



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

1. Jesus' Imminent Departure (13:33)

- a. "I am with you a little while You'll look for me, & just as I told the Jews, so now I tell you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'." (13:33)
- b. Reasons for the Disciples' Distress
 - a. Jesus' imminent departure (13:33)
 - b. Judas' apostasy & imminent betrayal (13:21-30)
 - c. Peter's impending betrayal (13:36-38)
- c. Jesus' exhortation (14:1)
 - a. "Don't let your heart be Believe in God; believe also in me." (14:1)
 - b. That "the disciples finally come to where Jesus goes, is the direct & personal work of Jesus that he will take them to himself & to the Father, so they may be with him where he is... *What they need to do is only believe...in Jesus & the Father* (14:1)." [Sean S. Kim, *Spirituality of Following Jesus* 189]

2. Jesus' Parting Promise (14:2-3)

- a. "In my Father's house are many rooms...I'm going to prepare a place for you... I will come again & take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also." (14:2-3)
- b. John 14:2-3 "is a promise regarding the individual future of each disciple 'in the Father's house'." –L. Scott Kellum
- c. "The one [End-time] doctrine on *which orthodox theologians agree is the second coming of Christ* ... It's the basis of the Christian's hope, the one event which will mark the beginning of the completion of God's plan." – Millard Erickson
- d. Where is Jesus Going?
 - a. Jesus departing from the world (13:3; 16:28)
 - a. "Jesus' hour had come to *depart from this world* to the " (13:1)
 - b. "I came from the Father & have come into the Again, I am *leaving the world* and going to the Father." (16:28)
 - b. In a general sense Jesus is going to 'Heaven'

- a. "The Gospel of John ...reveals a spatially transcendent reality, including the existence of other-worldly regions ...Because Jesus' true home is in heaven he is able to reveal the things of heaven [*No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven —the Son of Man*' (3:12-13)], *indicating the cosmological reality of heaven & earth* ...The revelation of a spatially transcendent reality is also evident in Jesus' claims about coming from the Father & returning to the Father in heaven, going to the Father's house (14:2-3) ... Jesus' preparation of a dwelling with his Father for those who believe is compellingly similar to ...Jewish apocalypses." [Benjamin E. Reynolds, *John among... Apocalypses*, pp. 86-7]
- c. Strictly speaking Jesus isn't going to 'Heaven,' but to the Father, the Father's House (13:1; 16:28; 14:2)
- a. "Heaven is not primarily about a place... but " — Dennis J. Billy
- b. "Although it is tempting to think of Jesus as speaking about heaven, *he is not.*" —John Behr
- e. It's not about place (location), but relationship
- a. "Jesus pictures his destination as a large, hospitable When he refers to his departure, he usually speaks of going to *'the one who sent me'* (7:33; 16:5) or *'to the Father'* (16:10, 17 [etc.]). *Emphasis falls on Jesus' relation with the Father rather than on his going to a place.* The Father to whom he goes is a generous householder, who has room for his Son & for others who are associated with him." [Daniel B. Stevick, *Jesus & His Own ...Jn. 13-17*, pp. 119-20]
- b. "14:2-3 is often interpreted as a promise that Jesus is going to prepare a place in heaven for the disciples, but that's not Johannine theology. Jewish traditions did identify the 'Father's house' with a heavenly place (Ps.2:4; 66:1 [etc.]); but it's crucial to the interpretation of Jesus' words here that the reference to *'my Father's house'* not be taken as a synonym for heaven. Instead, this reference needs to be read in the context of *the mutual indwelling of God & Jesus*, a form of 'residence' stressed in the prologue (1:1, 18). Throughout the Gospel, *location has consistently been a symbol for relationship*. Jesus' description as one who comes from heaven (3:31; [etc.]) confirms his origins with God. To know Jesus' origin (where he's from) is to know his relationship with God. By the end of... [Jn. 14] John has brought his own 'realized eschatology' to bear on the hope of being with Jesus in this life (14:23, 28). *The disciples are not concerned about where they will go after they die, but how they will relate to Jesus since he is going away.*" [Robert P. Vande Kappelle, *Truth Revealed*, pp. 174-5]
- f. Jesus is going to the Father's House — the Believers' Final State & Ultimate Destination
- a. The 'Father's House'— The Believers' Final State & Ultimate Destination
- a. "John 14:2 points to the future dwelling of believers with God in a reality external to the believers... *Likely... the final state of believers.*" —Andreas Kostenberger
- b. "What does the place 'where Jesus is going to' indicate? ...It's the dwelling place of the Father's house (14:2) which is the place where Jesus will be with the Father & take his followers to be with him when he comes again (14:3). When Thomas asked... 'Lord, we don't know where you are going (14:4), Jesus' ...reply indicated ...that he is going ... 'to the Father.' By Jesus' reiterated sayings ...that he is going 'to the Father,' it's [clear] ...Jesus will be with the Father in *This is the final and ultimate destination* of the journey of following Jesus." [Sean S. Kim, *Spirituality of Following Jesus*, p. 182]
- c. "Jn. 13:31-14:3 ...most clearly identifies...*the final & ultimate terminus* of the journey of following Jesus is the heavenly place where Jesus will be with the Father." [Sean S. Kim, *cit.*, p. 183]
- b. The 'Father's House'— The Heavenly New Jerusalem
- a. "*The Father's 'house'* with its many dwellings ['rooms'] *is most plausibly ...the transcendent dwelling of God* ...depicted [as] 'the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem' (Hb. 12:22) ...the City of God in 21-22." —G. Beasley-Murray
- b. The "Savior ... draws people from all nations unto *Those who believe* not only receive forgiveness of sins & eternal life, now in the present time, but *are also called to journey to the Father's house, the heavenly New Jerusalem* (Jn. 14:1- 6)." [Paul S. Coxon, *Exploring the New Exodus in John*, p. 259]
3. 'My Father's House with Many Rooms' (14:2)
- a. **God's Heavenly Home or the End-time Temple?**
- a. "The strong majority of commentators find in 14:2 ['my Father's house'] a *reference to God's heavenly dwelling place.*" [Jeffrey Gibbs, "*Already Dwelling in the Father's House...John 14:2-3*," *Concordia Journal*, V. 49 #1 (2023) p. 23]
- b. 14:2 ""is usually taken as a general promise: 'Our Father's house is big, & Jesus will go & make a place for ' But the only other reference in John to a 'Father's house' is the Temple in Jerusalem (2:16). This [14:2] is *more likely a reference to the eschatological [End-time] temple*, the 'place' where believers will worship God forever." [Ronald L. Giese, "*Is 'Online Church' really Church?*" *Themelios*, V. 45.2 (2020) p. 354]
- c. "There has been much debate surrounding the meaning of 'my Father's house' (*oikia*), with most scholars identifying this expression as *'a generalized description of heaven as the dwelling place of God.'* On the other hand, *others argue that the phrase refers to the temple* based on:) Jesus' usage of a very similar phrase (*oikon*) referring to the Temple in Jn. 2:16; 2.) frequent references in Jewish literature that depict the Temple as God's house; & 3.) the use of the term 'place' (*topon*) in
- d. Jn. 14:2, 3 – a term that often refers to the Temple —which John already used to indicate the Temple (Jn. 4:20; 11:48).
- e. John's reference to 'my Father's house' in 14:2 most likely *refers to the heavenly dwelling place of God*, which can rightly be conceived as *an eschatological heavenly sanctuary.*" [Susan Booth, *Tabernacling Presence of God*, pp. 117-8]

