

CONCERNING THE WAY

December 8, 2009

LESSON 84: THE GOSPEL OF JOHN



Chapter 13 – Christ the Servant

Now we come to a great section of scripture, the Upper Room Discourse, an intimate conversation Jesus has with His disciples the night before He was crucified. This discourse goes on for the next five chapters. Jesus spends the last night before His death teaching the disciples the things they would need to know after He was gone, and to reassure them that this wasn't the end, but only the beginning. Lewis Sperry Chafer said this discourse contains "the seed plot of all grace teaching."

"Everything that is uniquely Christian, the doctrinal truth of the Epistles, is taught here by Jesus in its embryonic form." Elmer Towns

John 13:1 Just before the Passover feast, Jesus knew that his time had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now loved them to the very end.

In the last chapter, we saw Jesus ride into Jerusalem on Sunday. John skips what happens on Monday through Wednesday and takes us right to Thursday, the day of the Passover Seder (dinner). Jesus and His disciples had walked together for three years, and had become very close. Sometimes they didn't understand what Jesus was doing or saying, but that's all right, Jesus understood that. Someday, with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they would put it all together. "Loving them to the very end" means He would love them so much that He would go to the cross and die for them, and us.

Jesus and His disciples are about to observe Passover, and they need a place to hold the feast. John skips the details, but Mark tells us a little more:

Mark 14:12-25 Now on the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?" (13) He sent two of his disciples and told them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. (14) Wherever he enters, tell the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" ' (15) He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." (16) So the disciples left, went into the city, and found things just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. (17) Then, when it was evening, he came to the house with the twelve.

Generally the feast of Unleavened Bread would refer to Nisan 15 (Friday), but the reference to the sacrifice of the Passover lamb tells us that Nisan 14 (Thursday) was what Mark had in mind (The month of Nisan went from March 27 to April 25). The celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted eight days, beginning with the Passover meal. The celebrations were so close together that at times the names of both were used interchangeably.

There were huge numbers of people coming into Jerusalem for the feast, so finding a place to stay and eat the feast could be difficult. The Passover was celebrated each year in commemoration of the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt; so it was a feast celebrating redemption (see Exodus 12).

The disciples went out and purchased a lamb, which had most likely already been cooked and prepared. This upper room could have been an upstairs room, or it could have been a rooftop, open to the sky. Houses were flat then and most had a rooftop living area, sometimes used for dining.

The Passover lamb was roasted and eaten after sunset in a family group of at least ten people. People ate the meal while reclining at a low table. It included, besides the lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs as a reminder of the time they were slaves in Egypt and God brought them out. The bread was *matzah* bread, like a cracker, a flat bread cooked without yeast, which was striped and pierced (note the symbolism there), and it represents the fact that the Israelites didn't have time to let their bread rise when they escaped.

They dipped their bread in horseradish or bitter herbs, which reminded them of the misery of being slaves, and charoset, a mixture of apples, wine, and nuts that represented the bricks the Israelites had to make. They would have all kinds of vegetables as well. Four cups of wine mixed with water were also used for the meal; each person would drink 4 cups of wine, which is why it was diluted. There was significance to each of the wine cups, which we don't have time to go into here, but you can read about in books such as "Backgrounds of Early Christianity" by E. Ferguson.

John 13:2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, that he should betray Jesus.

Judas had already made his plans to betray Jesus, as we see in Luke's account:

Luke 22:2-6 The chief priests and the experts in the law were trying to find some way to execute Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. (3) Then Satan entered Judas, the one called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve. (4) He went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers of the temple guard how he might betray Jesus, handing him over to them. (5) They were delighted and arranged to give him money. (6) So Judas agreed and began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus when no crowd was present.

The priests were afraid to do anything openly to Jesus, because He was so popular with the people, so they were delighted to talk to Judas, because this was exactly the kind of plan they were looking for. Matthew 26:15 and 27:3-4 also tells us that the priests gave Judas thirty silver coins to betray Jesus, which was predicted by the prophet Zechariah in Zechariah 11:12-13.

