

Into Thy Word Ministries Bible Study www.intothyword.org

General Idea: Jesus is facing betrayal. He turns to His Disciples to comfort them and says; *do not be afraid or troubled! Trust in God; trust in Me.* He then gives them a picture of hope by showing them a glimpse of what Heaven will be like. *In Heaven there will be many rooms in My Father's Home, one made up especially for each of you! I will prepare it personally and at the right time, I will come and get you and you will always be with Me. You will know all about it and how to get there.* But, Thomas jumps in and says *no Lord; we do not know how or where to go!* Jesus comforts him with this startling revelation, ***I am the Way, I am the Truth, and I am the Life! No one can come to the Father except through Me!*** Then Philip asks Jesus to show them the Father, still not quite getting it. Jesus responds, *you do not know Who I am after all this time? If you have seen Me, then you have seen the Father! So, why do you ask? I am in the Father and the Father is in Me and lives and works through Me. All you have to do is believe in Me because I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. The Truth is, anyone who believes in Me will carry on my work and even on a greater scale because I will be with the Father helping you. You can ask anything of me in my Name and I will provide for you in this great work; ask in my name for radical faith and I will give it!*

Contexts and Background: This passage starts what is called Jesus' "Farewell Discourse" where He gives His most passionate and important instructions to His Disciples and us. Here, Jesus is not consumed with His own coming agony, but rather turns His attention to His Disciples and their needs. He not only reveals to us the Father, He takes us to the Father. In this way, Jesus comforts, encourages, admonishes, and coaches while He gives testimony to His role and the events of His upcoming Passion. He warns them not only of His impending death, but also of the trials they will face in building the Kingdom. He shows us that He is the way, the role of the Holy Spirit, the importance of our connectivity to Him to produce faith and fruit, and that even in persecution, we will always be comforted as we remain in Him (John 14:1-16:33).

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings

- *Your.* This is plural, meaning that Jesus is referring to all of His Disciples and followers, then and now, to not be afraid. "Do not fear" was often a response of an Angel to those who were awe struck and also one that God gave His Prophets when they were in dire times.
- *Hearts be troubled.* Meaning to not fear or fret, but have a transcending peace and contentment even when the situation does not offer or give it. This is a depiction of the supreme comfort that we get from our Lord in a world filled with sin—bad choices surrounded by treachery, deceit, failures, and sacrifice.
- *Trust / believe in God.* This is a call to a personal relationship—unity with conviction with Christ, and it is a command to step up to faith, our response to the call of God with trust in Him through times of danger and fear. This is a depiction of a righteous person's proper dependence upon Jesus as He is exemplified. He is our Sanctuary; He is the Eternal God on whom we can rely and not only give our life to, but also live our life for (2 Sam. 2:3; Isa. 8:17; 28:16; Psalm 118:22; Isa. 8:14-18; 28:16; John 13:36; Heb. 2:13)
- *Father's house.* Meaning Heaven where God's presence dwells with us, as opposed to Hell where God's presence is absent. This is our ultimate future hope and residence, our future reward and our current motivation to pursue righteousness. Classically in Judaism, this meant the Temple, God's dwelling on earth, where God dwelt amongst His people. Here, this refers to our heavenly dwelling place that God prepares for us that no mere human words could ever describe (Ezek. 43:7-9; 44:9-16; 48:11, 35; Luke 16:9; John 8:35; 14:28; Acts 1:10-11; Rom. 5:2; 1 Cor. 15:16-19; Heb. 7:25; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 1 John 2:1).
- *Many rooms / mansions.* Meaning to dwell and remain in God. This is figurative language because this "non-corporeal" (not a normal flesh and blood human existence) or metaphysical wonder can't be explained in human language. In addition, "small" does not mean "limiting" here. This is also a

fulfillment of the celebration of the “Feast of Booths” that acted in converse to God dwelling in the Temple as people lived in tents to dwell with God (John 2:21; 14:16-23; 15:1-7; 1 Cor. 2:9; 4:5; Col. 3:18-4-1; Rev. 22:12).

