



March 22, 2009

John 14–17

*“Parting Promises”*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

The focus of our study today is [John 14:1–9a](#). In [John 18](#) we read about Jesus’ arrest, as well as the details leading up to his crucifixion and resurrection. Chapters 14 through 17 provide a look at the final 10 or so hours that Jesus spent privately with his disciples. His time is at hand. He won’t give another sermon or visit another town. There won’t be another leper healed or a hungry crowd fed. For all intents and purposes, Jesus’ public ministry is now over and the only thing that awaits him is the cross.

When Jesus shared a final meal with his disciples, he left them with some parting promises. He looked past the cross and his resurrection, to the time of his ascension when he will return to heaven. He told them he was going way: *“I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”* ([John 16:28](#)) The Lord prayed about his return in [John 17:1–5](#): *“After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: ‘Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.’”*

Simply put, Jesus was crucified because he said he was God, which was the highest form of blasphemy in the minds of the Jewish religious leaders. It’s clear the disciples didn’t have a firm grasp of this important theological truth, since Jesus, responding to Philip’s request to *“show us the father,”* replied, *“If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father.”* ([John 14:8–9a](#)) Jesus, in [John 10:30](#), said, *“I and the Father are one.”*<sup>1</sup> He wasn’t saying, “I’m a little bit like God,” he’s saying, “I am God.” It’s easy to see that Jesus left no doubt in the minds of his hearers that he boldly declared that he was God.

---

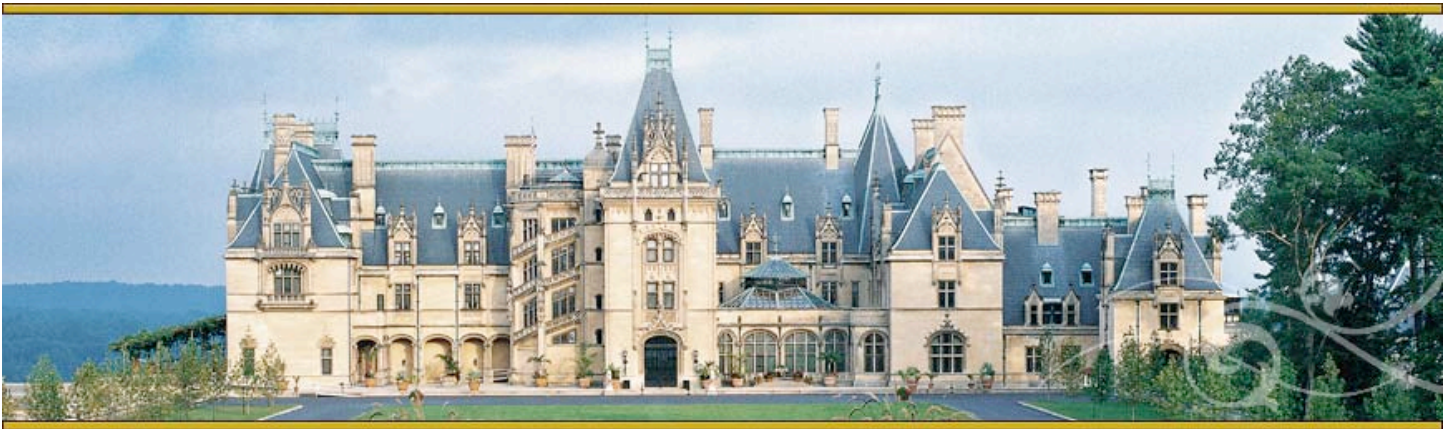
<sup>1</sup> The Greek word for “one” is *hen*, which means “one in essence and nature.”

But when he came to earth he divested himself of his glory and took on the limitations of humanity. The theological term for this is kenosis.<sup>2</sup> (**Philippians 2:6–8**) He assumed the limitations of humanity, and stepped inside our time/space continuum. He was no longer omnipresent; he was a person. He was no longer omniscient. He was fully God and fully man.

It's amazing to consider that with the agony of the cross in front of him, Jesus, a real human being, is completely concerned about people knowing the way to heaven. It won't be long before Jesus goes home, but before he goes, he's going to leave some parting promises.

### I Am Going To Prepare A Place For You

1. In **John 14:1–2**, Jesus tells the disciples, “*In my Father’s house are many rooms.*”
2. The King James Version of the Bible uses the word *mansions*, which is an unfortunate translation, because it conjures up the idea that every Christian is going to get a carbon copy of the 8, 000 acre, 175,000 square foot, 250-room Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina.



3. The words Jesus used actually describe an expanding family.
  - a. When a family grew by marriage or birth, the people of Jesus’ day would add a room onto their home, which means that three or four generations would be living in the same home.
  - b. Jesus spoke in very personal terms about how everyone who believes in him would all be together in close proximity to God one day.
  - c. Jesus is speaking about a wonderful new home for believers!

