

Commentary on John 14

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international / theology / commentary

(I Am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life)

An appropriate sub-heading to probably the most important chapter in the Gospel of John (if not the whole New Testament). The Christian saviour declares himself to be the absolute God and also the means by which we come to the realisation and presence of that God. The above claim was/is as bold a claim as was ever made by a sane man, notwithstanding some of Jesus' immediate family members thought him to be of questionable mental stability (at that time). Nevertheless, this commentary will be based on the text and the simple 2+2 logic that is accessible to a child but evades the apprehension of linear, biased, fanatic and frightened thinkers.

1"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4And you know the way to where I am going." 5Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" 6Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Jesus assures, comforts and instructs his disciples (and the reader) to Trust and believe in Him. He promises that he will prepare a 'place' for you/us and will return to take you/us to Himself. The 'location' is inferred by the phrase, "where I am you may be also"; the "Way" is to be made known to those who undertake the 'journey'.

We have previously been made aware that He is the "Way" and the final destination. Therefore, the destination and the means of arriving are identical - they could not be otherwise! The absolute God is infinite; infinity, due to its all-pervading nature, saturates existence (fills time and space). As such, its quality is moving/kinetic - 'Way'/process. Simple logic dictates that endlessness is a kinetic process. The absolute process of Being is indicated by the classic statement, "I AM THAT I AM", which is usually interpreted as a static name; however, it should now be clear that the above declaration of Being is actually a constant dynamic. Therefore, the "Way" and 'destination' are simultaneously absorbed and expressed in the infinite character of God as One continuous process of Being!

Building on the foundation of the above information we should now be able to tackle the most misunderstood statement in the New Testament, "No one comes to the Father except through/by me."

The Son of Man (Jesus) is 'Word' made flesh; a human being teaching human beings; flesh redeeming flesh. His incarnation (Deity incarnated if you like) is limited as we are limited and is limitless as we are (potentially) limitless. It is our potential that Jesus addresses; he has taken on our form to lead us (by the hand) to the limitless glory of which He speaks and promises. He shares with us our common humanity while at the same time realising His (our) full potential as Gods, on one occasion He emphasised the point to the Pharisees by referring to a popular Psalm (82), "Ye are

Gods; and all of you are children of the most High."

Apprehending the infinite God 'through' Him becomes an opportunity made available to all by His universal at-one-ment! Jesus is man not a Martian or extraterrestrial, His/our story is an exceedingly human story. The Son of Man as 'experience', does not lie outside the human experience or capability; there is nothing that He represents or accomplishes that is not immediately accessible to everyone (as is clearly stated in verse 12).

"Through/by me" is now understood as the experiential totality of a fully realised human being, one who has, by surrender to the greater Creative power/will of the nameless Godhead, become ONE (as is stated in Verse 20 and Chapter 17).

Exclusivity, racism, elitism and divisionism are Jewish theological concepts. Any interpretation based on Old Testament theology clearly indicates a failure to understand or accept the new reformed religion; furthermore, reverting to the Old theology becomes an act of rejecting the new gospel message of Jesus Christ, which is problematic for anyone who claims to be a Christian.

It is hoped that the "where" and "how" of Thomas' question has also been answered. It should not be forgotten that a text is written for a reader and You are the reader; the experience of Truth is immediate and relates to you in a hyper-personal way. If a message is to be received (and understood) from a text, the 'knowledge' must necessarily occur as process in the Living present. If the subject/object relates directly to Deity, the transmitted knowledge would and should encompass the totality of Being. If an interpretation in a theological context does not encompass the totality of Being a failure to understand the message has occurred. The Living Christ (Way) becomes the kinesis of knowledge, which transports us from darkness to Light or from ignorance to enlightenment. It should now be clear that the Living Christ (Way) is the source of knowledge, not a textual aid or other indicators. A clear distinction is drawn between the Living God and the dead ideologies of mainstream religion.

The 2+2 logic referred to earlier is exercised in understanding a characteristic of infinity ie, the totality of its inclusiveness. It is the height of ignorance or folly to entertain any notion that something could exist outside the totality of infinite existence. To exclude anything in any way would betray a discontinuous (or finite) condition and if God is not infinite then that 'God' is a fraud.

8Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

The text is written for the reader; Philip, on behalf of our ignorance, demands to be shown the ultimate reality (God the Father). Jesus (as man) astounds by declaring that He is the Father, however, certain conditions are introduced regarding recognition of Deity - familiarity and recollection. Who is our eternal (immediate) companion, who was with us "before the foundation of the world" and will be with us "till the end of the age"? "And you still do not know me, 'Philip'?"

Jesus also indicates his complete surrender to Divine Will, his speech and actions are no longer his own. Jesus is 'dead' to his personal identity/will but Lives as a conduit of God. The message of dying (while we 'live') in order to gain "eternal life" is a principal theme of the New Testament.

12"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

It would seem imperative that we recognise Jesus as a Living reality rather than a concept or an imaginary ideal. The above verse promises everything for those who understand the nature of Christ and the glory that is His (and potentially ours). The promise of "greater works" refers to the continuous expansion of Creation in which we may participate (as co-creators). His name is the name of the Son of Man/woman directly connected to the Source (and knowledge) of All. The Glory of the 'Father' through the 'Son' is our realisation and expression of infinite consciousness (God) and everything else that issues from that experience/knowledge. In a very real sense we become co-creators in His eternal process of renewal - there is no higher achievement.

The "Son of Man" (Jesus) is the product/progeny of God's creation on earth. Humanity is the interface between creation and the Creator; the God-men of various cultures have all shown us the way, Jesus is the principal representative for Western culture.

15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

All Scripture resolves itself in the two commandments of Jesus, that we love God and humanity totally. If these two commandments were incorporated into our personal lives and the societies in which we live, they would solve all the social and political problems on the planet. Remember this the next time someone claims to be a Christian and then engages in pre-emptive warfare. However, for those who would accept and express these commandments in thought, word and deed, the promise of a divine companion/comforter is made; one who would assist and guide us in every situation. There is no better counsellor than "the Spirit of Truth".

The reader will note that this counsellor has no relationship with the worldly-minded. Be aware of this the next time some person or organisation would attempt to degrade or exclude what God would exalt and include in his Creation. Who dares speak for God? Against the measure of perfection liars are always left wanting. Trust only the Living God and His counsel and let the others engage themselves.

18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

Jesus makes many promises and declarations in this chapter, none more reassuring than, "I will not leave you as orphans (comfortless); I will come to you." Where do we seek solace, in many unfortunate 'places' (substances etc.)? Trust Him if you believe Him, hold Him to His promise and He will never let you down; He will, as promised, come to you and saturate your Being with His Light and Love. From the 'mountain top' of that experience His entire Creation scintillates Being, Bliss and Limitless Light. From this 'vantage' (only) we witness His Perfection. We are One - All is One!

He declares His triumph over death and clearly states that He (continues) Lives! His Life is Our Life; dying to the world reveals a greater Unity as expressed in the verse, "on that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." That statement is the heart of His doctrine and Love is the medium of His message. We are One - All is One.

We are qualified as His by adhering to His commandments (Way); we are identified by our Love for Him and each other (Truth); and we are sustained by His eternal presence (Life).

25"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. 27Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. 28You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. 30I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, 31but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

These are the teachings of the Master in the flesh/text, however, it is time to abandon our 'crutches' and apprehend the infinite aspect of Life/Existence directly. We have all issued from One Source and to that Source we all return. The "Helper,.Holy Spirit", is the infinite aspect in us which we have awakened/revealed through embracing the Way, Truth and Life, or Jesus in his aspect as Christ. It will guide, sustain and most importantly, bring us to the "remembrance" of our essential nature; our quintessential Self that was with Him in the 'beginning' and remains till the 'end'.

Jesus contrasts His teaching with the values of the world; in His sublime Peace the 'world' and 'death' are of the substance of a mirage. Perfection knows only Perfection; Infinite existence continues in that Perfection.

Let us never forget as Philip forgot, "and you still do not know me, 'Philip'?"

Peace to you all.

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