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John 14:1-7
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Jesus speaks of many mansions; He is the way, the truth, and the life

Hugh Nibley Commentary

John 14:1ff. [Chapters 14 through 17 a thorough exposition, with the relentless repetition of John, on the NATURE OF THE GODHEAD.

That the Christian world should have been divided hopelessly on the subject since the 2^C is a commentary on the power of the schools

In this¹ chapter there are 145 p.pns. connected by prepositions & verbs. The same density of p.pns. continues thru Chap. 15 and 17.

This is an insistent exposition on how the parties are related and connected. The trouble is that it is perfectly clear--too clear; and like so many things in John has to be repeated over and over again because people don't want to believe it.

Br. Nibley is letting us know that the early church fathers were all trained in Greek Philosophy and they used these verses in John 14 to establish Christian thought on the Trinity: The Father — the Son — the Holy Ghost. The Christian world became hopelessly divided since the 2nd Century on the very Nature of the Godhead due to the influence of these early church fathers.

Be sure to notice the connections of the many personal pronouns being incorporated by John. In this chapter and in those that follow these personal pronouns make spiritual connections and relationships with 6 different entities: 1) The Father, 2) the Son, 3) the Holy Ghost, 4) the Apostles, 5) the Church, and 6) the World. All these are in relationship to us, the individual.

By repetition John wants to establish the relationships between the Father, Son and Holy Ghost and the Priesthood leadership, i.e., the Apostles, and their spreading the teachings of Christ and the atonement within the Church and with the World. Br. Nibley points out that we ought to be able to recognize these entities by John's insistent repetition.

Many Mansions:

1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

1. Don't be distrubed by this: (First) belive in God, and believe in me (what I am about to tell you?)[This is it]: (Make no mistake ab.it

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. (See also D&C 98:18)

~~In my Father's house are many monai.~~ Otherwise I would have told you./

[= mansiones: where you stay overnight on a journey; non is the end of the journey (lit. get ready)

So I am going ahead to prepare/a topos for you (pl) i.e. *a parable.*

[The word topos is extremely imp. in the Copt. Xtn. Lit.

It refers to real, if unknown, places

“In my Father’s house are many temporary waiting places (*monai*).” That’s the spirit world. They are temporary — before we go to the kingdoms. Mansions, or these temporary waiting places, are where you stay before continuing your journey — they are not the end of the journey. They are places to get ready for what’s coming.

Jesus explained that He was going to prepare a place for them. The Greek word for “a place” is *topos*. If you look at a topographical map, you see various levels — *topos*. Jesus is going to prepare a “level” for them. He is going to prepare the place for where they will want to be for the rest of eternity.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

3. And as surely as I go and get a place ready for you (that repetn. again!) I shall come back again and join you as an escort, so that you can be where I am. You know the WAY to where I am going (He has taught them that--We know that way too. Just what and where the place is, is another question.

Verse 3: Jesus is explaining that they will be able to pass through the veil into the celestial kingdom: “where I am, there ye may be also”. This is connected to the atonement. You have exercised your faith and prepared yourself to be where He is. When we receive glory, then Jesus will also receive glory, as we discussed in the last chapter. Shared glory is not diminished.

Since no unclean thing can be there, you will have to be washed and pronounced clean — not “to become such”. You will come forth in that first resurrection, having developed the character by keeping those covenants, and then we can be admitted in His presence. Jesus will return and join us as an escort that we might know the WAY, but where the place is, is another question.

The spirit world is the place we all go to learn and understand the Gospel perfectly. It is a place of preparation. We have to know and understand the Gospel perfectly without any misunderstandings or misconceptions before we go to any kingdom of glory. If not, then our agency would be compromised, and God would be unjust. Our D&C teaches that Jesus also went to teach the spirits there in that temporary waiting place for their preparation. (See D&C 138:11-19) Once we learn and understand the Gospel perfectly, we will then choose which one of the levels or *topos* we want to be in.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Light

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

5. Thomas: Lord we DON'T know WHERE you are going (only how to get there) How would we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

6. Jesus: I AM the way and the Truth & the Life--no one goes to the Father except through me. If you (pl) knew me you would know ~~THE~~ ^{my} Father

Such is the endowment; we cannot enter into the Father's presence without first coming unto Christ. He is the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIGHT.

