what follows. On numerous occasions, the disciples have heard Jesus declare his equality and exclusive position with the Father (the implications of which were very obvious to his detractors)—

- ▶ *In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.* (5.17-18)
- ▶ *“For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”* (6.40)
- ▶ *“Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me.”* (6.45)
- ▶ *“My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?” “We are not stoning you for any good work,” they replied, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”* (10.29-33)

- ❖ Once again Jesus is asserting his relationship with the Father; He is the Father's *Sent One, the Only Authorized Representative*. Jesus has not come with any personal agenda; he has come only to say and do what represents the Father's will—

“For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.” (12.49-50)

What he will say next will reveal the ultimate outcome of the Father's will and the mission of Jesus in bringing grace and truth (P¹⁶).

- ❖ Jesus has made these “believe” statements in response to the troubled hearts of the disciples. Jesus is, in essence, graciously urging his distressed followers: *“Don't dwell on what is troubling your hearts; believe, believe us, please!”* He really wants them to trust the unseen Father and His *Son-Representative* and to have their hearts and hopes fixed on the end result of THEIR plans for those who believe in *“the One the Father sent”*.

My Father's House

“My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?”

“Hear from heaven, Your dwelling place . . .

1 KINGS 8.27 *et al*

❖ John ended his prologue with this statement—

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. P¹⁸

This night began with Jesus' awareness that he had come from the Father and was returning to the Father. Though a spirit (4.24) unseen (P¹⁸), God is not abstract; He is real, and His residence is real. Jesus had come from a real place (heaven) to reveal the Father and His love; he was returning to this real place: “My Father's house”.

❖ *“My Father’s house has many rooms . . . or is it mansions?”* The gospel song declares: *“I’ve got a mansion just over the hilltop in that bright land where we’ll never grow old.”* The Greek word is *mone* and means “residence (the act or place)” and comes from the verb *meno* which means “to stay (in a given place, state, relation, or expectancy).” The word “mansion” in the KJV was based on the word *mansiones* used in the Latin Vulgate translation. Jesus had come from his Father’s house and is returning to reside with Him—as THEY have eternally done (P¹). Jesus is not speaking here with the intention of provoking an anticipation of lavish reward; rather, these words are meant to reveal the scope of the Father’s love and the Son’s work.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will— to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that He lavished on us. EPHESIANS 1.3-8

- ❖ The emphasis we should see here is the *accommodating immensity* of THEIR work:
 - ▶ The Father loved the world and sent His Son that **whoever** believes in the Son will have eternal life (3.16).
 - ▶ The coming work of the Son, just hours from now when he is lifted up from the earth (12.32), will be so effective that **everyone** who believes in him” (3.15) will be enabled to share in the eternal life that the Son has always shared with the Father.
- ❖ Jesus wants his disciples to be reassured by and focused on the ultimate outcome of the collaborative work of the Father and the Son. The atoning work of Jesus will be so extensively sufficient, that no matter how many believe, they will be justified and will possess eternal life. The love of the Father is so immense that He sent His Son to make it possible for as many as believe—even if it were the whole world—to be His children and share the home that He shares with His *One-and-Only* Son.

❖ *“If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.”*

With these words, Jesus gives his disciples another reason to believe and trust, as well as another emphasis of the seamlessness that exists between him and the Father.

- ▶ Jesus is returning home where he will share in the glory that he had with the Father before the world began (17.5).
- ▶ He is returning to a place that has always existed, to be with the One who sent him to reveal his Father’s heart and love.
- ▶ He is going to prepare the way that “whosoever” can come to the Father (14.6).

The Apostle John will see in heaven the “Lamb looking as if it had been slain” (Revelation 5.6), and will hear the uncountable multitude declaring that salvation belongs to God and to the Lamb (7.10), this “Lamb that was slain before the creation of the world” (13.8)—the fruit and ultimate outcome of the Father’s love and the Son’s sacrifice: millions who are now home with the Father and His Son.

A Promised Return

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

*Surely Your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

PSALM 23.6

- ❖ Note again what Jesus says for reassurance and revelation to his disciples:
 - ▶ What: “I am going”
 - ▶ Where: “I am going there [home, heaven]”
 - ▶ Why: “I am going there to prepare a place for you”
 - ▶ How: “I will come back and take you home to my Father’s house to be with me.”
- ❖ And yet another reason to believe and trust: “I won’t go without coming back.”

- ❖ The Apostle Paul reassured the believers at Thessalonica with words that were no doubt based on what Jesus had said to his disciples:

According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 THESSALONIANS 4.15-18

- ❖ This is our ultimate destiny and our hope, our equilibrium for our often-troubled hearts, our clarity in a world that tugs us towards its temporary worthlessness, our comfort and joy when we lose someone dear and indispensable: *heaven is home!*
- ❖ So, set your heart on things above where Jesus is now (Colossians 3.1); rejoice when those you love get to go home; count present difficulties as opportunities to prepare for going home (2 Corinthians 4.17-18). Nothing is better than being home!