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## **John 13:31-14:31 -- More Table Talk, Interrupted by Questions**

Whereas chapters 13-17 of John together record Jesus' conversation with His disciples on the eve of His arrest, 13:31-14:31 contain His words to them around the supper table after Judas Iscariot had left. As Jesus attempts to prepare them for the events of the next few hours, and to emphasize certain key ideas for their future ministry, the dinner conversation is naturally broken up by four questions asked by various disciples. It is helpful to read the passage this way to see how He had to respond to the interruptions, and yet would return to some key themes repeated throughout the evening.

### **Notes:**

13:31-38 - As we have seen, once Judas left, Jesus began to tell the disciples that He was leaving, and that they would not be able to follow. He began to talk about how they were to love one another, with a love like His own. This was to be the premier identifying mark of those who would follow Him, visible enough for all men to see. *Simon Peter said to Him* -- Suddenly Peter interrupts with a question about where Jesus was going. (Obviously, we can tell where his mind turned off. He was still back at vs. 33 in his thinking.) In the brief interchange, Jesus predicts that Peter would not stand so "rock-firm" in his commitment as he might suppose. Before the night was out, he would deny Jesus three times.

14:1-6 - Returning to His theme of trying to comfort them, Jesus tells them to not be troubled. The word here is the same as we have seen before in John 11:33 and 12:27. It means, "don't be agitated/disturbed/upset/terrified/frightened". *Believe in God, believe also in Me.* -- Jesus probably meant "trust in" or "have confidence in", more than "intellectually consent to", as the word "belief" has come to mean in our culture, i.e., "you trust in God, trust in Me also". "Don't be upset, but have confidence in what I am saying to you." *In My Father's house are many dwelling places* -- The household of God has many rooms. *If it were not so...* -- In the Greek NT, this phrase is presented as a question: "But if not, (would) I ever have said to you, 'I go to prepare a place for you'?" Evidently, Jesus had spoken these words to them before, though we have no record of it. The point is, "Why would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you, unless (1) there really was enough room for you; and (2) I really was going to go?". *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.* -- They would be together again. The whole idea of going to "prepare a place for them" meant that He intended to come back for them. *And you know the way where I am going.* -- The Greek is, "Y'all know (intellectually)/have observed the road/way/path where I (Myself) go/depart/go away." The way that Jesus was going to His Father was by His death. That is why in 13:33 He said that "Where I am going, you cannot come." He did not want them to die with Him, as Thomas and Peter had earlier suggested (11:16; 13:37). That would not accomplish anything lasting. He had trained them as apostles (representative ambassadors) to carry on His work after He was gone. *Thomas said to Him* -- Wherever Jesus' immediate train of thought was heading, it was interrupted by Thomas' question. *Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?* -- Thomas confessed that he and the others were not understanding what Jesus was talking about. They were not able to follow what He was telling them. His logic is sound, "If we don't understand where You are going, how are we able to know/perceive/see the road/way/path?" *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life..."* -- Jn. 14:6 is the sixth "I am" saying of this kind in the book (6:35; 8:12; 10:7,11; 11:25). The emphatic nature of the expression would be better translated as "I (Myself) am", drawing specific attention to Him. In effect, Jesus' answer to Thomas' question was, "All you need to know is Me, Thomas." Jesus is the way/road/path to the Father, the destination that Jesus was departing to (cf. vs. 2). He is the truth, all the information, the correspondence to reality, that they would need to find their way. He is the life, to overcome the fear of death. The last time they had heard Him refer to Himself as the life was when He prepared to raise Lazarus from the dead. The way to the Father is secure in Him who is Himself the path, the accurate map of reality, and the one who said, "he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die". *no one comes to the Father,*

*but through Me* -- Simple statement of fact. Jesus is the only means to come to the Father. Notice, however, that He did not say that no one would come to the Father unless he believed certain information about Him, nor that a person needed a certain kind of faith. Regardless of whether it may be possible to come to know God apart from professing faith in the historical Jesus, what we do know is that He paid the potential price for all people to come to God (I Tim. 2:3-6; I Jn. 2:2; II Cor. 5:14,15; I Tim. 4:10), including the OT saints (Rom. 3:23-26; Isa. 53).