Apparently early on in the Passover meal Jesus did something with His disciples that John doesn't speak about, probably because he assumed his readers were very familiar with it, since it is in the other three gospels. Here's Matthew's account:

Matthew 26:26-29 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat, this is my body." (27) And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, (28) for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (29) I tell you, from now on I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

During the Passover supper, the head of the group would take the first of four cups, the cup of thanksgiving, and pass it around the room. This may have been the cup used here by Jesus in the first Lord's Supper. After this it was the tradition to get up and ceremonially wash your hands. This is probably when Jesus gets up to wash the disciple's feet.

Jesus' death established the forgiveness promised in the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31. The Lord is reinterpreting the symbolism of the Passover meal, which tells us He is making a huge change in the world, bringing in a new era in how God deals with human beings. And these verses are where we get the communion service that Christian churches celebrate.

John 13:3-5 Because Jesus knew that the Father had handed all things over to him, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, (4) he got up from the meal, removed his outer clothes, took a towel and tied it around himself. (5) He poured water into the washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel he had wrapped around himself.

At a feast like this, the tradition was to have a servant at the door that would wash the feet of guests coming in before the meal. At home, wives often washed their husbands' feet, and children washed their parents' feet. Most people, of course, had to wash their own feet. Considering how they ate some of their meals in those days, in a reclining position, you can see that it would have been important to wash not only your hands, but also your feet! They didn't have nice asphalt roads and walkways then, so their feet would be filthy from walking through the dirt, mud, animal dung, etc. There must not have been a servant here to do the foot washing, and none of the disciples volunteered to do it. It was not a fun job, washing dirty, stinky feet!

We don't know in which order Jesus washed their feet. Early church father Chrysostom argued that Judas Iscariot was first. Origen said that Peter was the last, but Augustine said, because Peter was chief of the apostles, that he was first. That actually makes some sense, because if he had been last, he never could have kept quiet until Jesus got to him!

So Christ is acting as a servant here, and what He's going to talk about is the relationship He will have with the disciples even beyond His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. This goes for you and me also if you have trusted Christ for your salvation. By His spirit, The Lord Jesus Christ reigns inside of us right now!

Instead of serving each other, the disciples just before this had been arguing about who would be the greatest among them (Luke 22:24-27). What Jesus did convicted them, and they never argued about it again.

John 13:6-9 Then he came to Simon Peter. Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" (7) Jesus replied, "You do not understand what I am doing now, but you will understand after these things." (8) Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." (9) Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head!"

Peter was aghast that Jesus would be washing his feet, acting as a servant. He thought it should be the reverse. But good old Peter, who never did anything halfway, when he submitted to the Lord, he asked for a bath! Jesus was talking about a spiritual washing, of course.

I would have liked to have been there for this, wouldn't you? To have your feet washed by the creator of the universe, to personally see the significance of what He was doing (which the disciples didn't get until later on), to feel the love between these men, the warmth of their camaraderie, etc.

John 13:10-11 Jesus replied, "The one who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not every one of you." (11) (For Jesus knew the one who was going to betray him. For this reason he said, "Not every one of you is clean.")

This is an interesting statement by Jesus. Most people, before going to a dinner like this, would bathe themselves at home. Of course, they didn't take baths like we do today, but would wash their heads and hands, and feet and legs up to their knees. Then they would go to the feast. Of course, their feet would get dirty on the way, which is why a servant would wash their feet when they arrived at the place of the dinner.

This is generally regarded as a picture of salvation, that the bathing is the initial cleansing from sin, which makes us completely clean once and for all. But we go out into the world and get our feet dirty from contact with it, and so we need our feet washed, which could be a picture of our daily submission to Christ and confession of sins after our initial conversion. When we get our feet dirty, we don't need to be saved again, that's a one time thing. We just need to ask forgiveness for that sin, so that we can stay in fellowship with God.

"The first washing deals with relationship, the second with fellowship. The first washing is once and for all (Hebrews 10:1-12), but daily sins need confession and cleansing (1 John 1:9). The blood cleanses eternally from guilt before the law, but the believer needs constant cleansing from the daily defilement of sins." Elmer Towns

Jesus says the disciples are clean, but does this mean they were perfect, that they never sinned? Of course not. Jesus knew their hearts, and knew that they trusted Him for their salvation. All except for one. When Jesus said "Not every one of you is clean", He was speaking of Judas. This verse tells us a lot about trust and belief, doesn't it? Judas may have been a follower of Jesus, and saw all the miracles and heard everything Jesus said. But he only had an intellectual belief, not a personal belief. He had not been washed by the Holy Spirit.

