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John 14:18-31 -- Jesus' Promise To Return

Notes:

Vs. 18 - *I will not leave you as orphans* -- The Greek has "not" as the first word in the clause for the sake of emphasis, "Not will I leave/neglect/forsake you alone (ones)/orphans". He will not desert them, or pass them off entirely to the care of someone else. *I will come to you* -- The verb is in the present tense, "I come to you". Somehow Jesus Himself will return to be with them. Cf. vss. 3,23.

Vs. 19 - *After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you will...* -- Predicting His resurrection appearances. Physically, they will see Him again. *because I live, you also will live* -- His resurrection life will be applied to them in spiritual new birth.

Vs. 20 - *In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you* -- A dynamic possible only by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. How else could they be in Him, and He in them?

Vs. 21 - *He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me* -- The Greek uses participles to describe the ongoing action of these verbs, "the (one) having ... and keeping/obeying... that (one) is the (one) loving Me." Again, there is a strong connection between agapē love for Jesus and obedience. It is important to note, however, that obedience is not the condition for love, rather it is the fruit or identifying mark of genuine love for Jesus. Love does not equal obedience, but neither can one truly love or esteem Jesus and at the same time disregard His commands. Let there be no deception. Feelings of warmth, attraction, appreciation, or thanksgiving toward God may only be sentimentality, not real love. *and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father* -- What father could not value one who esteems and honors his son? *and I will love him* -- We need not fear that our love will not be appreciated or spurned. *and will disclose Myself to him* -- The Greek word for "disclose" means to "reveal, make visible or manifest within". He speaks of revelation to the inner consciousness. Christ responds to those who esteem Him with greater openness of heart and intimacy. Cf. I Sam. 2:30b; Psa. 25.

Vs. 22 - Judas Thaddaeus' (Lk. 6:16; Matt.10:3) question picks up on this word for inner disclosure - *what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?* -- The word for "not" is an emphatic form, used here for contrast. Behind the question is evidently the lingering belief that Jesus was going to publicly reveal Himself to Israel as Messiah. The word order of the question brings out the contrast more effectively in the original, "what has taken place that to us You are about to inwardly reveal Yourself, and not (indeed) to the world?" Has some event come to pass that has changed things?

Vs. 23 - *If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word* -- A return to the original statement from vs. 15. Love will produce obedience. *and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him* -- The word translated as "abode" is the same word as "dwelling places" in vs. 2, only singular in form. The one loving Jesus will enjoy the daily communion and interaction that accompanies living in one another's presence. Notice that instead of requiring us to be responsible to "dwell in God's presence", the Father and Jesus will come to this person and abide with him. The word for "with" is para, meaning "alongside of, near, in the presence of". This is like the relationship they had with the Spirit before Pentecost (vs. 17 - "He abides with [para] you, but will be in [en] you"). Jesus is not describing an indwelling relationship, as the promised new Spirit-dynamic would be. He is either using the phrase "make Our abode with him" in a figurative sense, referring to the quality of relationship, or, if meant literally, it refers to Jesus' second coming and the dwelling of the saints in the New Jerusalem (vss. 2,3,18; 17:24; I Thess. 4:16,17; Rev. 21).

Vs. 24 - *He who does not love Me does not keep My words* -- This is a negative statement of the same principle as above. Just as genuine agapē love will produce obedience, the resulting absence of that love is a disregard of Jesus' words. *and the word... is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me* -- As we have seen so often before in this book, Jesus credits the origin of His words to the Father, not from His own mind. To disregard Jesus' words is the same as disregarding the Father Himself. Cf. 7:16; 8:28,38; 12:48,49.