- f. "While it is *tempting to understand Jesus' promise as a reference to heaven*, he is *most likely referring to the construction of the end-time, heavenly temple*... 'In Jesus' going to the Father through death & resurrection, preparation is made for the dwelling place of God to be the dwelling place of Jesus' followers' (Bryan). Jesus is beginning to remove the great gulf that separates humanity from God's glorious presence." [G. K. Beale, B. L. Gladd, *Story Retold*, 146]
- g. "John was speaking of a heavenly temple that, though built by God, Messiah would prepare to be the [End-time] dwelling place of His people' (Steven Bryan) ... Since a reference to the eschatological [End-time] sanctuary is likely, there's no need to reject futurist eschatology [with] reference to 'my Father's house'." [L. Scott Kellum, *Preaching... Farewell Discourse*,]
- b. "My Father's House" is *Not* the Church, the Body of Christ
- a. "God's 'house' refers *not to the church* but to the heavenly dwelling where he lives (Hb. 12:22; 21-22)." –Gary Burge
- b. "The *presupposition is that the 'place'* [the 'Father's house'] *already exists*; in... Joh[n's] theology, it is the going itself, via the cross & resurrection, that prepares the place for Jesus' " [Susan Booth, *Tabernacled Presence of God*, p. 118]
- c. 'The 'Body' is Christ's expression *on earth*; the 'Father's house' is God's *heavenly* dwelling
- d. Christ dwells in his 'Body'; the believers dwell in the 'many rooms' of the Father's House
- c. Is the 'Father's House' the Church as God's Temple? (1 Cor. 3)
- a. "Some [expositors] have interpreted *oikia* [house (of the Father)] is a *corporate sense*, in the light of... *the Church* as the spiritual house or temple of God (1 3:16-17 [etc.] also Jn. 2:19-21) ... *On the contrary, the Father's 'house'* with its many dwellings ['rooms'] *is most plausibly ... the transcendent dwelling of God* ... depicted [as] 'the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem' (Heb. 12:22) ... the City of God in Rev. 21-22 ... The departure of Jesus [in Jn. 14] is for the purpose of preparing a place for the disciples *within that 'home'*... [which is] *existing already*, but by his death & resurrection the Lord ... makes[s] it possible for his own [people] to be there with him... The picture is of the Lord leaving the earth scene to prepare a place in the Father's house for his disciples & of his coming again to take them away to that 'house'." [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, pp. 249-50]
- d. "*Temple in John 14:2 ... is not the Temple of Jesus' body.*" — Steven Bryan
- a. "The connection between remaining in the Son [Jn. 15:4-5, 7] & dwelling in the Father's presence... *in no way requires the awkward identification of the Father's house with the community of believers*. *Though the Temple in John 14:2 is the Temple, it is not the Temple of Jesus' body* [2:21]. Rather, *it is the heavenly sanctuary* [Temple]. Neither use of the Temple imagery [Jn. 2:21; 14:2] should be dissolved into the other; it's entirely possible that John views the concepts of heavenly [Temple] & Jesus' glorified body as entirely harmonious. John may have simply used the [Temple] motif in diverse ways [in Jn. 2 & Jn. 14]." [Steven M. Bryan, "Eschatological Temple in John 14," BBR, Vol. 15.2 (2005) p. 197]
- b. Alan "Kerr & [Mary] Coloe claim [that interpreting John 2:26 & 14:2-3 together] invites *believers to participate in the temple of Jesus' body*, but Steven Bryan argues this identification between Jesus [as temple in 2 & 'my Father's house (14:2-3)] is *extremely awkward*. Jesus speaks of 'my Father's house' as though it *already exists* in ... 14:2-3, & certainly implies that *it is distinct from himself & his disciples when he goes to it, and promises to take them there*. Even a metaphor can only be stretched so far." [Ken Brown, *Temple Christology in... John*, Trinity Western University (2010) p. 142]
- e. The "Many Rooms" in the "Father's House"
- a. Not for a select subset of Disciples/Believers
- a. "There are many rooms in the Father's house so there need be no fear of being left out or excluded due to lack of space. Jn. 14:2 *refutes the claims* made by some sects that only a few will be admitted to [heaven] & when that number is complete, no one else can be admitted." [Joseph Ponessa, *Come & See... John*, p. 121]
- b. For e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses [JWs] believe that only 144,000 people will be chosen to go to heaven & rule with Jesus Christ. JWs interpret the "many rooms" or "many mansions" in 14:2 as symbolic of the heavenly hope for the 144,000 'anointed individuals' who will share in the rulership with Jesus Christ in heaven. The majority of JWs will remain on earth.
- b. Individual provision in proximity
- a. "The Father's house is said to contain many 'rooms' or permanent residences which [Jesus] went to prepare for... the Father's children (14:2) ... The word *monai* (dwelling places) puts emphasis upon the permanence of these dwellings, while *the plural number shows that individual provision will be made for all the Father's children*. It must not be over-looked, however, that *they are all together in one place*... The picture is of *each child having a suite of rooms in the Father's house. All will be with the Father*, enjoying His hospitality & sharing His love." [W. Robert Cook, "Eschatology in John's Gospel," *Criswell Theological Review* 3.1 (1988) p. 94]
- c. Not uniformity, but diversity in uniqueness
- a. "Heaven is not primarily about a place... but relationships. There are 'many dwelling places' in the Father's house because *each person's relationship with God is unique & cannot be replicated*. Each relationship reveals something special about God & about the If that relationship did not exist, a part of God that we could have known would remain a mystery to us, & we would be all the poorer for it." — Dennis J. Billy, *Jesus & the Last Things*, p.]