It is good to remember, as we listen to what Jesus says, that He is ushering in a new age. At this time, this is still basically the Old Testament - the Law, the Mosaic Covenant is still in effect. The Church will not begin until Acts 2, at the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But these men will go through this transition and become leaders of the original Church. All of what Jesus says to them is to them personally, for what they will need to know as they begin this new Church Age. But much of what Jesus says is also applicable to you and me, 2000 years later.

John 13:12-13 So when Jesus had washed their feet and put his outer clothing back on, he took his place at the table again and said to them, "Do you understand what I have done for you? (13) You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and do so correctly, for that is what I am.

I don't think they did understand at this point, but they would get it later. He was teaching them about being servants to each other. But it was also a salvation lesson He was teaching them. He said they were all clean (except for Judas), but they needed their feet washed. They had gotten themselves dirty, they had submitted to Christ's washing, and now they could have full fellowship with Him. He could be more open with them.

It's interesting that we never see the disciples in the gospels call Him Jesus or even Christ. They

always addressed Him as “Rabbi” or “Teacher”, or “Lord”, and sometimes “Master.” In their gospels that they wrote, though, they frequently called Him by His human name. But while He was on earth, especially as they learned who He really was, their relationship to Him was not man-to-man, but servant to Lord, or disciple to Master. Maybe when we speak to Him in prayer, we should honor Him in the same way? He would probably say, like He did here, “You do so correctly.”

John 13:14-15 *If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you too ought to wash one another's feet. (15) For I have given you an example — you should do just as I have done for you.*

This is where some churches get the idea that they should regularly hold feet washing ceremonies in their worship services. I have been through a foot washing ceremony, and it can be meaningful, but this is not a command from the Lord, and certainly does not have the same weight as being baptized. Whereas the Lord’s Supper was practiced by the early church as an ordinance, it apparently did not practice foot-washing as an ordinance in church gatherings. This passage emphasizes inner humility, not a physical ritual. So most churches do not observe foot washing.

Jesus is speaking of being a servant to each other here, being willing to give our lives for one another. But it also a picture of how we should help each other keep our feet clean. If we see a brother or sister getting their feet dirty, we need to help wash them. We are each other’s keepers. We should be able to help correct someone if we see they’re getting their feet dirty, without being mean-spirited about it. This is a true friend and displays the love of Christ, He is our example.

Why Did Jesus Wash the Disciples’ Feet?

As an example of humility (John 13:14)

As a rebuke to pride (Luke 22:24-27)

As a picture of our daily cleansing (John 13:10)

As a warning to Judas Iscariot (John 13:18)

As a picture of His humiliation (Philippians 2:5-11)

As a reminder of His union and communion with the believer (John 13:8)

John 13:16-17 *I tell you the solemn truth, the slave is not greater than his master, nor is the one who is sent as a messenger greater than the one who sent him. (17) If you understand these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*

Serving other people is a blessing, there is real joy and satisfaction from doing things for others that you do not get from serving yourself. This is a gift of God and His will for us.

John 13:18 *"What I am saying does not refer to all of you. I know the ones I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who eats my bread has turned against me.'*

Jesus is getting this from Psalm 41:9, and refers to a trusted friend turning around and attacking.

John 13:19-20 *I am telling you this now, before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I am he. (20) I tell you the solemn truth, whoever accepts the one I send accepts me, and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."*

The “he” at the end of verse 19 is added by the translators, it should be “believe that I AM”. We’ve

seen this before in John, it is a statement of deity, and is what God spoke out of the burning bush to Moses. Jesus is saying that He is the “I AM” that spoke out of that burning bush. And Jesus is saying to the disciples who He will be sending out, that whoever accepts them will get the Son, and thereby will also be getting the Father in the bargain!

John 13:21-22 When he had said these things, Jesus was greatly distressed in spirit, and testified, "I tell you the solemn truth, one of you will betray me." (22) The disciples began to look at one another, worried and perplexed to know which of them he was talking about.