Vss. 25,26 - *These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you* -- The word for "abiding" can also be "remaining". Again, the context is very strongly emphasizing that He is leaving, but the Spirit is coming to take

His place. The word "with" is *para*, "alongside, in the presence of". Jesus makes another intentional contrast between his physical ministry among them and the ministry of the Spirit, who would come to dwell "in" them. *the Helper, the Holy Spirit... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you* -- Two separate ministries of the Holy Spirit. He is not only to be our resident Teacher. He will remind us of things that Jesus had said. For the apostles, who were not fully grasping what Jesus was saying or doing, this was invaluable. Is it no less so for us? Most of us do not grasp the full meaning of Jesus' words the first time around, either. The Spirit will specifically bring Jesus' teachings to our attention to apply or explain in specific situations. *whom the Father will send in My name* -- Not only will prayer be received in Jesus' name from this time forth, but the coming of the Spirit is also in His honor. Just as the Father was to be glorified in the Son (vs. 13), so also the Son will be glorified by the Spirit (cf. 16:14).

Vs. 27 - *Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you* -- Instead of simply wishing them peace, as in the case of the customary farewell greeting among the Jews, "Peace to you", Jesus' words communicate that He is actually offering them something that is His to give, something that was His possession to transfer to another. The peace that was His portion, He leaves with them and gives to them, as though it were a commodity to be handed from one person to another. Possibly this is referring to the peace which He will soon make available as a result of His atoning death. This would bring about their experiential reconciliation with the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, who would be their ever-present Helper (Col. 1:19,20; Rom. 5:1; Gal. 5:22). Or, it could be that He is attempting to communicate to them the composure and peace which He was experiencing as an example to encourage them. *not as the world gives, do I give to you* -- The word "as" literally means "according as, in the same way as", so Jesus does not give peace in the same manner as the world's peace is obtained. Worldly peace comes to those whose outward circumstances are prosperous, pleasant, and in good order. The peace Jesus speaks of does not come from outward circumstances, but from an inward trust in God's love and control over all circumstances, even those that may be unpleasant (cf. Phil. 4:6,7; Isa. 26:3; Rom. 8:28; I Pet. 2:23). The world's peace must be secured by accomplishment and effort. Christ's is offered freely. *Let not your heart be troubled; nor let it be fearful* -- The first phrase is a word-by-word repetition of the first part of vs. 1. This indicates that this still remains the subject that Jesus' remarks have been aimed to address. The word "fearful" means "timid, cowardly". This is not the generic word for fear that is more commonly used in the NT. Forms of this word only occur five times in the NT, and it is never used in a positive sense (Matt. 8:26; Mk. 4:40; II Tim. 1:7; Rev. 21:8). This shrinking back in fear would soon be the very test that they would face (Mk. 14:50).

Vs. 28 - *You heard that I said to you, "I go away, and I will come to you"* -- Seeking to assure and fortify them in the face of their apprehension, Jesus summarizes some of what He had previously said to put it into a larger context. Yes, He said He was leaving, but He also said He would return to them. *If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father* -- The supreme good is to be in the presence of God (Psa. 16:10,11; 27:4). Instead of being agitated, upset, or fearful for their own safety, they should have listened with joy to what He was declaring would happen: He will be going to His Father. His joy and calm assurance should give them strength as they face the turmoil ahead. The word for "loved" is a different form of *agapē* than we had seen earlier. It communicates ongoing action in the past, "if you were loving Me...". He doesn't doubt their love, but is attempting to turn their attention away from themselves and their sense of loss. For Him, it would be joy to be with the Father again. *for the Father is greater than I* -- "Greater" is a word describing relative power and privilege. For example, the president of the United States would be "greater than I" in position, but not in essence. Certainly, in Jesus' incarnate state it was true that He limited Himself to a human existence (Heb. 2:17). The power and authority He manifested was derived from the Father, as Jesus responded to His leadings. In choosing to come, Jesus emptied Himself of the right to use His "greatness", limited Himself to a human body, and volunteered to live in humility. In John 17:5, however, we find Jesus referring to the time previous to His coming when He shared the glory and privilege of Divinity, a glory He would soon return to. cf. 5:22,23; 17:10.

Vs. 29 - *I have told you before... that when it comes to pass, you may believe.* -- Jesus' forewarning was intended to soften the blow of what would happen and give them some thread of hope to cling to. These events were all within the sovereign plan of God. They did not catch Him by surprise. Therefore, trust in Him.

Vs. 30,31 - *the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; but that the world may know* -- Satan's efforts will only serve to reveal Jesus' love and obedience to God.