4. Jesus' Promised Return— "I Will Come Again" (14:3)

- a. "This is the clearest example of a statement by Jesus regarding his 2nd coming in all 4 Gospels." [Edward Klink, , p. 616]
- b. "Look, I'm coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps... the prophecy... Look, I am coming soon, & my reward is with me to repay each person... He who testifies these things... says, "Yes, 'I'm coming soon. Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:7, 12, 20)
- c. "The concluding promise in [Revelation] 'I am coming soon' makes no sense apart from a future coming of Christ. This is wholly in harmony with the similar promise in John 14:3..." [Max Turner (ed.) *Jesus of Nazareth Lord & Christ*, 409 #35]
- d. **Note:** Jesus promised he would most certainly return, yet, "all Evangelical writers agree that *the precise date of the second coming is not known & cannot be known*. Even Jesus did not know the date of his return; only the Father knows (Mt. 24:36).
- e. The Majority View—Jesus' 2nd Coming—an End-time Event
- a. "Jesus is not simply going away; he is...going to his Father's spacious house ...to prepare a place for his Jesus is coming back for his own (14:3) ...a reference to the second coming ...He is not only going away; *he is coming back*. This theme John ...treat[s], both explicitly (e.g., 21:22) & implicitly..." [D. A. Carson, *Farewell Discourse... of Jesus*, pp.]
- b. "Nowhere in the [4th] Gospel are the followers of Jesus spoken of as inhabiting the domain of the Father [e.g., 'Father's house'], except in these few 'second coming' passages." [W. Brewster Wilcox, *Gospel & Strategy*, p.]
- c. "I will come again" (14:3) "a glance at the Ancient Christian Commentary series shows that for the most part, the [Church Fathers] ...take Jesus's words 'I will come again' to refer to Christ's second coming. Cyril of Alexandria explicitly states that Jesus's words speak of 'the renewal of all things,' & Cyril adduces 1 Thess. 4:13–18 [Rapture/Resurrection of believers] in support of this eschatological understanding...I also consulted 15 (relatively) modern commentaries on...John. Ten writers conclude that Jesus's words about coming again refer to the second coming." [Jeffrey Gibbs, *cit.*, pp. 14-15]
- f. Jesus' Going & Coming—a Literal/Physical Departure & Return (Acts 1:10-11)
- a. "In John 14:1-3 When Jesus said, "If I go & prepare a place for you" (John 14:3), He was speaking of a literal departure, in which He went bodily from earth to heaven (Acts 1:11). His next statement, "I will come again" likewise referred to a literal & bodily return from heaven, not a coming of Christ to individual believers is death or in the person of the Holy Spirit. When Christ returns, he will take believers to be with him forever. Jn. 14:2 clearly refers to heaven as 'my Father's house,' which is where the... ('dwelling places') must be In 14:2-3, Jesus discusses an activity that he will carry out in his Father's house –He will 'prepare a place' for believers. Sometime after he accomplishes that, he will 'come again' & 'receive' believers to himself [14:3]. Where will he receive them? Jesus said he is preparing a place for them in heaven, so he must intend to take them to heaven –where he will be ...Thus, Christ will go to heaven (his ascension), return literally and bodily to earth for his people, and take them literally to heaven with him (at the rapture) to be with him." [Wayne A. Brindle, "Imminence," in Tim LaHaye (ed.) *Harvest Handbook of Bible Prophecy*, p. 162]
- b. After Jesus' ascension, two angels told the disciples: "Why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who's been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you've seen him going into heaven." (Acts 1:10-11)
- c. In "John 14:3 ...The coming again is the counterpart of the going away –visibly Jesus ascends (Acts 1:9-11), visibly he returns ...The language of Jn. 14:1-3 speaks of Jesus coming from heaven to Earth to take his own [people] back to 'the Father's' This passage, taken literally, indicates that the believer is going away to heaven ['the Father's house'] at the time of Christ's coming for him[her]." [Tim LaHaye, Thomas Ice, *Charting the End Times*, p. 113]
- d. In John's postscript, Peter asks the resurrected Jesus about the Beloved Disciple: "Lord, what about him?" "If I want him to remain until I come," Jesus answered, "what is that to you? As for you, follow me." (Jn. 21:21-22)
- e. Jesus' Coming Again Affirmed in the Apostles' Creed:
- f. "The Apostles' Creed affirms...the physical second coming of Christ to the earth...The relevant portion of the Creed ... is as follows: "He ascended into heaven, & sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick [living] & the dead." [This]... refers to the belief that Jesus Christ, who ascended into heaven, will return to earth to judge both the living ('the quick') & the dead. This is a fundamental Christian belief in the second coming of Christ."
- g. "Prepare" suggests an End-time Event
- h. Jesus: "I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again..." (Jn. 14:2-3)
- i. The word ['prepare' (14:2)] is frequently used in the NT to announce that the future hope is 'prepared' (Mt. 25:34 [etc.]) Already in the OT (Is. 40:3 ['prepare the way of the Lord'], this word is used in connection with ...an [End-time] Its use

