

He Goes to Prepare the Earth for Us. A Biblical Theological Exploration of John 14

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[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

I was going to hear what was intended to be my sermon for John chapter 14. I think I wrote this on Monday or Tuesday. And once after writing it, realized I just wasn't sure, at least on Monday or Tuesday, if I had written a sermon.

The sermon, I suppose you might say. That happens to me a lot. My first pass at a passage might be, well, hopefully accurate, but isn't always the thing that God reveals to me is needed for our particular congregation.

So I've got a really, you know, dense, theologically dense sermon written on Monday or Tuesday and just had this kind of sense of need to go more practical. There's plenty of practical in this particular passage in John 14.

[1 : 53] So that leaves me with this whole 5,000 word monstrosity that I will inflict upon you in a moment.

Before we get to that, a couple of thoughts. One, our hymn for the day. I've forgotten about my hymn commitment. And our hymn for the day is from John Newton.

And it's called At Parting. For a season called to part, let us now ourselves commend to the gracious eye and heart of our ever-present friend.

Jesus, hear our humble prayer, tender shepherd of thy sheep. Let thy mercy and thy care all our souls in safety keep.

In thy strength may we be strong, sweeten every cross in pain. Give us if we live ere long, here to meet in peace again. Then if thou thy help afford, Ebeneezers shall be reared.

[2 : 57] All our souls shall praise the Lord, who our poor petitions heard. This is at least partly rooted in John Newton's great affection for his people.

I don't actually know the history of this particular hymn. My guess is that he wrote it upon the passing of one of his congregation members. It may not be that. It may not be that.

But there's some kind of parting in view here, of course. And what he's doing is he's commending the grief he's feeling, the pain he's feeling in this parting to this greater story that Jesus is taking care of us and we will ultimately meet again.

I also wanted to mention a quote that I read this week from George Eliot. A man on Twitter named Josh Doss posted this and it's from Middlemarch, George Eliot.

He writes, Things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been. That things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs.

[4 : 20] What's he saying there?

I'll try to remember to bring that quote up again around Mother's Day. It's a perfect Mother's Day quote. It's really what a mother does. Okay, now getting into John 14.

We're just going to jump right in. The passage itself is centered around Jesus giving comfort to his disciples. But as I began to unpack the deeper theology at work in this passage, I realized that I really couldn't just jump right into it without dealing with some misconceptions that Christians typically walk around with.

And so let me clear up a few things. This is all rooted in Jesus's first statement in John 14. Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me.

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? 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.

[5 : 56] And you know the way to where I'm going. Another reason why this didn't make it to Sunday is that my understanding of what Jesus is doing is a bit on the elaborate side.

I know for sure that what I'm going to tell you is true biblically. I am not confident, not entirely confident that what I'm telling you is exactly what Jesus is talking about.

This is a bit of one of those Dunning-Kruger kind of moments where the more you lean into a passage, the less you're sure about what you're seeing here. So I'm going to give you my best take on sort of why Jesus going is a comfort for us.

And in order to do that, I have to deal with some misconceptions that a lot of Christians carry around. And the first misconception is that our eternal future state is disembodied, which is wrong. We won't be mere spirits floating around. Remember, Jesus remains incarnate in heaven. He has a body in heaven, and he won't be the only one with a body. Rather, as Paul teaches us in Philippians 3.20, But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

[7 : 30] And you can see this discussed again in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 8. So let's make sure we understand that our eternal future involves physicality.

The second misconception is a little bit more common, I suppose. And my take on it is perhaps a little bit more controversial. The second misconception is that our eternal home is in heaven.

And this is incorrect. We will dwell physically with Christ on earth. Revelation 5.10, You have made them a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign upon the earth.

So when Jesus says he will prepare a place for us, I think he has something rather earthy in mind.

And I will work that out more as we continue into this passage. But I can say for sure that we will not dwell with Christ in merely in purely spiritual disembodied state.

But we will be given glorified bodies and also a glorified earth to dwell upon. And I'll touch on another proof text for this, which is in Revelation chapter 21. Listen to this in Romans 8.18-21.

[8 : 44] Paul writes, The idea here being that when the full saints, whole number of saints are being brought in, when all that are saved that were chosen by God to be saved, then the earth will actually match the glorified state of a believer, and the earth will be renewed.

And there, Revelation 5.10, amongst other places, we will dwell and reign with Christ on the earth.

The third misconception is by far the most controversial and by far the most common, and that is that this earth will be destroyed.