### I Am Coming Again For You

4. Jesus alludes to the fact that when a Christian dies they will go home to be with the Lord.

---

<sup>2</sup> A Greek word meaning the “action of emptying, from *kenoun* to purge, empty, from *kenos* empty: the relinquishment of divine attributes by Jesus Christ in becoming human.” <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kenosis>

5. He also refers to his Second Coming<sup>3</sup> for those who will be alive when he returns.
6. Either way, the Lord will take all believers to heaven to be with him forever!
7. In **1 Corinthians 15:51**, the apostle Paul refers to “the generation that never sleeps.”
8. When is the Lord coming back?
  - a. No one knows the “*day or hour*,” according to **Mark 13:32**.
9. Jesus, in **Matthew 24:42** instructed believers to “...*keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.*”
  - a. Other Second Coming Scriptures include: **Ezekiel 38–39**, **Zechariah 13–14**, and **Daniel 7, 9, 11–12**.
10. What are the signs of his coming?
  - a. There will be “*wars and rumors of wars.*” (**Matthew 24:6**)
  - b. There will be a global economy in place that will suffer collapse, according to **Revelation 6:6**.
  - c. There will be devastating diseases.
  - d. There will be natural disasters in great numbers, the effects of which will be incredible levels of damage.
  - e. There will be a great persecution of Christians; and **John 16:2** says, “*a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.*”
    - i. It is estimated that 30% of all Muslims (there are approximately 1 billion Muslims in the world today) are radical, which means 300 million radicals will not rest until Islam has covered the earth through terror.

### I Am The Way, The Truth, The Life For You

11. Jesus made a very exclusive claim when he said, “*I am the way*” to God, and “*I am the truth.*”
12. He is emphatically stating, “I am not one among many truths!”
13. He was saying, “I am the fullness of life, abundant life and everlasting life.”
14. Truth, by definition, is exclusive. Everything cannot be true. If everything was true, then nothing is false. And if nothing were false, then it would also be true to say that everything is false.
15. How can people say that all paths lead to God when the different paths all define a very different God?
  - a. Islam – Muslims believe in one supreme god, the god of the moon, Allah, as chosen by Mohammed from the 360 gods of polytheistic Arabia.

---

<sup>3</sup> There are about three times the number of prophecies about Jesus’ Second Coming as there were concerning his first coming, all of which were fulfilled. We can rest assured; Jesus is coming again!

- b. Hinduism – Some have a pantheistic belief of hundreds and thousands of deities (Vishnu, Shiva, Krishna, etc.).
- c. Hinduism – Some have a belief in a personal creator but an impersonal, absolute reality (Brahman).
  - i. Mahatma Gandhi said, “God is that indefinable something which we all feel but which we do not know.”
- d. Buddhism – Buddhists believe there is no personal creator and not even an absolute self, but a non-self (Anatman, a cycle of birth and rebirth).

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **John 14:1-9a** to provide an overview of today’s study.
3. Spend time talking about the KJV and NIV translation difference regarding the word for the new home in heaven believers will enjoy.
  - a. Are there any cultural or regional traditions that suggest a certain theological understanding of the difference between mansion/room?
    - i. Use this link to read the lyrics to a Bluegrass song titled *Mansions for Me*.  
[http://www.bluegrasslyrics.com/all\\_song.cfm-recordID=s4387.htm](http://www.bluegrasslyrics.com/all_song.cfm-recordID=s4387.htm)
    - ii. Use this link to hear Elvis Presley’s version of the Ira Stumphill song titled *Mansion Over The Hilltop*. <http://heavens-gates.com/elvis/mansion/>
4. Read and discuss **Philippians 2:6-8**, which describes the emptying of Jesus’ glory (kenosis).
  - a. “[Jesus], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross.”
5. When you think about heaven, do you have a specific picture in mind?
  - a. Is the Biltmore Estate the first thing that you think of?
  - b. Do you have a personal view of heaven?
  - c. When the Bible mentions “*the kingdom of heaven*,” what do you think of?
  - d. Do you think people think there won’t be room for them?
    - i. What are some of the reasons people come up with that give them the idea that they don’t “qualify” for heaven?
6. What is your reaction to people who say, “All paths lead to God”?
  - a. The illustration Pastor Gary used to describe the impossibility of this being true was both humorous and profound (the law of non-contradiction) because, after all, not every bus in the terminal goes to Miami!
  - b. Do you know people from other world faiths who are open to the claims of Christ?

- i. What are some of the Scriptures you might be able to share that the Lord could use to impart truth into their lives, outside of **John 14:6**?
  - c. Spend time talking about the large percentage of Americans who seem to have a smorgasbord theological understanding, and those who seem to believe there is no such thing as absolute truth.
    - i. Statistics from the George Barna Group indicate there is a very small percentage of Americans, nine-percent in 2005, who have a biblical worldview.  
(<http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/21-transformation/252-barna-survey-examines-changes-in-worldview-among-christians-over-the-past-13-years>)
    - ii. You may want to review and discuss the world religions noted above.
7. Close your time by allowing everyone in your group to: thank the Lord for giving them the assurance of salvation and the assurance of their home in heaven some day; ask the Lord to help them to develop a burden for lost people caught up in the lie of false world religions, as well as those who claim there is no God.