

John 13v36 - 14v7

Question time

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Background note

Before we read this passage: a little history about how the Bible's text came to look as it does today.

In the early 13th century Archbishop Stephen Langton put the chapter divisions in.

In 1546, a monk, called Robertus Stephanus introduced the verse numbers whilst travelling from Rome across Europe into France. Prior to Langton and Stephanus, the Bible was unbroken text.

The section titles and headings that we see today were all added by modern editors – there used to be none.

Therefore – as we read John's gospel, we should be looking for the section breaks from the author and not from Langton and Stephanus... This study looks at a classic passage that proves the point.

Let's start by reading ch 13v36 – 14v7... and notice the different questions and answers:

Ch 13v36 - 14v7: Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterwards." ³⁷ Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." ³⁸ Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow till you have denied me three times.

14 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In 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? ³ And 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. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

These are the first two of the four major questions that the disciples asked Jesus after Judas has left.

So... knowing that the divisions were not there in the original text... how would we expect the verses to be ordered?

- Question - followed by...
- ...an answer

...which is exactly what we are going to look at!

Question 1: Peter: ***“Lord, where are you going?”***

Read ch 13 v 36: *Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterwards.”*

This is a topic we have had before:

e.g. ch 7 v 34: *“You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come.”*

Why is what Jesus says to Peter in ch 13 v 36 such a surprise to Peter?

- He clearly understood that Jesus was likely to be going to Jerusalem to die... but why would that mean he (Peter) could not go with him... and gloriously show his love for Jesus by dying with him?

What does Peter’s answer reveal about what he had failed to understand – what has he not yet realised?

- Peter has not yet appreciated that he cannot serve God until he has first been served by God... at the cross.

Remember ch 13 vs 6-9:

ch 13 vs 6-9: *He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?”⁷ Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterwards you will understand.”⁸ Peter said to him, “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.”⁹ Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!”*

Peter thinks he can lay down his life for Jesus:

ch 13 vs 37-38: *Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow till you have denied me three times.*

- Peter simply doesn't realise how terribly weak he is in his own strength!
- There is a large element of arrogance in our thinking we are similarly strong... in the face of our proven human frailty and propensity to sin!

Read ch 14 v 1: *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me."*

To whom is Jesus talking? And what is it that is causing "trouble" for the disciples' hearts..?

- Jesus is speaking to Peter and the rest of the disciples

He has just told them two things:

- 1) He will be leaving them and they cannot follow:

v 36: ... ***Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward."***

- 2) They will fail him:

v 38: ***Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times."***

So Jesus' words:

ch 14 v 1: *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me."*

...are designed to comfort them in light of his departure and their future.

Now let's look at ch 14 vs 2-4:

ch 14 vs 2-4: *"In 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? ³ And 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. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going."*

How do Jesus' words to his disciples here offer them real comfort?

There are three things Jesus is going to do:

- He is going to prepare a new home for them:

v 2: *"In 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?"*

- He has to go in order to do this... but will one day come back for them:

v 3: *“And 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.”*

- He will go... via the cross:

v 4: *“And you know the way to where I am going.”*

Why couldn't Peter go with Jesus?

- Because Jesus needs to go and deal with the very thing that we CANNOT do:
 - Carry the weight... and pay the cost of... OUR sin.

Thinking it through...

Have you yet found yourself in Peter's shoes?

- thinking you are standing strong in your faith or self-belief...
- ...when actually you need to rely upon Jesus' GRACE...
- ...and need to return to him for forgiveness!

If we haven't – we will!!

...and then we will need the comfort of these verses.

Question 2: Thomas: *“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”*

What a comfort – after three years with him (and 14 chapters of John) Thomas still wasn't clear about the way to God!

The answer:

ch 14 vs 6-7: *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”*

What is startling about how Jesus begins his answer?

v 6: ***“I AM the way”***... to God the Father

- Not the kind of answer you would get from the various world religions – they would all give a list of things to do... wouldn't they?

Jesus tells us that the way to “find God” is not through a method or a manual, but rather through the MAN, the person, Jesus Christ.

Not “do this or that”, but rather in v6:

- the great “**I AM**” speaks
- “**THE TRUTH**”

...Or – “I AM the truth about God”... “The truth is located – in me!!”

“**...AND THE LIFE**”:

- A life NOW...
- ...and for eternity!

How can Jesus say this?

- Only HE is the way to God... because only HE has died on the cross to deal with the great problem of our sin.
- Only HE is the truth from God... because only HE has come from God, has seen God, and known God from eternity:

Read John ch 1 v 18: *No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.*

- Only HE is the life from God... because only HE has conquered death.

The last part of ch 14 v 6 is the most challenging of the lot!

ch 14 v 6b: “**NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME**”

- Today these words are very politically offensive... and they were then also - to the Jews!

Remember, Jesus says these words in Jerusalem on the eve of Passover – the greatest Jewish festival of the year!

It's just SO exclusive! So, let's be clear – Jesus is condemning the multi-faith / inter-faith / “all roads lead to God” approach of religion as:

...EMPTY - EMPTY – EMPTY

Let me give you an example by introducing you to 'Great Aunt Agatha'...

Imagine I stood in a classroom and said to the children being taught today's politically correct view - that multi-faith religion really does unite people:

- “*Who thinks my Great Aunt Agatha is really tall?*” ...and approximately 25% of the children run to the corner I have pointed them to if they agree.
- “*Who thinks my Great Aunt Agatha is really tiny?*” ...and just less than 25% of the children run to the corner I have pointed them to if they agree.
- “*Who thinks my Great Aunt Agatha is of average height?*” ...and approximately 25% of the children run to the corner I have pointed them to if they agree.
- “*Who thinks I don't actually have a Great Aunt Agatha!?!?*” ...and the remaining children run to the last corner!

“Now what would you think if I told you that actually you are ALL correct!! You know that would be wrong, don't you?!”

“Great Aunt Agatha can only be one height – and she either exists or she doesn't!”

Yet the BBC continues to broadcast its “Thought for the Day” as if all roads lead to the same God... even though:

- Buddhism would say that God does not exist!
- Hinduism would say there are millions of gods!
- In Islam – Muslims would be horrified at the concept that God is a Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!

In contrast - while the world doesn't like the answer, Jesus says:

v 6: ***“I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE. NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME!”***

There is only ONE correct answer! ...Just as there is with Great Aunt Agatha's height!

Jesus reveals God the Father – ABSOLUTELY:

ch 14 v 7: *“If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”*

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