This, I think, is wrong, but it is understandable. Because there is a text that seems to indicate that the earth will be destroyed. Not long ago, Dr. David Jeremiah, who is working from a completely different eschatological system than I am, he came to realize that he had misinterpreted 2 Peter 3.10-13.

That passage reads in the ESV, Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought we be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn.

But according to this promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. This text is the reason why so many people believe that God will destroy the earth.

[10 : 57] And listen to David Jeremiah's explanation, which, by the way, has happened relatively late in his life. He writes this, In other words, God was going to give up on this world, totally wipe it out, and start over from scratch.

I now realize that I was mistaken in my understanding, and so are many others, as I have learned. The word burned up in that passage of Scripture does not appear that way in the early Greek manuscripts.

In fact, if you have a copy of the New International Version, it translates that phrase, laid bare. The actual word in the text conveys the idea of being uncovered or laid open for exposure.

In other words, Peter is not talking about destroying the earth, but rather about purifying it. The basic materials of the earth's structure will not be annihilated. They will undergo tremendous

processes of disintegration, as Peter's language implies here.

All the age-long evidences of decay wrought in the earth's crust will be completely destroyed. Then, God will once more exercise his creative power, and will create and make the new heavens and the new earth.

[12:17] So you can see why this is a common misconception. It's really not people's fault for believing it. It's really kind of the translator's fault, I suppose. But once people do the work in the Greek, they typically wind up realizing that God isn't actually going to annihilate the earth.

Rather, he is going to renew it, and that renewal will involve the destruction of all the ways that death had established itself on the earth.

Similarly, Oh my goodness. Randy Alcorn writes the following in his book, For many years, both as a Bible student and later as a pastor, I operated under a set of assumptions about the end times and God's ultimate plan.

I didn't think in terms of renewal or restoration of what God had already made. Instead, I was convinced that God intended to destroy the earth entirely, to scrap his original design and purpose for creation, abandoning it as a failed experiment.

In my mind, he would then start over from scratch, implementing a completely new plan with a disembodied, unearthly heaven, a place wholly separate from the physical world we know.

[13:29] This view shaped how I read scripture and taught others. But over the past 15 years, I've come to see something different. It is as though my eyes have been opened to what scripture has been saying all along.

God's intention isn't to annihilate his creation, but to redeem and restore it. The Bible points to a continuity between this world and the next, where the earth isn't discarded, but renewed.

And heaven isn't an escape from creation, but a fulfillment of it. Now, the reason that I felt like it was necessary to unpack those misconceptions is because Jesus here speaks of a work he is doing with our eternal future in mind.

That's a reasonable take on John 14, 1 through 3. I will give you another take on it in the sermon that I actually preached this Sunday, but it is a reasonable take to say that Jesus is speaking here of our eternal future.

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. 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?

[14:40] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again. I will take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also. In verse 28 of chapter 14, he says, You've heard me say to you, I'm going away and I will come to you.

If you loved me, you would have rejoiced because I'm going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. So we're going to, on Sunday, lock into mainly that idea of how to keep our hearts from being troubled.

But what I was originally planning on talking about was what is happening here when Jesus goes and prepares a place for us, and why is it comforting?

One of the questions you could ask, for instance, is, Why has the same Jesus who spoke the world into existence taken 2,000 years to prepare a place for us?

Did heaven need that much remodeling? And the answer is, of course, no. But what does need that much remodeling?

[15:49] And I would say, the earth. The earth needs that much remodeling. When Jesus talks about going to the Father, and when all of the apostles talk about this, they are all having in mind Psalm 110, that pictures the ascension and reign of Jesus.

Psalm 110, verse 1, The Lord says to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. So you'll see the apostles alluding to this constantly.

I believe it's the most quoted Old Testament verse in the New Testament. The most quoted or alluded to verse. He says he's going to the Father in John 14 because he's alluding to that same top promise, that he is going to reign at the right hand of the Father in power.

This is a big deal to Jesus. He talks about it a lot, actually, in the last few chapters. Well, not in the last few chapters, but from John 14 through 17. I'll show you some of those in a moment.

But this is a main theme surrounding Jesus' enduring the cross, forsaking its shame for the joy set before him. In fact, when Jesus is arrested and brought before the council, he says in Luke 22, verse 67, they say, Are you the Christ?

[17:23] And he says, If I tell you, you will not believe. And if I ask, you will not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God. See, there's this Psalm 110 is kind of everywhere in the New Testament.

Jesus is going to the Father explicitly to sit at the right hand of a position of rule. Hebrews 1, 3. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

And after he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven. So what is he doing when he says, I go?