in 14:2 corresponds to that... 'The future eschatological hope is not lacking in John's Gospel' (Dunn)." [John C. Stube, ...*Rhetorical Reading of the Farewell Discourse*, p. 106]

- j. "When Jesus said 'I'm going to prepare a place for you,' we should not think of him returning to heaven, & having arrived there, setting about the construction of 'rooms' for his disciples to occupy – a task he has now been occupied with for some 2,000 years! Rather.... His very going, by his betrayal, crucifixion & exaltation ...makes it possible for us to dwell in the presence of God." [Colin G. Kruse, *John*, 296]
- g. Still Ambiguous? To what does "*I Will Come Again*" (14:3) refer?
- a. "Because the reference [in Jn. 14] is ambiguous, 3 options are generally suggested: that Jesus is referring (a.) to his return from death on Easter, (b.) to his 2nd Coming, or (c.) to a more individual coming for believers at their death, ushering them into their eternal home. Given John's [realized] eschatological perspective, the first option seems preferable." [Robert P. Vande Kappelle, *Truth Revealed*, p. 175]
- b. "'Jesus' words in 14:2-3 are ambiguous enough to lend themselves to either an [End-time] or an immediate post-resurrection interpretation' (Keener). Many have argued [1.] that Jesus refers here to his preparation of future heavenly dwelling places that he'll assign to his followers at his 2nd coming. Seen in this light, the focus would be on the prospect of permanent residences in the presence of God ... [2.] Others have noticed that at the only other place in the 4th Gospel where the term *mone* ['room/dwelling place'] is used is 14:23, it refers to *spiritual relationship, a figurative meaning* ... As Jesus is about to promise his ongoing presence with the disciples through the Spirit, the immediate context may thus well suggest that his statement is *not only related to the future eschatological motif of his Parousia* [2nd Coming]. Rather, Jesus might be saying... his departure & his post-resurrection return provide the way for a permanent spiritual relationship not only with him but ...[also] with the Father. While the 'realized eschatology' of the latter interpretation [2.] seems to fit the context well, *the connotation of 'future eschatology'* [1.] *cannot be easily denied*. A conscious double entendre [double meaning] is not beyond John..." [Philipp F. Bartholomä, *Johannine Discourses*, pp. 268-9]
- h. A Popular Interpretation Dismissed –Not Coming for Christians at their death
- a. "The Lord doesn't come to a believer at death; rather, the believer goes to be with the Lord (2 5:8)." –Tim LaHaye
- b. "The two key questions, [1.] 'What is 'the house of my Father'?' and [2.] (a.) 'Where is Jesus going, & (b.) when is [Jesus] coming again to take the apostles [disciples] to himself?' [Jeffrey Gibbs, *cit.*, p. 14]
- c. "The *popular understanding*" of these verses... [answers] the two most important questions raised by the text in the following way. First, *'the house of my Father' is taken as a reference to heaven*. Second, Jesus's promise *'I will come again & will take you to myself' refers to the death of a believer* when his/her soul goes to be with Christ in heaven. The following paraphrase expresses this popular understanding: "In heaven there are many 'rooms' of safety and blessing. I am going to heaven now, & I'll prepare a place for you in heaven, & when you die, I will come & take you away to your heavenly home/ mansion." [Jeffrey Gibbs, *Op cit.*, pp. 13-14]
- d. "*The disciples are not concerned about where they will go after they die*, but how they will relate to Jesus since he is going away." [Robert P. Vande Kappelle, *Truth Revealed*, p. 175]
- e. "Many...teach that John 14:1-3 speaks of Christ *coming to believers at death*. Yet the majority of ancient & modern Bible interpreters view this text as a *future second coming passage*. That's because the plain meaning of the passage taken in context, demands such an In Jn. 14:3, Christ tells his disciples 'I will come again, & receive you to myself.' That *expression is never used of death* anywhere in the whole Bible. ...By contrast, passages that speak of the coming of Christ are found in the context of his second advent [coming] (Mt. 24-25; Jn. 21:23; Acts 1:9-11 [etc.]) *The Bible never speaks of the Lord coming to a believer at death*. Instead... [poor] Lazarus was 'carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom' (Lk. 16:22). Stephen...saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56). Jesus didn't come for Stephen; He was at God's right hand. *The Lord doesn't come to a believer at death; rather, the believer goes to be with the Lord* (2 Cor. 5:8)." [Tim LaHaye, Thomas Ice, *Charting the End Times*, p. 113]
- f. "One of the most common [interpretations of 14:2-3] is the Jesus is going to prepare a *heavenly place for us* so that it will be ready *when we die, a place in the Father's house*... *This is not...what Jesus is saying*... *Jesus is speaking here of being with the Father, not of being 'in the heaven*.' He prepares the way, by going to the cross, & for us to have a relationship with the Father ... *We do not need to wait until we die to have that fellowship with the Father*. It is available after Jesus' glorification (i.e., the cross) ... *Jesus does not mean that we come to the Father only when we die*." [Riku P. Tuppurainen, *Prologue to Studies in the 4th Gospel*, pp.]
- i. Jesus' 2nd Coming (Return) described in John 14:2-3; 1 Thess. 4:16-17
- a. "If I go away & prepare a place for you, *I'll come again* & take you to myself, so that where I am you may be " (Jn. 14:3)
- b. "If we believe that Jesus died & rose again, in the same way, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For we say this to you by a word from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, & with the trumpet of God, & the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, & so we will always be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:14-17 CSB)