Even though Jesus knew all along what Judas was going to do, He was still greatly hurt by this betrayal, and you can see Him grieving here. Anyone who has been stabbed in the back by a friend knows how much this hurts. And Judas must have been good at faking it, because the disciples had no clue who he was talking about. Judas looked and talked like a believer, said all the right things, went along with everyone doing good works. But he didn't believe any of it; in his heart he had no real faith.

John 13:23-25 One of his disciples, the one Jesus loved, was at the table to the right of Jesus in a place of honor. (24) So Simon Peter gestured to this disciple to ask Jesus who it was he was referring to. (25) Then the disciple whom Jesus loved leaned back against Jesus' chest and asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

Everyone agrees that the “one Jesus loved” was John, the author of this book. He never referred to himself by name, and it is not meant to mean that he was the one Jesus loved most, but as a selfless way of referring to himself, not wanting to call attention to himself in any way, but only as one who Jesus loved.

Some translations use the more literal phrase “reclining on Jesus' bosom” in verse 23. Keep in mind that because of how the disciples were reclining around the table, you were literally almost in the next person's lap, very close together. Leonardo Da Vinci's famous painting of the Last Supper is a beautiful painting, but it is not an accurate picture of this scene. No one sat on chairs. They reclined on large pillows or low backless couches, leaning on their left elbows, and eating with one hand. And since John was sitting right next to Jesus, Peter was trying to get him to ask Jesus who He was talking about. Peter apparently was sitting further away.

John 13:26-27 Jesus replied, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread after I have dipped it in the dish." Then he dipped the piece of bread in the dish and gave it to Judas Iscariot, Simon's son. (27) And after Judas took the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are about to do, do quickly."

Judas was apparently sitting close enough to Jesus where He could hand him a piece of bread. And Jesus was saying, "If you're going to betray me, get on with it." And Satan entered Judas - what a horrible phrase! Judas had let greed and probably anger control him for so long, that he opened a door that let Satan right in. Do not give the devil an opportunity (Ephesians 4:26-31)!

"Table fellowship had more significance to the Jews than simply a social gathering. Eating together was evidence of peace, trust, forgiveness, and brotherhood. To betray the one who had given you his bread was a horrendous act." David E. Garland

John 13:28-30 (Now none of those present at the table understood why Jesus said this to Judas. (29) Some thought that, because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him to buy whatever they needed for the feast, or to give something to the poor.) (30) Judas took the piece of bread and went out immediately. (Now it was night.)

So the disciples didn't get what was going on here. Of course it was night by this time, because the feast began at sundown, but some take this as a mystical or symbolical statement as well, and that's fine. In terms of Jesus' ministry on earth, the betrayal marked the end of the day and the beginning of the night, which would consist of Jesus' arrest, trials, crucifixion, and death. And Judas was walking in the dark, because the light was not in him (John 11:10)

John 13:31-32 When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. (32) If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him right away.

The process of the glorification begins here. Now that Judas has left to do what he planned to do, it's as if Jesus breathes a sigh and says, "It has begun." For Jesus to be glorified, he must be betrayed and crucified. Now that Judas is gone, He can be completely open with His disciples.

John 13:33 Children, I am still with you for a little while. You will look for me, and just as I said to the Jewish religious leaders, 'Where I am going you cannot come,' now I tell you the same.

Jesus will be going to heaven at His death, where the disciples cannot come, not yet, anyway. The Lord is now going to give them His final instructions.

John 13:34-35 "I give you a new commandment — to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (35) Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples — if you have love for one another."

The New Covenant eclipses the Mosaic covenant - the Mosaic Law is about to come to an end, and here Jesus gives a new commandment for this new age He is inaugurating. This is the ultimate commandment for the Church, and one that we so often disobey in our local churches. Jesus is saying we must follow His example of sacrificial service to each other. This is not a gushy feeling that you act on if it feels good, but a commitment to one another that, whether it feels good or not, we would lay down our lives for them. It doesn't look like a new commandment, because the command to love your neighbor is in the Mosaic Law:

Leviticus 19:18 You must not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the children of your people, but you must love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Jesus reiterated this law in Luke 10:27, Mark 12:31, Matthew 22:39. James calls it the Royal Law:

James 2:8 But if you fulfill the royal law as expressed in this scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

So how can this commandment be new? Let's look at it:

Royal Law (James 2:8)	New Commandment (John 13:34)
Love your neighbor.	Love one another (fellow believers).
Love as you love yourself.	Love as Christ loved you.