He's going to the right hand of the Father to reign. But what does that reign look like? And how is it comparable or fitting to say that that reign is a preparing reign?

Is it that heaven needs great preparations? I think that that's probably the wrong focus. The main focus seems to be that this earth needs preparing.

[18:33] Specifically, he must reign until his enemies are made his footstool. That way of thinking about Christ's reign, thinking of it in almost like an eschatological category, that's pretty consistent in Scripture.

In 1 Corinthians 15, 21-26, Paul writes, For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order, Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ, then comes the end.

For he delivers when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father, after destroying every rule and every authority and power. He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death. That's 1 Corinthians 15, 21-26. So where is Jesus gone?

He is gone to the right hand of the Father.

[19:42] What is Jesus doing? He is preparing a place for us. What kind of place? The new heavens and the new earth. What kind of preparation is he making?

He is reconciling all things to himself, bringing an end to all of the ways that this earth has been polluted with sin and death, so that his saints can dwell with him, God, on the earth.

Now is the time to read Revelation 21. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them as their God. And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more.

[20:47] Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new.

Also he said, Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true. And he said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of water of life without payment.

To the one who conquers will have this heritage. And I will be his God, and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for the murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

That's the great comfort provided to the saints. The comfort that Jesus, I think, is extending to the saints in John 14. He is going to reign at the right hand of the Father.

It is at that reign that he is preparing a place for us. That place is the new heavens and the new earth. And the chief activity of this preparation is to expunge the world of his enemies.

[22:08] You know, a lot of times when we say God is on the throne, we think mostly of his authority. And indeed, Jesus is now king of the universe. He really is in charge.

And yes, the authority of Jesus does give us some comfort. It does. Just as the cross of Jesus gives us comfort. In fact, in the Heidelberg, you know, the authority of Jesus comes through really strongly.

And what is your only comfort in life and death? That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood.

And He has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head.

Indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. So praise God that Jesus reigns with full authority. But the comfort that Jesus provides in John 14 goes beyond merely reminding of Him, reminding them that He is going to take the throne.

[23 : 16] It's not just authority in view here. It's an agenda. See, kings don't merely enforce existing laws. They use their authority to advance their agenda.

And so it is with Jesus. His agenda ultimately comes down to this, to prepare a new heavens and a new earth so that His people can dwell with Him in a perfect physical place forever.

And that preparatory work is mostly related to clearing the earth of His enemies. Now, one of the ways, the preferred way, I would argue, that He is doing this is by converting His enemies out of a state of enmity and into a state of charity.

He moves His enemies out of their status as enemies. That's one of the main ways that Jesus destroys His enemies. He converts them. And that makes sense if you think about it, because when we see Jesus issuing His great commission to the apostles, there's all this authority but agenda language, right?

And it all has a certain agenda in mind to change the face of the earth. Matthew 28, 18. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[24 : 39] Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. So this conversion, I call it conquering via conversion. This is like a major thing that Jesus is doing to prepare the world for us.

The preparation involves expunging this earth of all the vestiges of sin and death, recreating it to be a perfect place, a perfect physical place for us to dwell with Him forever.

And one of the ways He is getting rid of His enemies is by converting them. This tells us two things. Firstly, the Lord is kind.

I mean, what a merciful God. When it comes to clearing the earth of His enemies, He certainly has other options at His disposal besides saving them and making them His sons.

[25 : 44] But conversion is His priority. And this also tells us another, the answer to a question that we might have all wondered at one point or another, and that is, why is all this taking so long?

Why is it that the God who spoke the universe into existence has taken so far 2,000 years to accomplish His preparatory work so that His saints have a place with Him free from sin?

And Peter actually answers this question. He says this, But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

So why is God taking so long? Well, He is working to clear the earth of His enemies, but in His mercy, He has chosen to do so by converting them. When this work is accomplished, and going back to John 10, when all the sheep who are scattered throughout the world, both in time and space, are gathered into His sheepfold, Christ will then immediately turn His attention to the renewal of the earth, which, as Jonathan Edwards puts it, is a small task compared to the converting of a sinner.

[27 : 11] Jonathan Edwards has some questions. He says, It is easier for God to create a world than to convert a sinner. That's what Romans 8, 18 is saying.

Let me read that again. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

He says in the beginning there in verse 18, the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. Why? Because when all the sons of God are revealed, when all the sheep are gathered, when all the enemies are converted to, that are supposed to be converted or converted into His sons and daughters, then He turns His attention to the creation, to the earth itself.