- c. 14:3 “is a promise wrapped in a condition [*‘If...’*] Jesus is going away to prepare a place for his followers. Then, assuming this to be true, the statement is amplified by another promise: *‘I will return & receive you to myself’* ... He will personally return & usher his followers to their prepared place. Although John does not dwell on the cosmic nature ... of his return, this promise is a very *real even in the life of all followers of Christ, not just those alive at his return* ... As Paul puts it [in 1 Thess. 4] ‘the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, & so we will always be with the Lord’ (1 Thess. 4:16-17). *The ultimate purpose ... is that the followers of Jesus would be with him forever...* The promise ... is more than a reserved space (although it is that). It is also communion with the exalted Christ in that place.” [L. Scott Kellum, *Preaching the Farewell Discourse*, p.]
- d. “In the farewell discourses there’s a remarkable saying about the many ... [‘rooms’] in ‘my Father’s house (14:2-3). ... [Here] the heavenly realm of God was viewed in terms of a heavenly temple... with many rooms ... The idea *is linked with a Parousia [2nd Coming] tradition comparable to 1 4:16-17*, although the idea is much more focused in John. Rather than the apocalyptic imagery ... the disciples ... shall dwell where Jesus is (14:3); i.e., in the ‘house of the Father’.” [Jorg
- e. Frey, “*Temple & Identity*,” in Z. Weiss (ed.) *Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History?* p. 486]
- f. “*The key test for understanding ... John 14:2-3 is 1 Thess. 4:13-18*. Here, Paul refers explicitly to ... a ‘saying of the Lord.’ He is concerned to console [those]... who’ve lost a relative... who died in the Lord. [They] and the living will share the same destiny at the return of Just as the dead will be called out of their graves... so will the Lord also come... for those who are still alive in order to take them up with him into heaven... *Paul has taken this notion from the Judaism of his time & from earliest Christianity*, as a... glance at the *Synoptic Gospels shows (Mk. 13 par.)*.” [Johannes Beutler, *John*, p. 375]
- j. John 14:1-3 Parallels 1 Thess. 4:13-18
- a. “Jn. 14:1-3 refers to Christ’s coming It is not a promise that they will go to Him at death. Rather, it refers to the rapture of the church. Note *the close parallels between the promises of Jn. 14:1-3 & 1 Thess. 4:13-18*. First, consider the promises of a presence with Christ: ‘that where I am, there you may be also’ (Jn. 14:3), & ‘we shall be always with the Lord’ (1 Thess. 4:17). Second, note the promises of comfort: ‘Do not let your heart be troubled’ (Jn. 14:1), & ‘Therefore comfort one another with these words’ (1 Thess. 4:18) ... In Jn. 14:3, ‘where I am’ must mean ‘in heaven’ ... Because Jn. 14 refers to the rapture, a pretribulation rapture satisfies the language of Jn. 14:1-3 & allows raptured saints [believers] to dwell for a meaningful period of time with Christ in the Father’s house.” [Tim LaHaye, *Harvest Handbook of Bible Prophecy*, p. 346]
- b. “Many Bible scholars note that our *Lord’s statement in Jn. 14:1-3 parallels* the words of another NT passage – *1 Thess. 4:13-18*... When we compare Jn. 14:1-3 & 1 Thess. 4:13-18, we see amazing parallels. That Jn. 14:1-3 is a ‘Rapture reference’ is supported by the progression of the words & thoughts of Paul’s more extensive Rapture teaching in 1 Thess. 4:13-18. ... It appears obvious... that *Jesus’ teaching in 14:1-3 & Paul’s revelation in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 speak of the same event ... the Rapture of the church*.” [Tim LaHaye, Thomas Ice, *Charting the End Times*, p. 114]
- k. John 14 lacks the Apocalyptic elements of 1 Thess 4