Love because of the covenant relationship between Israel and God.	Love because of the relationship within the family of God.
Love as an expression of human effort in keeping the Law.	Love as an expression of Christ loving others through us.

John 13:36-38 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later." (37) Peter said to him, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you!" (38) Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? I tell you the solemn truth, the rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times!

Peter didn't realize what was about to happen. He didn't understand how he would react under the stress of the arrest, trials, and crucifixion. Sometimes we are the same way, we don't know how we will react to something stressful until it happens. Peter did deny the Lord three times before the night was over, but we know that Peter eventually laid down his life for Jesus (John 21:18-19). Church tradition states that Peter was crucified upside down, at his request, because he felt that he was unworthy to be crucified like his Lord.

Chapter 14 – Christ the Coming One

The disciples were completely bewildered and discouraged. Jesus had said He was going away (7:34; 8:21; 12:8, 35; 13:33), that He would die (12:32-33), that one of the Twelve was a traitor (13:21), that Peter would disown Him three times (13:38), that Satan was at work against all of them (Luke 22:31-32), and that all the disciples would fall away (Matthew 26:31). All of these things must have been very depressing to them.

Even though He knew the torture He was about to face, Jesus was focused on His mission and cared about His friends who would be left without their shepherd. He knew that it was about to get very rough for them, also. So He spends some time in this chapter comforting them, telling them about the heavenly home that waited for them, and talks about someone else who would come and have a relationship with them. Then He promises them that He would give them His peace through all the turmoil that was about to take place.

John 14:1-2 "Do not let your hearts be distressed. You believe in God; believe also in me. (2) There are many dwelling places in my Father's house. Otherwise, I would have told you, because I am going away to make ready a place for you.

People don't think about it this way, but this is another statement of divinity by Jesus. Can a mere human go to heaven and prepare places for us to live in? No, only God can do that. We would assume that Jesus is speaking of the New Jerusalem here that He is going to prepare in heaven that will eventually come down to the new earth where believers will live forever (Revelation 21:2). Jesus is going ahead of believers to prepare a place for them, a permanent dwelling place in the Father's house.

"Have you ever decorated a room for someone special? If you have, you know what it is like to make a room suit one particular personality. If it is a daughter, you make the room pretty....If it is a son, the room might have airplanes or model cars. If it is for Grandma, the room might have her favorite books; and it might be far from the playroom or the children's bedrooms. We take care in such preparation. Are we to think that Jesus will take less care for those whom He loves,

who are to spend eternity with Him?" James Montgomery Boice

John 14:3-4 And if I go and make ready a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that where I am you may be too. (4) And you know the way where I am going."

There is no doubt about it; this is a Rapture passage, the first one in the New Testament. We have already been over the doctrine of the Rapture, so I won't go into it again here, but Jesus is saying something very important here. He says that He will come again and take the disciples (and by extension, all believers) back to be with Him. If you read that sentence carefully you see that Jesus will come back to the earth, take the believers from the earth, and return to heaven (where He is). That's the Rapture!

John 14:5-6 Thomas said, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?" (6) Jesus replied, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

There is no wiggle room in what Jesus says here. He is THE WAY to heaven. He is THE TRUTH, the source of all truth. He is THE LIFE, the source of all life. We saw early in this book that Jesus made everything, and holds everything together. And we saw with Lazarus that He has the power over life and death. He is the only one that can bridge the gulf between sinful man and a holy God. NO ONE comes to the Father but through Jesus. There is no other way the original Greek can be interpreted to mean anything different, and no disagreement between the thousands of ancient manuscripts we have. This is what Jesus said, so we must either accept it and submit to it as truth, or reject it, thereby rejecting God. There is no middle ground.