And that is, again, that's just a matter of a quick, easy command. So God has two agendas in mind, and one of them is relatively simple, and that is remake the earth.

[28 : 27] That's a few words. But He has chosen to place His people in time. And so God is working to convert many of His enemies into His sons and daughters across a predefined period of time.

We don't know how far into the future that time extends, and we don't know the full number of the saints to be gathered in. If we knew those two things, we would know when the earth would be made new.

We don't know. Okay, so let's review. Number one, Christ is reigning. Yes, His authority brings us comfort, but what Jesus has in mind here seems to go beyond His authority to talk about His agenda, to talk about what He's actually doing at the right hand of the Father.

What is He doing? He's preparing a new world in which He will dwell with His beloved. How is He doing that? He's reigning until all of His enemies are removed. Well, how is He doing that?

In various ways, but the primary means presented in Scripture involves converting His enemies into His sons and daughters. This demonstrates that God is incredibly merciful, and it also explains what is taking so long.

[29 : 44] It also explains when the earth will be renewed, and it does one more thing. It gives us purpose. Now you see this partnership emerging between Jesus and His people, almost as if He is the second Adam and His bride is the new Eve.

And together, primarily through the Great Commission, the second Adam and the second Eve fill the earth with His glory, ruling and subduing it.

That's what's going on with the Great Commission. He's got this agenda, and He includes us in that agenda. That agenda is to primarily rid the world of His enemies through the act of conversion.

This is evident in John 14 in slightly different but related ways. And this is also another chance to clear up some common misconceptions or some common confusion about other sections of John 14.

Here's another section that tends to confuse people. This is John 14, 12 through 14. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do, and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

[31 : 04] Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it. It would be a very faulty analysis to say that the work Jesus is doing to prepare the world is somehow disconnected or separate from the works His disciples are doing.

That's definitely not the case. So it's not as if Jesus starts in verses 1 through 3 talking about the work He's going to do and then moves to John 14, 12 and says, and you guys are going to do some other kinds of work here and I'll bless it.

No, the agenda is the same. And He's working through us to will and work His great purpose. So that's a really helpful context to understand what Jesus means when He says, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will He do.

People look at that and they immediately think of Jesus as miracles. And they think, well, I've never healed anybody. I've never raised anybody that was dead for four days and so on and so forth.

And they don't know what to make of that verse because they're looking at, they're assuming that Jesus when He's talking about works is talking about miracles. And again, that's actually also a very understandable mistake.

[32 : 32] But you've got to remember that Jesus' miracles were all in service of a larger purpose. and that was to bring judgment on His enemies in one of two ways, either by converting them or condemning them.

So that's how you answer this kind of tension that you feel when you read verse 12 and think, well, I've never met 5,000 people. There must be something wrong with me or something wrong with this promise.

But of course, those actions that Jesus did were not accomplishments in and of or for themselves. They served a larger purpose, namely to make disciples. The Bible says that the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.

That's the work. And this means that when Jesus talks about you and I doing the same works He has done, it explains how, at least in a theoretical category that we can understand, at least some of us will do even greater works than Him in this sense.

Of course, this is all being done through Him ultimately. But there certainly have been plenty of people in history, beginning in Acts 2, who converted a larger number of people than Jesus did in His earthly ministry.

[33 : 51] Right out of the gate in Acts 2, we see thousands and thousands of converts. So that, understanding the agenda, understanding what Jesus is doing, God is preparing a world for us and He's doing so, in large part, by turning His enemies into His friends, also gives us a clear sense of purpose.

Think of it this way. You and I are part of Jesus' Earth Renewal Task Force. By living godly lives, being truth and beauty in community, we are contributing in our small ways to the preparation of our future glory.

Of course, again, it's Jesus who's doing all this and He says that because I go to the Father. It's hinted at at the very least. Now, speaking of Jesus at the right hand of the Father, we also have the issue of prayer brought up in verses 13 and 14.

Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. Are you beginning to see how all this is connected to this agenda?

Why do we have confidence that God hears our prayers? Because Jesus is a priest king and He's seated at the right hand of the Father. But once again, there's a tension that arises here too because we've all experienced unanswered prayers.

[35 : 10] And Jesus says, whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. And we look to our experience and we see something quite less than that.

And the truth is, we don't even need to look to our experience. 2 Corinthians 12, 2 through 4. Paul is discussing, receiving a surpassing vision, being caught up into the third heavens.

