

He Loved Me...

He Loves Me Lots

The Gospel of John

Text

John 14:1-14

Topic

Jesus reveals He is returning to Heaven
to prepare houses for His saints

Title

"Houses of the Holy"

Geneticists are trying to 23andMe Jesus.

Dr. George Busby is an evolutionary geneticist at the University of Oxford. In a 2017 interview he said, "An archaeologist discovered what he believes are the bones of one of the most famous of all saints: John the Baptist. I was interested in what DNA analysis could tell us about these bones."

Busby is interested because he is searching for the DNA of Jesus. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin - meaning they would share DNA.

Another team is working to extract DNA from the James Ossuary, a first century box which may have held the bones of Jesus' brother. Researchers also found DNA on the Shroud of Turin.

The only thing unusual they might find is that Jesus has lion DNA. He is, after all, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

Believers are the spiritual children of God.

- The apostle John told us in chapter one, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become **children** of God..." (v12).
- In the previous chapter, Jesus addressed His disciples as "**little children**" (13:13).

When you are born of God, you become a child of God in the family of God. Jesus was like God the Father, and you will be like God the Son.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Like The Father, Like The Son, & #2 Like The Son, Like His Saints.**

#1 - Like The Father, Like The Son (v1-11)

Portrayals of God in the movies are all over the map and overstep the mark.

Actors who have portrayed God include Morgan Freeman, Val Kilmer, Martin Sheen, Rob Zombie, Whoopie Goldberg, Seth MacFarlane, George Burns, Alanis Morissette, Richard Pryor, L.L. Cool J, Tom Sizemore, and Jacob Cohen.

Jacob Cohen is the birth name of Rodney Dangerfield. In an interview, when asked about his parents, he replied, "My family moved around a lot... *But I always managed to find them.*" He died an avowed atheist. No joke.

Too bad Hollywood doesn't listen to Jesus. He said repeatedly, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him. He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (14:7&9).

'Twas the night before Christ was crucified, and all around the table, the disciples were understandably "troubled." Jesus had just announced that one of them would betray Him. He told Peter that he would deny Him. He was talking about dying. Everything they had been working for the last three plus years seemed like it was coming to a violent end.

Joh 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

Are you ever "troubled?" "Let not" puts us on notice that we are to overcome our troubled heart. The Great Physician prescribed the treatment. J.C. Ryle explained it, saying, "*Even the best of Christians have many bitter cups to drink between grace and glory. Even the holiest saints find the world a valley of tears. Faith in the Lord Jesus is the only sure medicine for troubled hearts. To believe more thoroughly, trust more*

entirely, rest more unreservedly, lay hold more firmly, lean back more completely - this is the prescription which our Master urges on the attention of disciples."

- Abraham believed God, and God credited it for righteousness.
- The disciples believed God, and God credited it for righteousness.

It sounds odd, but a believer does not know what they believe. When I received the Lord, I had no knowledge of even the most basic of Christian doctrines. You get to know what you believe as you walk with the Lord, instead of this word, the Bible.

When Jesus told them to believe also in Him, He was letting them know that what He was about to tell them was stuff that *no one yet knew about*. Nevertheless, they could believe it because He and the Father are one.

Joh 14:2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

For the life of me I don't know why, but it has become popular among Bible commentators to downplay anything extravagant in the word "mansions." They waste ink and breath arguing that the word should be translated, "dwelling places."

- My dorm at UCRiverside was a "dwelling place."
- A tent is a "dwelling place."
- Under a bridge can be a "dwelling place."

I am expecting a mansion. Look around, at Creation. Magnificent, declaring the glory of God. Even in its current fallenness, you can tell God does nothing on the cheap.

Joh 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Follow the movements of Jesus in this verse:

1. Jesus left Earth to return to His Father's house, which is Heaven.
2. He will "come again" from Heaven to "receive" His followers.
3. Jesus brings His followers to where He is, "His Father's house" in Heaven.

The gist of what Jesus said was that He is away preparing our mansions in Heaven. He will return to take us home.

The coming Jesus promised is the resurrection and rapture of the church.