- a. C. H. “Dodd admits that in 14:3 ‘we have the closest approach to the traditional language of the church’s eschatology.’ [He] *likens this saying to Paul’s words in 1 Thess. 4:13-18*, which represents ‘the current belief about the departure & return of Christ & his disciples’ reunion with him’ – a belief echoed in 14:3... This saying [14:3] *is the equivalent of 1 Thess. 4:14-17, expressed in non-apocalyptic terms*.” [George E. Ladd, *Theology of the NT*, p. 340]
- b. “John has consistently *refined away the apocalyptic expectation* in preference for Christ-mysticism... The author of this [4th] Gospel... retained a future hope, but one *purged of lurid apocalyptic*, & based on the experience... of what Jesus had already achieved.” [Gary M. Burge, *Anointed Community*, p. 143]
- c. “The figure in John 14:2-3 is wholly *un-apocalyptic*; rather it is *eschatological* [about the End-time].”—G. Beasley-Murray
- l. John 14 Jesus’ Coming – Multiple Aspects
5. Jesus’ Coming to receive the believers—the Ultimate End-time Event (14:2-3)
- a. “When Jesus says ‘I will come again,’ [14:2-3] is he referring to his Second Coming? To Easter [to Jesus’ resurrection appearances]? Or to his coming in the Holy Spirit?... Jesus makes all 3 This ... ‘Jesus’ Coming’ must explore each of these themes carefully.” [Gary M. Burge, *John*, pp.]
- a. “Jesus’ promises of a future ‘coming’ are emphasized primarily in the [farewell] discourse ... in Jn. 13:31-16:33 ... Jesus’ promise to come again to his disciples after going to prepare a place for them (14:1-6) is *best understood as a reference to his future coming as eschatological messianic King*, leading to the disciples’ being taken to dwell with him.” [David L. Turner, “*Future in John’s Writings*,” D. J. Bingham (ed.) *Eschatology*, 222]
- b. [1.] The promise of the Second Coming... appears throughout [John’s writings] both explicitly (21:22 [Jesus: “If I want him (beloved disciple) to remain until I come”]) and implicitly (when Jesus refers to the resurrection on the last day

(6:54; 11:24-27). We... also find this theme in the Synoptic Gospels... John 14 [has] ... *Jesus'* [End-time] *vision for his disciples* ... some day he will 'come again' & take us to himself (14:3)." [Gary M. Burge, *John*, pp.]

b. Jesus Coming to the disciples in Resurrection (14:18-19)

- a. "I will not leave you as orphans; *I am coming to you*. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but *you will see me*. Because I live, you will live too." (14:18-19)
- b. "Here the contrast is between the disciples' *imminent experience* during Jesus' arrest & death, when *they will not see him*, & their experience, *very shortly after*, of seeing him because of his resurrection (20:19-29). But what's clear to implied readers...is by no means apparent to the disciples at this point." [Andrew Lincoln, *John*, 422]

c. Jesus' Resurrection Appearances: "the world will no longer see me, but *you will see me*." (14:19)

- a. "[2.] Jesus' Coming in The most pressing...concern for the disciples is the threat of death [to] Jesus... [Jesus] says confidently that he will return 'before long' so that they can see him. The [Resurrection] appearance of Jesus in the Upper Room following the cross is one of the most important events in Christian history... Jesus' return from the empty grave is the bedrock of early Christian testimony. ...The promise of Jesus' coming at the end of time took faith... But, ...in this [Easter] promise, Jesus provides objective concrete proof that validates his identity & power." [Gary Burge, *John*, pp.]
- b. "Jesus' promise to manifest himself to the disciples so that *they will see him* & not be orphaned (14:18-21) most likely refers to the *post-resurrection appearances* narrated in... Jn. 20-21." [David L. Turner, *cit.*, p. 222]

d. Jesus coming to indwell the believers: "*I'm coming to you*...On that day you'll know that I'm in my Father, *you are in me, and I am in you*." (14:18, 20)