And then in verse 7, he says that, as a consequence of what he saw, well, let me just read it. So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

So let's be clear, friends, you're not the only one who has not had their prayers answered in a way that Jesus seems to promise in John 14, 13 and 14.

[36 : 20] The Apostle Paul asked him, Lord, three times for a particular malady to be removed and this request was formally refused. I bring this up in part because I want to save you from the subjective, introspective examination of your unanswered prayers.

Note what God says to Paul. He does not condemn Paul for the way he prayed or the lack of faith. He simply refused to remove the thorn because the presence of the thorn served his agenda in the best way possible.

And that's what we need to understand about Jesus' promise related to prayer. Pray the agenda.

Pray the agenda. Do your best to pray for particulars with the agenda in mind.

And understand that if you ask for the agenda to be accomplished, it will be. Your best understandings of how that agenda might be accomplished are another matter.

One commentator puts it this way, to ask something of Jesus in Jesus' name is best understood to mean or ask something for Jesus' sake. He goes on to say that this being the case, we can understand better the sort of prayer for which answers are guaranteed.

[37 : 42] It is certainly not wrong to pray for other things, but the promise of answered prayer attaches primarily to our part in God's plans. See how the agenda of the first few verses of 14 carry all the way down to giving us a sense of purpose.

We have work to do. What is that work? It's the work of making disciples. In this way, primarily, God is preparing the earth for us by making his enemies into his sons and daughters.

And we have to keep that context attached to the promise he makes regarding prayer in the next few verses. What kind of prayers are guaranteed to be answered?

The prayers particularly informed by this agenda that Jesus has in mind. Now, this theme of partnering with Christ continues into the next section.

He says, if you love me, you'll keep my commandments. Once again, all of this is located within the concept of partnering with Jesus. And that's a pattern, by the way, that emerged in chapter 13 is Jesus says, here, I did a thing.

[38 : 53] I washed the disciples' feet. Now you do the thing. Wash one another's feet. Love one another. Jesus is saying, do what you see me doing. And John 14 is just a further development of that same pattern, but now we're looking at what Jesus is doing at the right hand of the Father.

And we're partnering with him in that respect through prayer, works, and through obedience. And then the next section of John 14, if we keep it within this larger context, we understand the role of the Holy Spirit.

That's what Jesus is promising in the next section from 14, 15 through 27. He says in verse 15, if you love me, you'll keep my commandments. And I'll ask the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him or knows him.

You know him for he dwells with you and will be in you. He's called the helper. Helping what? Well, the work we've already discussed. He's helping us do the thing that Jesus is doing.

The partnership between Christ and the church is aimed at establishing his kingdom rule on the earth, primarily through making disciples. And note that the Holy Spirit is described as the Spirit of truth.

[40 : 09] So how are enemies turned into friends? Well, through the gospel proclamation, the proclamation of gospel truth that is empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus actually returns to this very subject in chapter 16.

In verse 7, he says, Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage if I go away. For if I do not go away, the helper will not come. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, here the Holy Spirit is empowering this disciple-making work.

He will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. Concerning sin because they do not believe in me. Concerning righteousness because I go to the Father. And you will see me no longer concerning judgment because the ruler of this world is judged.

While we're in 16, let's just go a couple more verses. John 16, John 16, 12. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak of his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

[41 : 16] He will glorify you. Glorify me, for he will take what is mine. And I hate it when I accidentally read heresy into scripture. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

All that the Father has is mine, and therefore I said he will take what is mine and declare it to you. So again, what does Jesus have? He has the whole, he has everything. He was given authority over the cosmos.

This is Colossians, Philippians, so forth. So again, the Holy Spirit's active, what the Holy Spirit is doing for us is making us good partners with Jesus in his ruling and subduing work.

He's doing an active work, preparing the world for his people, he's advancing his agenda, and the Holy Spirit communicates the back and forth between us and Jesus in this work.

We can see a supreme example of this by returning to the ministry of the Apostle Paul, who, again, we can probably safely say did more, humanly speaking, to convert Christ's enemies and change the face of the earth than any other human being.

[42 : 28] And he says he did so by working harder than anyone. But, and this is 1 Corinthians 15.10, he hastens to say, nevertheless, it was not me but Christ in me.

What's the work that Paul's doing? He's spiritually terraforming the earth. He's, he's taking thoughts captive for Christ. He's renouncing arguments and lofty opinions held against the supremacy of Christ.

He's making converts primarily. And that's hard work but it's actually Christ doing it in him. So, the idea being with the Holy Spirit that Jesus will animate our activities to fulfill his agenda.