- It cannot be the Second Coming, at the end of the Great Tribulation, because Jesus comes *with* His saints, who are already in Heaven, not *for* His saints who are either buried or still living.
- This cannot be the Second Coming, at the end of the Great Tribulation, because Jesus comes and takes His followers to be rewarded in Heaven, not to Jerusalem, to reign on Earth.

Arno Gaebeliien writes,

*"The Lord gives a new and unique revelation; He speaks of something which no prophet had promised, or even could promise. Where is it written that the Messiah would come and instead of gathering His saints into an earthly Jerusalem, would take them to the Father's house, to the very place where He is? It is something new. And let it be noticed in promising to come again, He addresses the eleven disciples and tells them, 'I will receive you unto Myself, that where I am ye may be also.' He speaks then of a coming which is not for the deliverance of the Jewish remnant, not of a coming to establish His kingdom over the earth, not a coming to judge the nations, **but coming which concerns only His own.**"*

The BeeGees asked, *How can you mend a broken heart?* When He needed to comfort His disciples more than ever, Jesus spoke to them of His coming to gather them to Heaven.

The apostle Paul did likewise. When the believers in Thessalonica were troubled, Paul comforted them by describing the imminent resurrection and rapture of the church. After he explained the resurrection and rapture, he said, "Comfort one another with these words" (first Thessalonians 4:18).

Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes, *"The Christian is a man who can be certain about the ultimate even when he is most uncertain about the immediate."*

If you are not comforting troubled hearts with talk of Heaven and the Lord coming to take us home, then you are not comforting them at all.

Joh 14:4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Joh 14:5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

- John the Baptist preached that the Kingdom of God was at hand.
- Jesus preached likewise, and taught Kingdom principles and parables.
- Four days earlier, on what we call Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was hailed as King.
- The King was to rule from David's Throne.

Where in the world could Jesus possibly be going?

Joh 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

I once thought that being an Italian Catholic was a lock on getting into Heaven. Jews thought they were automatically citizens of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus declared Himself "the way," exclusively, that a person gets into the Kingdom, into Heaven:

- Judaism, as much as it was given by God to reveal the holiness and grace of God, was *not* the "way."
- Certainly no other man made religion or philosophy could be the "way."

Believing Jesus is the exclusive "way." Why would God send His Son to Earth to die on the Cross if it didn't matter and people could get into Heaven another way? That makes no sense at all.

Jesus is "the truth" and "the life."

- Randy Alcorn writes, *"Jesus didn't say He would show the truth or teach the truth or model the truth. He is the truth."* The "truth" is that Jesus is the Savior promised in the opening chapters of Genesis. He is the "truth" in that He fulfills all the Law, the prophets, and promises of God.
- His resurrection from the dead established that He has the authority to grant eternal "life."

In the 1980s we used to gesture to Heaven, and say, "One way." The first century church was called, "The Way."

Joh 14:7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

They “knew” Jesus in a saving way. Nevertheless, they were deficient in their knowledge of God the Father. Why? Largely because He must be spiritually discerned, which requires a person to have the help of God the Holy Spirit. They could only understand so much without being born-again and receiving God the Holy Spirit. As this talk goes on, Jesus promises them the Holy Spirit.

Joh 14:8 Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

It was not uncommon in Old Testament times for a Jew to ‘see’ a vision of God. Moses, Isaiah, and Ezekiel are in that club.

Philip wanted something like that. *But what he wanted was less than what he already had.*

Jesus was right there, present, could be touched and heard. Moses, Isaiah, and Ezekiel would be jealous.

Many believers are turning to what they believe are the ancient practices of the early church. One article I read said, “Large segments of evangelicalism are moving toward the traditional. This is evidenced by the fact that younger evangelicals are showing more interest in Christian ordinances, such as Communion and baptism, and in worshiping according to the liturgy. For them, tradition is vibrant.”

I cannot help but see it as a step *backward*, putting traditions between you and Jesus.

Joh 14:9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

Geno and I were on a mission’s trip to Honduras with his high school. In one of the video clips taken, the two of us were sitting next to each other on a stage. We had on the same outfit; we both had a Bible open in our lap; our posture was exactly the same; and we each had our right ankle resting on our left knee, and were shaking our right foot at exactly the same pace. It was eerie.