- a. "In the latter half of [Jn. 14] Jesus does ...promise to 'come' to his disciples, *not* ... with the idea of transporting them back to heaven by his side, but rather in order *to dwell with them & in them on earth*... The second half of Jn. 14 can only refer to the experience of the disciples 'down here'; yet 14:2-3 is set in heaven & the real differences must be... " [John Ashton, *Understanding the 4th Gospel*, p. 436]

e. Jesus' Coming with (in/as?) the Holy

- a. "The climax of [John 14] describes the 'coming' of Jesus in the Holy Spirit. ...The 'rooms' in [the Father's house] in 14:2 parallel the 'home' built by the Son & the Father in the disciple's life (14:23) ...The Christian experience of the Holy Spirit cannot be viewed apart from the experience of Jesus. To experience the Spirit is to experience Jesus ...its theological ramifications are profound." [Gary M. Burge, *John*, pp.]
- b. "The Christian need not live with his eyes constantly straining towards the heavens from which the Son of man is to come; for as the Paraclete, Jesus is present within all believers." [Raymond Brown, *John*, 2, p. 1143]
- c. "How tightly knit the Son & the Spirit are...is shown in the Farewell Discourse. Jesus promises, '*I will come to you*' (14:18) a promise that *God fulfills precisely by sending the Spirit* (14:16-17, 26). This use of the first person in promises [Jesus: '*I will come to you*'] of the Spirit's coming is remarkable. In the preceding context Jesus, envisioning an indefinite period of absence from the world between his ascension & return (14:2-3), had just spoken of the Father's gift of the Spirit-Paraclete to be with the disciples so they will not be left orphans (14:16-18a). Jesus presented himself in post-resurrection visits initially, but they were fleeting & did not answer the needs of continuing care of his 'orphans' to the end of time." [Paul A. Rainbow, *Johannine Theology*, pp. 245-6]

f. Believer's Present Realization of the Father & Son's Indwelling (14:21-23)

- a. "We see in John the present realization of eschatological [End-time]" –Stephen Um
- b. "Jesus answered, 'If anyone loves me, he/she will keep my My Father will love him/her, & *we will come to him/her and make our home with him/her*.' (14:23)
- c. 14:23 "clearly refers not to heaven but to the present communion of believers with Jesus through the This...shifts the *believer's hope from the eternal future to the present*, from traditional future eschatology to John's realized eschatology, *without denying the future coming of Jesus*." [R. Alan Culpepper, "*Realized Eschatology in the Johannine Community*," in CR. Koester (ed.) *Resurrection of Jesus in John*, pp. 267-8]
- d. In 14:23 "the motif of the heavenly dwellings (14:2) is taken up and *turned inside* The word [Gk. n.] *mone* does not occur in the NT outside these two verses (14:2, 23). Whereas the original promise [14:2] remained ...within the conventional expectation of the Parousia [Christ's return/2nd coming], the movement is now [14:23] in *the other direction*. The ascent to heaven in an indefinite future is overshadowed (though not replaced) by the movement down from heaven, not just of the Son, but of the Father also. Together they will make their home (*mone* [dwelling place]) with the faithful disciple... *The 'coming'* [here, 14:23] *is neither the resurrection nor the Parousia*... *It's ... a mystical union of awesome intimacy*." [John Ashton, *Understanding the 4th Gospel*, pp. 440-1]
- e. "When Christ says in 14:23 that he & the Father will come to those who love him & keep his word '& make our dwelling place (*mone*) with him,' the dwelling place must be understood not spatially, but as the dwelling of the Father & the Son *in the believer* ...The subject of the verb *meno* [Gk. dwell, abide] throughout John 14 is not the believer but God. The action [in 14:23] therefore is not the *believers* coming to dwell in God's heavenly abode, but *the Father, the Paraclete, & Jesus* coming to dwell with believers." [John Behr, *John the Theologian*..., p. 172]