Allah is not the way, nor is Mohammed. Buddha is not the way. There are no other gods or religious personalities who could ever claim this. You can put the writings of any other philosopher, prophet, or religious leader alongside what Jesus said, and there is no comparison. All other religions are false. This is what makes Christianity and the Bible so unique (and so hated by the world) - the person and claims of Jesus Christ.

By the way, this is where I get the title of this Bible study series - Concerning The Way. Jesus is THE WAY. Early Christians were called followers of "the Way". It's all about Him. And He didn't just come to show the way, He is the Way.

John 14:7 If you have known me, you will know my Father too. And from now on you do know him and have seen him."

Wow! Did you catch that? Jesus is saying if you have seen Him, you have seen the Father. Jesus is the representation and personification of the Father. This is another claim by Jesus that He is God. Jesus came to show us God the Father, to reveal Him. He is God in the flesh.

John 14:8-9 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be content." (9) Jesus replied, "Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? The person who has seen me has seen the Father! How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Jesus expected the disciples to understand this, that He and the Father were one in essence. Scripture makes it clear that no one has seen the Father, who is spirit. They are not the same

person, which they understood, but they could not get the idea that in seeing Jesus they were seeing the Father. Phillip is a good lesson for us all. He had been with Jesus every day for three years and saw and heard everything, but he still didn't understand Jesus' true nature. This tells us how important it is that we continue to study and learn about God. No matter how much I study or how many times I have read the Bible, I am continually amazed at how much there still is to learn about our Lord Jesus Christ. You need to be continually growing in your knowledge of Him, and you will love Him even more!

John 14:10-11 Do 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 initiative, but the Father residing in me performs his miraculous deeds. (11) Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me, but if you do not believe me, believe because of the miraculous deeds themselves.

These verses help us understand what Jesus is saying. Since the Father is in Him, when you see Jesus you are seeing the Father also. You have to be careful here, there are some fringe heretical groups, like the Pentecostal Oneness church, that do not believe God is three persons. They believe He is one God that wears three hats. Sometimes He wears His Father hat, sometimes He takes that off and wears His Son hat, and other times He wears His Spirit hat.

Now, when you get right down to it, there is no way we can really comprehend the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity. But we have to accept what the Bible says. Scripture is clear that there are three entities who are one God in essence. If there weren't, there would be no need for Jesus to have this conversation. He would just say that He is God - no other explanation needed. But He speaks of someone who is separate, a different person, but yet one. And He makes it clear that He is subservient to the Father, which clearly indicates separate persons. You can't be subservient to yourself!

John 14:12 I tell you the solemn truth, the person who believes in me will perform the miraculous deeds that I am doing, and will perform greater deeds than these, because I am going to the Father.

Now wait a minute. How could we do any miraculous deed that is greater than the raising of Lazarus from the dead? Can you do that? Do you know of anyone who can? What is Jesus saying here? Jesus is not referring to signs and wonders like healing or moving mountains here. Remember that to Jesus it's the spiritual that really matters, not the material. We as believers can witness to others about Christ and lead people into a saving knowledge of Him. To Jesus, bringing someone to a place where they can trust Him for eternal life is a far greater miracle than any of the sign miracles He did while on earth.

This started with the apostles after Jesus had left the earth and the Holy Spirit came. You can see in the book of Acts that many more people were added to the Church through the ministry of the apostles than had ever become followers of Jesus while He was on earth. That's what Jesus is speaking of. It is not about doing more spectacular miracles than Jesus did, but about what we can do with the Holy Spirit's empowerment that is incredibly important from an eternal perspective. From these eleven men, Christianity spread beyond Israel to the whole world. There is no greater miracle than to lead someone to Christ, to be used as an instrument in someone being rescued from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.

John 14:13-14 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (14) If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

This is an incredible promise. Does this mean we can ask God for money, a brand new car, or healing any time and expect to get it? What's the secret to getting something from God? The key is the phrase "in my name". This doesn't mean you can just throw out a prayer and end it with "in Jesus name", and poof, your prayer is answered. We all do that. But that's not what Jesus is saying. To ask in His name is to ask with His authority, in His will, and for His glory (which is specifically mentioned in verse 13). So this is a huge deal.