- *Prepare a place.* Jesus is preparing for us, those He chooses, an eternal home; Heaven. This is not just a residence; rather proof that God will completely and thoroughly accomplish and achieve His purpose throughout the universe. He will bring all things to fruition. He brings peace and a future to those in Him. Thus, God will achieve His purpose; we will inherit His wonders and blessings and we will have no ties to the old nature of sin and evil. Jesus is not just preparing a place for us in Heaven; He is preparing us by our journey of faith in the here and now too (Isa. 42:9; 48:6; 51:15-16; 65:17-25; 66:22; 1 Cor. 15:35-57; Rev. 7:9; 21:1-8)!
- *Take you.* Referring that Jesus is our only way, the gate and stairway to Heaven; there is no other way to God except through Him. Meaning the resurrection of the dead leads to a new life, our life after death that Jesus is able to provide by His death and resurrection. This can also refer to the Second Coming or the new age of the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. But, moreover, this is about Jesus as our Rescuer and Redeemer; He took on our human nature but without our sinfulness, and remained pure to pay the debt for our sins. In the process, His human nature voluntarily became lower than the angels, but as Fully God He is superior to them in essence, power, purpose, and distinction (Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:1-4; 2: 7, 14-15).
- *Know the way...*to Who He is and where He went so we know where we are to go. In simpler terms, we need to ask *what would Jesus have me do* and then do it. By knowing Him and His Word we can know Truth and the path of God’s will that we are to follow. This is what we do on earth that echoes into eternity where we receive our rewards. We do this by Christ alone by faith alone. No other aspect of what we can do such as “works,” can give us merit; rather, our salvation is the result of His working in us (John 1:23; Rom. 1:16; 10:4-17; James 2:14-26).
- *Thomas.* It was the custom and proper for Disciples to ask questions to learn and clarify the instructions. Here they were honest, but not sure what Jesus was saying as they were bound to the thinking of the systems of the Levitical Priesthood and the Law and did not understand who Jesus was and what He was doing. They would not understand until after the Resurrection and the coming Holy Spirit (Acts 1-2).
- *We don't know.* Fear, frustration, misunderstanding, expecting something else? Whatever it may be, they lacked the wholehearted commitment to faith and obedience to follow it up (John 2:21).
- *I am the way and the truth and the life.* Meaning Jesus is the way to the Father. Jesus is exclusive, the only living Temple, Beacon, and Gate to God! The “way” in Hebrew writings, refers to the pursuit of righteousness as one journeys through the wilderness of the tough times of waiting and confusion—even suffering. It is a beacon and we are to focus on Christ. *Truth* in this context means He fulfills the Law and teachings of the Old Testament. *Life* means there is no existence without Him and there is no salvation without His atonement, redemption, and grace. Christians were first called “the Way” (Ex. 16:33; Lev. 10:2; 16; Num. 17:5; Matt. 7:14; John 1:1-4, 14; 3:16-18; 5:26, 33; 11:25-26; 18:37; Acts 4:12; 9:2; 19:9, 23; Rom. 10:14-15; Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 10:19-20; 1 John 5:12).
- *No one comes.* There is only one True God and only One right way and Jesus is that Only way and path to God, Heaven, and real righteousness!
- *Philip asked an impossible act, an appearance that even Moses was not allowed to see.* This would have been a ridiculous question for a Jew to ask on one hand and yet a beginning to a statement of faith that Philip did not quite understand, but was starting to realize—that Jesus is God (Ex. 24:10; 33:18; Isa. 6:1; Ezek. 1:26-28; John 1:18; 14:21-22).
- *I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me.* This is a dynamic and dramatic expression of the Divinity of Jesus, that there is One True God, yet distinct personalities, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each sharing the same mutual, united, reciprocal indwelling essence. This is also a statement for the Trinity, for the Whole of Godhood expressed in this one passage (John 10:38; 17:21; 2 Cor. 13:14).