This is also spoken of in Philippians 2.13. It is God who works in you both to will and work his good pleasure. So, in John 14.18, it says, I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you. This is a reference to the final reappearing of Jesus or this is not a reference to the final reappearing of Jesus. Rather, this is a reference to Jesus coming via the Holy Spirit and this is made plain in verse 19.

[43 : 41] So, in 18, it says, I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you. And then verse 19, yet in a little while the world will see me no more but you will see me. He's saying that through the Holy Spirit we get to see Jesus working to advance his name into the world.

And then he continues in 19 all the way through 23. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in the Father and you in me and I in you.

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me and he who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and manifest myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot, said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?

This is a, you know, a secret internal indwelling of the Holy Spirit in view. And Jesus says in verse 23, if anyone loves me he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him.

So now you've got, you can see why this is not going to be a good sermon. It's just too convoluted. I really do think I'm onto something here, but boy, it just wouldn't make a good sermon.

[44 : 53] Anyway, you remember that saying, I missed in the pulpit is a fog in the pew. But what seems to be so interesting to me about this section is that Jesus had talked about his original goal, which was for us to dwell with him forever physically.

How does he accomplish that most fundamentally by giving us the Holy Spirit to dwell with us spiritually? And then we just see this thing happen that happens all over scripture and that is the invisible, the spiritual eventually manifests itself in the physical.

That's what Jesus has said multiple times in John 14. He's going to live with us eternally when this place is prepared for us. How is that preparation most fundamentally made?

By living with us spiritually through the Holy Spirit. John 14, 16, And I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper and to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him or knows him.

You know him for he dwells with you. Dwells. This language, this dwelling language is going right into chapter 14 when we get a vibe. Same idea.

[46 : 01] So when you connect all this to the larger message of the chapter, we see that Jesus is going to physically dwell with his people.

He's preparing the world for that now. And how is he accomplishing this? By spiritually dwelling with them now, fueling their disciple-making, their obedience to the Great Commission, their prayers about the advancement of the agenda of Jesus.

That's, it's dwelling, it's a spiritual dwelling that will one day give birth to a physical dwelling.

Hebrews 11, 3, By faith we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

So just as the first version of heaven and earth manifested spiritually out of a, manifested physically out of spiritual realities, so the final version of the new heavens and the new earth will be manifested physically out of spiritual reality.

To put it simply, the earth is physically prepared to become a dwelling place for God and man by you and I, these little temples that we are, living in the good of that same dynamic only expressed spiritually.

[47 : 12] Through the Holy Spirit, Christ dwells in us to will and to work his good purpose, and one day these spiritual realities will become physical ones, and we will dwell with him upon the earth.

Again, that's the fundamental dynamic I think we see happening in John 15 where the dwelling language gives way to the abiding language, where the household metaphor gives way to the agricultural vineyard metaphor, but it's all the same idea.

John 15, 5, I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. Nothing.

Let's review. We started by handling three errors that might get in the way of a correct understanding of John 14. We are going to have bodies. We are going to live with God on the earth, and that earth is going to be this earth, perfectly clean and renewed.

Then we jumped into John 14 to see that Jesus is going away to reign. It is in that reign that he exercises not only just general authority so that not a hair on our head can be harmed without his saying so, but a particular agenda.

[48 : 25] What's that agenda? He's preparing the world to be a place suitable for us to dwell with him forever. How is he doing that? He's reigning until all his enemies become his footstool.

In what way? In various ways, but the primary means presented in scripture involves converting his enemies into his sons and daughters. This demonstrates that God is incredibly merciful.

It also explains why it is taking so long because God has chosen primarily to convert his enemies into his sons and daughters, and that is taking place on a timeline into the future.

It also explains when the earth will be renewed. If we could figure out the end of that timeline and the exact last person to be saved, we'd know. And it gives us one more thing.

It gives us purpose. Our primary purpose is to make disciples. This is how we partner with Jesus in his ruling and subduing agenda. Disciple making is, I keep saying, God's preferred way of eliminating his enemies.

[49 : 32] And our prayers connected to that purpose will be answered. The works we do connected to that purpose will be great. And the power we have to do these works is connected to God himself through the Holy Spirit.

He is the one connecting Christ's heavenly activity to our earthly activity. He gives us the spiritual realities of dwelling with God even as we await the day when those spiritual realities manifest physically.

what a glorious day that will be. Let me end again with Revelation 21. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

[50 : 44] Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. Oh, yeah.

The Army Blues!