Joh 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

Joh 14:11 Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

"I'm in My Father, and My Father is in Me," He said. There is an intimacy, a unity, an equality, that could be witnessed with the eyes of faith.

Jesus spoke "words," and He did "works," but never on His own. He set aside the independent use of His deity and, as a man, obeyed God. A disciple is someone who sets aside their independence to obey God.

A large part of Jesus' encouragement to His disciples is going to be that He would send them to serve. We take over where Jesus left off. If they - we - want to be servants like our Lord, **we will set aside our independence.**

#2 - Like Son, Like Servants (v12-14)

April 30th, 1975. Eleven Marines remained. They climbed to the roof of the embassy, locking the doors to each floor behind them, with no means to call for help. Four hours later, many of the men assumed they would either be killed by the communist troops or by the frenzied crowds that by then had broken through the embassy's gates and were breaking their way through each locked door between the floor and the roof. But, then, off in the distance, they spotted the last helicopter out of Saigon.

Christians live in a spiritual war zone as ambassadors for Jesus Christ. He is coming for us, to take us home. We do not cower on the rooftop of our embassy, afraid we will miss the last chopper. We are in the streets, among those who are the Lord's enemies, who are taken captive by Satan to do his will. There is room on the chopper for whosoever of them believes.

I suppose a better metaphor would be a *transporter*, not a chopper. The dead in Christ of the Church Age, and all living believers, will be instantly changed and transported to Heaven.

Jesus was leaving. Until His return, we are tasked with continuing His work. *There's a lot of work in the next three verses.*

Joh 14:12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

If we do the "works" Jesus did, and there are a lot of us throughout the Church Age, then we will do "greater works," numerically, and geographically.

"The works that I do" foments arguing because the first thing we think of is miracles. Shouldn't there be signs and wonders breaking out all around us?

The miracles Jesus performed were proof He was Messiah. The majority of Jews who witnessed His miracles did not believe.

Miracles are not an effective strategy.

Grant Osborne writes,

"We must ask what a greater miracle than the raising of Lazarus might be. The answer is that the greatest miracle is not new physical life such as Lazarus received but new spiritual life, the bestowal of eternal life on the unsaved. While Jesus made forgiveness for sins and salvation possible by his sacrificial death on the Cross and by sending the Spirit to enter the new believer upon conversion, we are allowed to participate in God's mission to save the lost. So the "greater works" are both life in the new age of the Spirit and the resultant mission to the unsaved empowered by the Spirit."

Footnote: Like the Ramones sing, *I Believe in Miracles*. More often than not, **they don't happen**. It isn't because we are failing to obey, but on account of the biblical fact that in the Church Age our suffering and weakness reveal the glory of God.

Joh 14:13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Joh 14:14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

"Whatever," "anything?" Really?? That is not the experience of most Christians in the Church Age.

The answer to the "anything, "whatever" is demonstrated in an episode that would occur a little later that night. When the the authorities arrested the Lord, Peter drew his sword to defend Him.

Mat 26:52 ... Jesus said to [Peter], "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Mat 26:53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?

Mat 26:54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

Sixty-thousand warrior angels were at DEFCON 1. But then how would mankind be saved? Jesus must go to the Cross.

We, too, need to pick up our Cross. The thing we are being promised is grace sufficient to submit to God's will.

It's not a cop-out. It is servanthood. It is a guarantee that our work done as unto the Lord cannot fail.

Thank you for your service is a popular response when we see first responders or the military.

We will be resurrected or raptured. At some point, in Heaven, we will stand before a Reward Seat, to be given rewards - to be thanked, in a sense - for our service on Earth. I don't want to hijack the custom, but we could say to any Christian God is using, "Thank you for your service."

Our service doesn't end at the Reward Seat. Alexander MacLaren writes, "The joys of Heaven are not the joys of passive contemplation, of dreamy remembrance, of perfect repose; but they are described thus: 'They rest not day nor night.' 'His servants serve Him, and see His face.' "

Like the Father, Like the Son...Like His Saints. It's in our spiritual DNA.