If you ask for something that aligns with God's will and purpose, He will always grant that request. That is the promise. We don't get things we ask for because we ask with the wrong motives (James 4:3). We want a personal benefit, and we can't see what God is trying to do in our lives. Lord, if you just give me the money to buy a yacht, then I will travel around the Caribbean going from island to island handing out tracts. Hmmm, I think the Lord sees right through requests like that.

John 14:15 "If you love me, you will obey my commandments.

What are His commandments? Well, basically everything that He has said. By the way, all of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament except for keeping the Sabbath. Those are moral imperatives that are commands for all time; they didn't just begin with Moses. We are not under the Law of Moses any more, but we must remember that obedience is the proof of genuine love.

John 14:16-17 Then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever — (17) the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you.

All three members of the Trinity are in verse 16. The Son will ask the Father and the Father will give the Holy Spirit. The word translated "Advocate" here is the Greek word "paraklētos", which has a wider range of meaning than any single English word. Other English words that imperfectly describe what is meant are "comforter", "counselor", or "helper". It actually means something like "one called alongside". No English word does it justice, though. Notice Jesus says He will give "another" Advocate. When He was on earth, Jesus fulfilled the role of "Paraclete". For example, if you are worried and upset, and you are looking for peace, you call on the Holy Spirit to come alongside you, to give you peace.

Right here in verse 17 you can see a difference between the age of Law and the age of Grace. Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit already existed, and resided with the disciples. But something new was going to happen soon at Pentecost, where the Holy Spirit would begin a new way of dealing with people. In the Old Testament and at this time in the upper room, the Holy Spirit would come upon a person for a specific ministry, and then He might leave. For example, the Spirit came upon King Saul, but later on He left Him.

This is the first explicit promise that He would be coming to be with the believer, taking the place of the Son, who would be returning to the Father. Having taken a human body, the Son cannot be omnipresent, but the Spirit is omnipresent, and so Christ can continue to be with each believer through His Holy Spirit. In the age of Grace the Holy Spirit indwells believers permanently and

fulfills the role of Paraclete (1 Corinthians 6:19, Romans 8:9). That is a whole study in itself, but that's it in a nutshell! Here are some more verses about the 3rd member of the trinity - Luke 1:35, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, 12:1-13, Romans 8:2, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30, Hebrews 9:14, 1 Peter 4:14.

John 14:18-20 "I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come to you. (19) In a little while the world will not see me any longer, but you will see me; because I live, you will live too. (20) You will know at that time that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you.

Jesus could be referring to the disciples seeing Him after His resurrection, but it could also be referring to all believers seeing Him someday in His glorified body, when He comes to us and takes us to heaven. Verse 20 tells us that not only will the Holy Spirit live in us, but so will the Son and the Father. We have the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit living in us, and it is beyond our comprehension in many ways.

John 14:21 The person who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him."

We have to be careful with this statement, because there are different levels of "love". Simply loving the Lord does not mean you are saved. In the last chapter of this book Jesus shows Peter that his love is not very deep. So it is possible for a believer to love the Lord and not obey His commandments. Jesus is speaking of a deeper love that is shown by obeying Him, that is the person God is pleased to reveal Himself to. When we truly love Him, we will obey Him, and it won't be a chore.

John 14:22 "Lord," Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "what has happened that you are going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?"

This Judas was also called Thaddeus. The disciples still expected Jesus to reveal Himself to the world as Messiah and King of Israel, so they couldn't understand why he would say He was only going to reveal Himself to them. Of course, Jesus had already revealed Himself in many ways to the disciples, but Jesus is speaking of a new spiritual revealing that would happen in the future, after His ascension.

John 14:23-24 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and take up residence with him. (24) The person who does not love me does not obey my words. And the word you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

This is the relationship we have now with God. He comes to us (in all three persons) and takes up residence in us. What an incredible, unfathomable thing! God in us! Jesus is talking about fellowship with us, a relationship with us, which was never possible before. And it is a process. I will never love Jesus as much as I should, I'm sure, but I have come to know and love Him more and more as the years have gone by. I've always loved Him, but there is a deeper quality of love now, a deeper understanding of Him.

Some Christians never grow spiritually. They never come to know Jesus in a deeper more intimate way, they never grow in their love for Him, they just continue on their way and wonder why things

never change. Why? Well, you can't develop a relationship with someone if you don't spend a lot of time with them and really get to know them.