7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

7. From this time you know him & you shall see him.

Understanding these chapters are some of the most important chapters we have in scripture. This is where Christ is explaining to those eleven apostles (and to us!) the atonement, the temple, exaltation, and the glory to be received. John is the only one writing about these things. To me, this is exciting! He is giving us additional and significant insights, letting us know that Jesus will prepare temporary waiting places and he will come back and be an escort and guide us through the ordinances. This is the whole concept of the Initiatory and the Temple.

To participate in the endowment proper is to be able to stand before the Father at the veil. The endowment teaches how to develop the worthy character that will allow one to pass through that veil. "Having been true and faithful" in developing that character, you can now enter in the presence of God. Before you can come to that point you will have to come to and exercise your faith in Christ – in His atonement and in His resurrection – which is what the initiatory represents. We have to participate in the purposes of Christ's life and mission. The Washing = the Atonement, and the Anointing = the Resurrection. Thus, Jesus can proclaim, "I am the truth, the way and the light. Nobody comes to the Father unless they participate in what I have done for you."

I hope you can see that all ordinances provide a hope for a future reality. Christ explains, "When you have exercised your faith in Me, in My atonement and in My resurrection, and have developed the character that is required to make God *God*, then you will be conducted right back in the Father's presence (by His servants) so that you can receive all that the Father hath." This is an exceptional text!

Question: So, in the Spirit world there are different levels of understanding or different levels of acquired truth?

Yes. The spirit world is a temporary waiting place; a place where we all can learn and understand the Gospel *perfectly*. I do not think any human can learn and understand the Gospel perfectly in this life. Those who never ever heard about the Bible, for example, will be at a different level than those who did grow up with the scriptures. Those who are more diligent and obedient in this life will have more of an advantage in the world to come (D&C 130:19), than those who were slothful. The *monai* are the temporary waiting places. The *topos* are those permanent kingdoms prepared for those who have chosen to inherit them (see D&C 88:21-24, 28-32).

Jesus is saying, "I am the only path to exaltation. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Comment: Jesus is the First and the Last; Alpha and Omega; The Beginning and the End; He is the Bread, the Life, and the Door (the way), the Shepherd. He is everything to every one at every time anywhere.

This is why King Benjamin taught that we cannot take the atonement seriously until we know HOW BAD we need it. What we are not teaching is how bad we need it! This is why the masses were converted at the time of King Benjamin (Mosiah 2-5). He did not just deliver a great conference talk, rather he told them in no uncertain terms that they were not even as the dust of the earth (Mosiah 2:25; 4:2). He taught them that they needed to retain in their remembrance their own nothingness before God (Mosiah 4:5, 11). You cannot take the atonement seriously until to come to understand HOW MUCH you have to rely upon God. Christ is the One who created this earth for us, and He is the One who has saved us from it.

These verses in this chapter are all about the atonement. Christ is teaching His apostles (and us) how to come to a better understanding of that atonement. We'll continue next month where we left off.

Question: What we're seeing in Br. Nibley's translations is different from the King James Version. Do you have an explanation for this?

About 90% of the King James Bible came from Tyndale's translation. He was not using the best quality of manuscripts towards the end of his life as he was at the beginning of his translations. It comes down to an understanding of the Greek New Testament. When I was in class with Br. Nibley, he did not bring the King James Version to class; he brought the Greek New Testament to class and taught from it. When he taught the Old Testament, he brought the Hebrew text, not the KJV. He did not use the English translations of either one when he taught. He taught directly from either the Greek or the Hebrew texts. The organization who put Tyndale's translations together, left out or lost many of the 'plain and precious parts' (See 1 Nephi 13:24-29).