



JOHN 14:12-21 | THE UPPER ROOM: PROMISES TO HIS DISCIPLES

- Verses 12-14 – see session 56
  - Review: *these verses were (a) to the disciples of that dispensation and (b) verses 13-14 were to the assembly as a whole, not as a group.*
- Bad commentary on these verses:
  - William Hendriksen, New Testament Commentary:
    - *When he now speaks about the greater works, he is in all probability thinking of those in connection with the conversion of the Gentiles. Such works were of a higher character and vaster in extent.*
    - *It is not difficult to see that such a prayer will always and most certainly be answered, for the one who utters it does not ever want anything that Christ does not want!*
  - J.M. Boice, The Pillar New Testament Commentary:
    - *But even so, greater works is not a transparent expression. It cannot simply mean more works—i.e. the church will do more things than Jesus did, since it embraces so many people over such a long period of time—since there are perfectly good Greek ways of saying ‘more’, and since in any case the meaning would then be unbearably trite. Nor can greater works mean ‘more spectacular’ or ‘more supernatural’ works: it is hard to imagine works that are more spectacular or supernatural than the raising of Lazarus from the dead, the multiplication of bread and the turning of water into wine.*
    - *...the greater works the Father will show the Son, and that the Son will therefore manifest to his followers, are displays of resurrection and judgment.*
    - *In short, the works that the disciples perform after the resurrection are greater than those done by Jesus before his death insofar as the former belong to an age of clarity and power introduced by Jesus’ sacrifice and exaltation.*
  - H.A. Ironside, Addresses on the Gospel of John:
    - *In the sixth place, notice His promise to hear the prayers of His servants. “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do.” “If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it.” Now somebody speaks up and says, “Well, I asked God for something in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and He did not do it.” Oh, but that was not necessarily asking in His Name. To ask in His Name is to ask by His authority; that is to pray in accordance with His revealed will. It is as though He said to us, “Whatever you ask by My authority, I will do.” And so what you and I need is to be sure that we understand His will and that we have His authority for the requests that we make.*
- Verse 15 –
  - This *if/then* statement is a true hypothetical. The result of loving Jesus was to **keep my commandments**. Jesus will repeat this instruction in [John 14:21](#), [23](#), and [John 15:10](#), [14](#) (all in this same upper room).
  - We should be careful to avoid a direct application here due to the nature of Jesus’ commandments.
    - [1 Corinthians 16:22](#) - those who do not love Jesus Christ should be **Anathema**.
    - Those who do love Him should keep His commandments, including:

- Repent - [Matt. 4:17](#)
- Do not make oaths - [Matt. 5:34](#)
- Forgive 70x7 - [Matt. 18:21-22](#)
- Render to Caesar - [Matt. 21:21](#)
- Heal, raise the dead, cast out demons - [Matt. 10:8](#)
- For a sample of others, see <https://iblp.org/questions/what-are-commands-christ>
  - Note the *selective* use of Jesus' commands, avoiding Matthew 10:8 and John 13:14.
    - I would venture to say that those of us who love Jesus are not fully obeying these commands. Does that mean we are **Anathema**?
  - In the end, only a dispensational interpretation will avoid legalism. Today, under grace, our love is expressed in bringing glory and honor to Jesus Christ, but we cannot use our obedience to the commands of Christ as a test of our love.
- Verse 16 –
  - Jesus was with the disciples as a **Comforter**, and He will ask the Father to give **another Comforter**. The word **another** is ἄλλος [allos], which is *another in number, of the same kind* (as opposed to *heteros*, another of a different kind).
  - According to Bullinger, “The Rabbinical writings often refer to the Messiah under the title *M<sup>e</sup>nāhem*. (= Comforter), and speak of His days as the days of consolation.” Thus, embedded in the promise is the idea that Jesus is *one Comforter* and the Father will send **another**.
- Verse 17 –
  - In verse 16 the promise was given, in verse 17 the identity is revealed. The new Comforter is **the Spirit of truth**. While the use of the definite article in Greek does not abide by the strict rules of English grammar, here we have a double use of the definite article, *the Spirit of the truth*. A double use is very often indicative that an identifiable *person* is in focus, rather than an intangible spirit. For example, *the Spirit of the Antichrist vs the spirit of antichrist*. In verse 17 we have more than just *the spirit of truth*, but rather an identifiable person, the Holy Spirit. Evidence is that the Lord speaks of this **Spirit**, which is in the neuter form, using a masculine pronoun.
  - Jesus declares that **the world cannot receive** this coming Spirit **because it seeth him not**. The world is likely an indication of *natural versus supernatural* thinking. Natural thinking, by definition, does not receive the *supernatural*.
  - It is interesting that Jesus tells His disciples that they **know him** (present tense) and that **he dwelleth with you** (present tense) and that He **shall be in you** (future tense). How can they know and dwell with One that hasn't been given? Clearly the Holy Spirit was *present* in days before Pentecost, and many examples could be given. Verse 16 promises a Comforter who will **abide with you forever**, and verse 17 uses the same Greek word for abide, here translated **dwelleth**. In pre-Pentecost days the Holy Spirit was *temporary* and *external*. The Lord promises a day when the Comforter is *permanent* and *internal*.
- Verse 18 –
  - While the Lord will send a **Comforter** (v. 16), the information of verse 18 does not refer to the Holy Ghost. Here Jesus promises His return, having previously spoken of both His departure and His return ([Jn. 14:2-3](#)). The promise in verse 18 totally relates to the blessings of the return.
  - From the time of His departure until His return (so it seems from this verse), the disciples will be **comfortless**. The Greek word is ὀρφανός [orphanos], from which we get *orphan*. However, the word here does not mean *fatherless*, but in its broader meaning of *bereaved* (as in Young's Literal Translation). Many modern versions translate as *orphans*, yet doing so fail to convey the broader usage of the Greek word *orphanos*.