John 14:25-26 "I have spoken these things while staying with you. (26) But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you.

This is a very important verse. Jesus is authenticating the New Testament ahead of time. This is why we can trust what the writers of the New Testament books wrote, because Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would cause the apostles to remember *everything* Jesus said to them. So, unlike me, who easily forgets a conversation I had with someone a couple of days ago, the apostles (including the apostle Paul, who was instructed personally by Christ) had perfect recall about what Jesus had said. We can trust it because Jesus said it.

Most of what Jesus says in this discourse will be applicable when the Church age starts at Pentecost. Some things are said directly to the disciples and do not apply to us, and this is one of them. These men have a special ministry in time ahead of them, some of which we'll see in the book of Acts, and they were given special help from God to carry out their tasks. Some people use this verse to try to say that they don't need to study the Bible or prepare a message or a Sunday School lesson, the Holy Spirit will tell them everything they need to say, and help them remember what the Bible says.

Well, the Holy Spirit certainly helps us say what we should say, and helps us remember what He has taught us in His Word, but that's not what Jesus is saying here. This promise is for a specific group of men in a specific time for a specific purpose.

It's a good example of the bad practice of just putting the whole Bible in a mixing bowl, stirring it up, and just pulling out anything you want and making it apply to you personally today. We cannot do that, although many do. In this case, we realize that Jesus was giving His final instructions to His disciples before He left the earth. This was a special time that will never again be repeated. We know that these words were for the original apostles, but there are some things in what Jesus says that we can apply to ourselves in the Church age. That's what we look for.

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be distressed or lacking in courage.

This is not a new subject, He is still speaking directly to the disciples about something that will happen when He leaves the earth. But I believe it is applicable to us as well. It is a wonderful promise to all Christians in all ages. Jesus gives a peace to us that the world will never have. It is a peace that we have no matter what is going on around us. It has nothing to do with our circumstances, and it is not the peace of an easy life. It is the peace of a servant who has complete confidence and the full support of his master, knowing that he is loved and will never be abandoned, leaving the servant free to carry out his duties effectively and joyfully.

John 14:28-29 You heard me say to you, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I am. (29) I have told you now before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe.

The disciples should have been happy that He was going back to heaven, because that's where He

would be glorified by the Father. And when Jesus is glorified He will glorify His disciples (John 17:22).

Jehovah's Witnesses argue from the statement, "The Father is greater than I am", that Jesus is a lesser god. But this would make Jesus a created being or would lead to polytheism, both of which are unbiblical. The Father and the Son share the same essence (John 1:1-2; 14:9; 20:28). The Father and the Son are "One" in purpose and essence (10:30). So the Father is greater in office or glory than the Son was in His humanness.

John 14:30-31 I will not speak with you much longer, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, (31) but I am doing just what the Father commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Get up, let us go from here."

The "ruler of this world", of course, is Satan. Satan is coming to try to destroy Him (at the cross), but Jesus is saying that He is the one who's going to be the one who is in control of what goes on. Satan may have deluded himself into thinking that he was going to be able to gain some kind of victory over Christ, but God is sovereign over every detail. The crucifixion was going to happen because the Father wanted it to, not because Satan was causing anything to happen.

Then Jesus ends this part of His discourse by saying, "Get up, let's get out of here." This probably means that this is when they left the upper room and went to the Mount of Olives where Christ was arrested. If that's true, all that Jesus said next He said on the way there. And that is where the chapter ends.

"Before the incarnation, Jesus was in eternal glory. He experienced the Father's infinite love and fellowship in a way we cannot comprehend. But He left this glory to come to earth, not as a king to a magnificent palace but as a tiny baby to a stinking stable. He lived in poverty. He had no place even to lay His head. He suffered the hatred, abuse, and jeers of evil men. He was rejected by His own people and vilified even by the religious leaders. . . .

The hatred and abuse were almost over. Death would end them, and He would return to the glory He once had with the Father. He found joy as He approached the cross, because through His suffering there He would be restored to the full expression of deity. He looked forward to it. He rejoiced in anticipation of it. And He wanted His beloved friends to share His joy." John MacArthur