Vss. 7-11 -- In this section, Jesus refers to His role as the revealer of the Father, whereupon He is immediately interrupted by Philip, whom He briefly responds to. *If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also* -- The earliest manuscripts have, "If you had known Me, also My Father you will know", a guarantee of the effectiveness of His role as the Way. The words for "know" refer to experiential, relational knowledge, not merely intellectual. *from now on you know Him, and have seen Him* -- The words, "from now on" would probably be better translated "from this time", "presently". The statement refers to Jesus' incarnational role as the revealer of God (cf. 1:14,18). As they presently know Jesus, they have seen the Father. *Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."* -- Not quite catching the drift, Philip apparently thinks that Jesus is going to initiate some deep religious experience. Jesus' response in the next few verses clarifies what He meant. *the Father abiding in Me does His works* -- This is the clearest statement of the dynamic that Jesus operated by. He has alluded to it several times throughout the book. He did nothing "from Himself", rather the words and works He performed were from the Father (5:19,20,30,36; 7:16,17; 8:28,29,38; 10:25,32,37,38; 12:49,50). Now we find out clearly that they were from the Father, who was indwelling Jesus (cf. Lk. 5:17). *Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me* -- Trust Me that what I am telling you is true. *otherwise believe on account of the works themselves* -- If you can't just accept what I am saying, how do you explain the miracles that I perform? The fact that I do them testifies that God is with Me somehow.

Vss. 12-24 - Jesus begins to make the application to the disciples, i.e., He will send the Holy Spirit so that they will be able to operate in the same way He does. *Truly, truly, I say to you* -- Important declaration approaching! *he who believes in Me* -- Lit., "the (one) believing". *the works that I do shall he do also* -- An astounding statement to our ears, yet the apostles would have heard it much differently. After all, they had done these same kind of dramatic works that Jesus was referring to (Lk. 9:1-6; 10:1-11). They would have heard these words as an extension of that ability and authority to all believers. *and greater works than these shall he do* -- Greater in what sense? In power? In a larger geographical area? With greater impact? In greater numbers? No explanation is given. By the way, some would attempt to argue, using 6:28,29, that Jesus was not at all referring to miraculous signs here, but only to those works that resulted in the spread of the Gospel. This is an unwarranted conclusion, motivated by a fear or skepticism of "supernatural power demonstrations". The way that the word "works" is most often used in John would include, if not specifically highlight, the miraculous (cf. 5:36; 9:3,4; 10:31,37,38). Furthermore, it is quite clear that "power ministry" was definitely one aspect of the effective Gospel testimony of the early church (Acts 2:43; 3:1ff.; 4:10-14,33; 5:1-16; 6:8; 8:4-13; 9:17,18,32-42; 10:38; 13:6-12; 14:3,8-18; 15:12; 16:16-18; 19:11-17; 28:3-10; I Cor. 2:1-5; 4:18-21; I Thess. 1:5; Heb. 2:1-4). *because I go to the Father* -- Why is Jesus' absence from them, and His going to be with the Father an explanation for this new dynamic made available to every believer? Cf. vs. 16 and Acts 2:33. This phrase provides a connecting link to Jesus' further thoughts about the Holy Spirit, who would be a comforter/helper to them like He Himself had been. As He talks of the Spirit's coming, He mentions (vss. 18,19) that He Himself would come to be with them, and though they will see Him again, the world will see Him no longer. *In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.* -- In this unusual sentence, Jesus alludes to the new dynamic that will prevail in those days. Somehow, even as they have witnessed the Father in Jesus, and heard Him say that He was in His Father, in that day they will experientially know that Jesus Himself will be in them, and they in Him. Moreover, somehow He will remain in His Father, which means that they, too, will be in the Father. This kind of talk, prompts the fourth interruption from Judas (not Iscariot): *Lord, what then has happened that you are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?* -- Unable to really grasp what Jesus spoke of, it was a reasonable question. Of course, the event that Jesus spoke of had not as yet taken place, nor was there any way to plausibly explain it to them, so Jesus assured them that the Spirit will teach them what they would need to know (vs. 26). For now, He spoke to them before the events unfolded, so that they would be able to maintain their faith after the crisis of His death took place (vs. 29). *Arise, let us go from here.*