

John 14:1-7: Biblical Reading and Reflections

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[0 : 00] John chapter 14 verses 1 to 7. We do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?

Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.

From now on you do know him, and have seen him. Discussing Jesus' farewell discourse in the Gospel of John, Frederick Dale Bruner suggests that we find a Father Sermon, a Son Sermon, and then a Spirit Sermon.

In this part, Jesus reveals the way to the Father, the truth of the Father, and the life from the Father. The big question that hangs over John chapter 14 and the chapters that follow is how the disciples would relate to Christ after he had gone, and the question of how Christ would in some form come to his disciples after that point.

Jesus would come again to his disciples in the resurrection, of course. He would come again to his disciples in the gift of the Spirit. He would come again to his disciples in his presence at particular moments, and in particular acts.

[1 : 33] And then he would come one last final time to his disciples on the great day of the Lord. But at this point, the disciples are unsettled. They know that Peter is going to deny Christ.

They have some inkling, perhaps, that Judas is about to betray him. And they know that something is going to happen to Jesus in the coming day. All this is weighing upon them, and Jesus speaks to them in that condition.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. The charge that he gives here is one that contrasts with his own internal state. He is very troubled in his spirit at this point. The charge that he gives to them is one that recalls the sort of charge that Moses gives to Joshua.

Joshua is called to be strong and courageous, not to lose heart, to be confident as he goes forward. Like the departing leader Moses, Jesus addresses his disciples on his departure.

He is concerned for his disciples at this point. He calls them to believe in God and to believe also in him. The connection that he establishes between faith in the Father and faith in himself at this point is significant.

[2 : 37] It might remind us of the statements that we find in Exodus chapter 14 verse 31, where the people believe in God and in Moses following the Red Sea crossing. He goes on to talk about the fact that there are many rooms in his Father's house.

Where is the Father's house? Perhaps the best way to think of it is as the temple of Jesus' own body. This is less a dwelling place than it is an indwelling place. Christ will take his disciples to himself.

Many read this as a reference to heaven and to the eternal state, and this may be part of the picture. However, I think there is a much more immediate fulfilment than this.

I don't believe that the place that Jesus is preparing is heaven per se. Rather, the place is his body, the church. As we will see in the book of Revelation, the church is prepared in heaven, but it is prepared on earth too.

In order to prepare this place, Jesus must die, rise again, ascend into heaven, give the spirit to form the church, and to bring us into God's presence. I believe that this interpretation can be strengthened by other references to God's dwelling in this chapter, especially in verse 23.

[3 : 47] Jesus and the Father will make their home with the believer, making the believer a room in the new temple that Christ is preparing. On that last day, the new Jerusalem will descend from heaven, as we see in Revelation chapter 21 verse 2.

Christ declares that he is the only way to the Father here. He is the one who comes from the bosom of the Father, and he is the one who will lead his people into the presence of the Father.

He speaks of himself as the way, the truth, and the life. He is the truth throughout the Gospel of John. He has been describing himself as the true version of things. He's the true light coming into the world.

He's the true bread from heaven. He's the true vine. And he's not just the true this or that or the other. He is the truth. He is the one also who has life in himself.

He's the source of eternal life. He is unique in all of these aspects. There is no other like him.

There's no other way to the Father save through him. He is the image of the Father.

[4 : 48] He's the only begotten Son. He declares that if you've seen him, you have seen the Father. The Father is known in Christ. Christ does the Father's work. He acts with the Father's authority.

He speaks the Father's words. And the Father is in him. If you want to know the Father, you will know the Father in Christ. And Christ is the way. On several occasions in the Old Testament, there are contrasts between different ways.

The way that leads to life and the way that leads to death. The way of wisdom. The way of folly.

Christ is the way. The early church came to be known as the way. Christ is the way into God's very presence.

He's the new and living way into heaven itself. The movement that Christ will make in his death, resurrection and ascension will blaze the trail and lead the way by which his people can have access to God, by which they can approach the Father.

A question to consider. How might this passage change the way that we think about heaven?■■■■