- f. "In Jn. 14:23 ...Jesus promises that he & his Father will make their home within those who love him. This reference [14:23] *should not be read back into* the reference to dwelling places in 14:2, however. 14:23 refers to God's spiritual indwelling of the believers, which is realized in & through the person of the Holy Spirit, while 14:2 points to the future dwelling of believers with God in a reality external to the believers... *Likely... the final state of believers.*" [Andreas Kostenberger, "Heaven in John's Gospel," in CW Morgan (ed.) *Heaven*, 143-4]
- g. "While John's Gospel does not deny the ultimate future consummation...*the focus here* [14:23] is plainly *on believers' present experience of the indwelling presence of Father, Son, & Spirit.*" —Andreas Kostenberger
- g. This indwelling is explicitly individualistic— "*We will come...& make our home with him/her.*" (14:23)
- a. If "there's any 'coming' ... realized in the near future, it is...*a secret, private coming to each individual.*"—CFD. Moule
- b. John has "an *explicitly individualistic* eschatology' (Moule) ... Salvation in John is realized at the level of the individual ... [In] 14:21-23 ...Jesus tells the disciples that he will reveal himself to those who love him ...[Jesus'] message [is] about mutual indwelling of Christ & God & the disciples: 'If anyone loves me, he/she will keep my My Father will love him/her, & we will come to him/her & make our home with him/her' (14:23). In Moule's view: '...insofar as there is any 'coming' to be realized in the near future, it is essentially not a world-wide manifestation but *a secret, private coming to each individual* as he/[she] realizes...the resurrection, loves God in Christ, & accepts him' (Moule)" [Melanie Baffes, *Love, Loss, & Abjection*, p. 27]
- c. John's Gospel has "a focus on the *individual's intimacy with the living Jesus*... [This doesn't] exclude[e] an important role for the corporate life & worship... but it does mean that there's *individual experience that's not reducible to the corporate*...In John's Gospel...this individual experience is most clearly & frequently evoked." [R. Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, p. 19]
- h. Not Conflating Different Aspects of Jesus' Coming
- a. Jesus' 'Coming again' (14:2-3) — not an all-encompassing concept
- a. "It has been popular... to affirm that 14:2-3 *include all forms of the coming of Christ* – the appearances of the risen Lord, the coming of the [Spirit] Paraclete, the coming of Jesus at [the believer's] death, & at the Parousia [2nd Coming] ...For the viewpoint of [biblical] exegesis ...*this is not to be countenanced* [i.e., *not to be accepted*]. Nor is the view ...that the coming of Jesus to the believer at death is here specifically in mind." [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 250]
- b. Distinct aspects (14:2-3, 18-19, 23); one doesn't negate the others
- a. In Jn 14...*Jesus 'will come' to the disciples ...at 3 distinct points*: [1.] Jesus' climactic 2nd Coming, [2.] his Easter return [& resurrection appearances], &... [3.] his 'coming' to them in the interior experience of the Holy Spirit ... [when Jesus] & the Father will reside within them, making a 'home' (Gk. *monē*) within them (14:23). That is, *the [future, End-time] places of dwelling promised in 14:2 will be [presently] realized as places of 'indwelling' in 14:23.*" [Gary M. Burge, *John*,]
- b. "In 14:23, Jesus speaks of the Father & himself coming & making their *dwelling place within the believer* in a spiritual sense. The...reference [14:2-3], on the other hand, speaks of a *reality external to believers.*" —Andreas Köstenberger
- c. Not denying or 'spiritualizing' John's Future Eschatology (14:2-3)
- a. "There has been ...suggestions... to interpret John 14:2-3 in a spiritual or existential way ...They can be read in the light of Jn. 14:23 where Jesus promises that he the Father will dwell with anyone who loves & believes. *However, the movement there [14:23] proceeds in the opposite direction, & the subject is not the dwelling places Jesus will prepare for his own in the house of the Father*... With good reason Jorg Fry *contradicts such attempts* ... [He contends] the evangelist deliberately placed words of Jesus... with *future-oriented eschatology alongside* others characterized by *present-oriented eschatology* ... The parade example ...is 14:5-24." [Johannes Beutler, *John*, p. 375]
- d. Not subsuming one aspect into others
- a. Louis "Martyr says that John modifies the hope of a home in heaven (14:2) into the reality of a home on earth (14:23), but *it seems rather that John retains both notions side by side.*" [C. K. Barrett, *John*, p. 455]
- b. "A common interpretation of Jesus' statement denies a reference to a future coming & understands it ...[as] a 'coming' to believers by means of the Spirit/Paraclete. While there is a strong 'present' eschatology in this [episode] ...*it is a mistake to deny a future reference.*" [Edward Klink, *John*, p. 616 #16]
- c. "In 14:23 ...Jesus promises that he & his Father will make their home within those who love him. This reference [14:23] *should not be read back into* the reference to dwelling places in 14:2, however. 14:23 refers to God's spiritual indwelling of the believers, which is realized in & through the person of the Holy Spirit, while 14:2 points to the future dwelling of believers with God in a reality external to the believers... *Likely... the final state of believers.*" —Andreas Kostenberger
6. Dealing with the 'Delay' in Christ's Coming (Hab. 2:3; 2 Pet. 3:8-9)
- a. "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it testifies about the end and will not Though it delays, wait for it, since it will certainly come and not be late." (Habakkuk 2:3)
- b. "The problem of...delay was familiar to Jewish [prophets & people] ...In the face of the delay in the fulfillment of the promises...of the [OT] prophets, the [Jewish] apocalyptic visionaries...believed most fervently that the promises remained valid & relevant." [Richard Bauckham, *Jewish World Around the NT*, p. 67]
- c. "This text [Hab. 2:3] ... contain[s] the basic... 'explanation' of the delay... It appeals to the omnipotent sovereignty of God, who has determined the time of the End. Even though it is longer in coming than the

- prophecies seem to have suggested, this apparent delay belongs to the purpose of God. It will not be 'late' according to the timescale which God has determined." [Richard Bauckham, *Op cit.*, p. 67]
- d. "Dear friends, don't overlook this one fact: With the Lord one day is like 1,000 years, & 1,000 years like one 9 The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:8-9)
- e. 3:8 "contrasts man's transience with God's everlastingness, the limited perspective of man whose expectations tend to be bounded by his own brief lifetime with the perspective of the eternal God who surveys the whole of history... [Man] is impatient to see the redemption *himself*... God is free from that particular impatience... There is first [3:8] ... the appeal to God's sovereignty; he is not *late* in fulfilling his promise... the delay belongs to his purpose... Then the positive meaning of the delay [3:9] ...God restrains his anger in order to give... people... opportunity to repent." [Bauckham, *cit.*, pp. 81-82]