- *Faith in me.* This is not just knowledge of God, rather an intimate connection that He first offers to us—a unity to us in His work for our redemption. All the blessings and wonder that we have and can have are locked up in Christ and He gives us the key of faith turned by our faith, commitment, and obedience.
- *Greater things / works.* Works here does not mean miracles; rather, this refers to righteous deeds and a greater number of them in amounts, cultures, and regions of people transformed. Jesus was limited to Palestine as he walked this earth; we have had the whole world to go at with the full force of the Church for many centuries, over twenty thus far. Thus, when Jesus went to the Father and sent us the Holy Spirit, the work began at Pentecost. This “works” (Greek *ergon*) does not mean miracles like signs and wonders, that is a different word rendering; rather, here it is a call that the Disciples through us today will have a greater Kingdom impact and expansion than when Jesus walked the earth. Mainly because Christ work is multiplied through His Disciples and then their Disciples and so on. Also, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and the exponential increase of followers and opportunities are included (1 Kings 17:22; Matt. 28:18-19; John 2:11; 5:17; 7:21, 39; 8:39; 10:32; 14:16-17, 26; 15:13, 26; 16:7; 19:30; Acts 1-2).
- *Do whatever you ask.* Meaning to identify with His purpose, plan, and call. The call here is to expand one’s faith and thinking so Christ is all and working in and through us. In Jewish teachings, God provided a call to His pious people and provided for all who serve God because of the intimate relationship they and we have. But this is always in context to God’s will and providence and never an excuse for us to abuse or some kind of magic formula for success (Luke 11:1-13; John 15:16; 1 John 5:14).
- *Name.* Refers to expressing the consistent name of God with reverence in prayer without uttering His Holy Name *Yahweh*, to seek His glory and not one’s own. For a person, it means to defend the honor and give respect to that person as you represent them and as you pass on their traditions. This also means to address them in person and when away from them, continue with respect and reverence and act accordingly to their authority. Here, it is the same to Christ to honor Him and act in accordance to His call and commands, because we reflect His reputation. In contrast, the pagans used the names of their gods to manipulate them to get what they wanted for their own desires and power and control which was considered the utmost of wickedness, because only God is to be in control and honored (Ex. 5:23; Deut. 18:5-7, 19-22; 1 Kings 18:24-32; 2 Kings 2:24; Psalm 9:2; 18:49; 118:10-11; Prov. 18:10; Jer. 14:14-15; John 2:23).
- *Glory to the Father.* Meaning what we do in prayer echoes into eternity. To praise God for all He is doing and can do in my life. To be conformed to His likeness, to perceive before we receive. The key to a successful Christian life, ministry, and church is prayer. There is no way around it (Psalm 2:7; John 12:41; Philip. 2:11).
- *I will do it.* This is perhaps one of the most abused passages in the Bible; taken out of context, it is to satisfy one’s lust for power and control.

Devotional Thoughts and Applications

The greatest carrot on a stick for us, Heaven, is that inheritance God is promising us beyond our scope of understanding. How incredibly wondrous this must be; our place and security is in **Heaven** to come and our joy can then be declared and lived out. This is also what we receive, our reward for all that we have done and endured for Christ and His children and the opportunities He gave us. This is what we look forward to, our dwelling with Christ, and what can also motivate us in the here and now.

This passage has been greatly abused by many so-called pastors who read it out of context and inserted their own feelings as truth. This is not a guarantee or a *give to get* scheme or a *get because you believe*. Rather, this is an invitation to radical faith. We often get more than we want and have more than we need and do better in His will than ours. We are limited in thinking and power and He is not. God is not promoting Himself as a vending machine. Rather, He is saying we can trust in Him totally and completely

with all we have now and for our future. Because, He is not just preparing a place for us in eternity, He is preparing us for eternity too! What we go through is not just about sin in an unfair world, it is the building up of faith and being that display a beacon to a dimly lit world that needs His Light.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. What causes you to fear or fuss or fret or stress? Why do you? What happened? What should have or could have happened?
2. How do you feel about the fact that there is only One True God and only one right way to Him? Why has this caused so much controversy over the centuries?
3. What does it mean to you to *Trust in God*? How do you respond when someone says, *do not be afraid or troubled*?
4. How would a glimpse of what Heaven will be like give you hope? What else gives you hope?
5. How has Jesus comforted, encouraged, admonished, and coached you? How have you done so with others?
6. Did you notice that Jesus was not upset or stressed by His coming agony? So why does He turn His attention to His Disciples and their needs?
7. Do you have the ultimate hope and assurance that you are not made for this world, that your true home is heaven? How do you feel about this?
8. How do you feel about your personal Christianity and that God will completely and thoroughly accomplish and achieve His purpose throughout the universe?
9. Did you know that Jesus is not just preparing a place for you in Heaven; He is preparing you first by your journey of faith now too? How can this help you overcome fears and doubts?
10. What do you lack to have more wholehearted commitment to faith? What gets in your way of follow-through and obedience?
11. How would you express the importance of our connectivity to Christ to produce faith and fruit? How can you do this more even in times of harassment and/or doubt? What do you need more of to be comforted and empowered in Him?
12. What do you need to do to have peace and contentment, even when your situation does not offer or have it?