

John 14:1-4

“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 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. 4 And you know the way where I am going.” NASB

Introduction

The emphasis in this prediction is on the comfort that reunion with the departed Savior guarantees (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:18). Jesus will personally come for His own, and He will receive them to Himself. They will also be with Him where He has been (cf. John 17:24). Jesus was stressing His personal concern for His disciples’ welfare. His return would be as certain as His departure. The greatest blessing of heaven will be our ceaseless personal fellowship with the Lord Jesus there, not the splendor of the place.

Thomas Constable <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/john/14-3.html>

Other Scripture clarifies that when Jesus returns at the Rapture it will be to call His own to heaven immediately (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). John 14:1-3 is one of three key New Testament passages that deal with the Rapture, the others being 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. In contrast, when Jesus returns at the Second Coming it will be to remain on the earth and reign for 1,000 years (Revelation 19:11 to Revelation 20:15).. . . it is important to note that Jesus did not say that the purpose of this future coming to receive believers is so that He can be where they are-on the earth. Instead, He said that the purpose is so that they can be where He is -in heaven."

Renald E. Showers, Maranatha: Our Lord, Come! A Definitive Study of the Rapture of the Church, p158. Cf1Thessalonians4:17. His entire eighth chapter, pp 154-75 , deals with this passage and various interpretations of it.

Since Jesus spoke of returning from heaven to take believers there, the simplest explanation seems to be that He was referring to an eschatological bodily return (cf. Acts 1:11). Though these disciples undoubtedly did not realize it at the time, Jesus was evidently speaking of His return for them at the Rapture rather than His return at the Second Coming. John 14:3 is the only verse in the Gospels that is commonly accepted by contemporary pretribulationists and posttribulationists alike as a reference to the rapture."

Wayne A. Brindle, "Biblical Evidence for the Imminence of the Rapture," Bibliotheca Sacra 158:630 (April-June 2001):139

Did Jesus Ever Refer to the Rapture? (John 14:1-3)...Edited and Supplemented

By Dr. Andy Woods

Setting- Three Troubling Predictions in John 13

- **The first prediction is in verses 21-30 and it deals with Judas' departure.**
- **The second prediction is in verses 31-33 and it deals with Jesus' departure.**
- **The third prediction is in verses 36-38 and it deals with Peter's denials.**

Transition-Prediction of Comfort...John 14:1-4

Is John 14:1-4 really a rapture passage?

First we're going to look at some preliminary reasons why I do think it's a rapture passage...why we should be open to a rapture interpretation in these verses.

Secondly, some exegetical work...we're going to be going word by word through John 14:1-4.

Pre-tribulational arguments...Preliminary Reasons

Preliminary reasons: Even before we get to the text of John 14:1-4 I think there's a lot of evidence why we, as unbiased people, should be open to a rapture interpretation of these verses.

1. Significance of the Upper Room Discourse...

Upper Room Discourse vs Olivet Discourse...

The Olivet Discourse, Matthew 24 and 25; Upper Room Discourse, John 13-17.

The Olivet Discourse takes place on the third day of the Passion week. The Upper Room Discourse, the sixth day of the Passion week.

The focus of the Olivet Discourse is Israel's future, her time of tribulation and conversion after the church has been removed from the earth. But the Upper Room Discourse looks forward to the church and its divine provisions that are on the horizon, particularly the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

What prompted the Olivet Discourse is a question about the temple's destruction. What prompted the Upper Room Discourse is the prediction, as we saw earlier, of Christ's imminent departure. What is the Olivet Discourse about? It's really an explanation of Old Testament material. Consider Jeremiah 30:7...Israel will go into a time of distress and be converted through the Great Tribulation. [Jeremiah 30:7, "Alas! For that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved from it."]

The Olivet Discourse is amplifying that section of Scripture alongside Daniel 9:27 and a number of other passages. [Daniel 9:27, "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."]

The Upper Room Discourse the focus is on teaching that is going to be developed in the epistles. So we are not surprised at all if we should discover the rapture in these verses.

Jewish Marriage Analogy...

BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMES!

April 1, 2011
Dr. Renald Showers
(Excerpts)

Those who live in the modern western world do not catch the full significance of Jesus' promise [in John 14:1-3 that He would go to His Father's house to prepare a place for them, and then come back and receive them to Himself]. This is due to the fact that in His promise Jesus was drawing an analogy from Jewish marriage customs in biblical times.

By Jesus' time, it was usual for [a marriage] covenant to be established as the result of the prospective bridegroom taking the initiative. [He] would travel from his father's house to the home of the prospective bride. There he would negotiate with the father of the young woman to determine the price (*mohar*) that he must pay to purchase his bride.

Once the bridegroom paid the purchase price, the marriage [and betrothal] covenant was thereby established, and the young man and woman were regarded to be husband and wife. From that moment on the bride was declared to be consecrated or sanctified, set apart exclusively for her bridegroom. As a symbol of the covenant relationship that had been established, the groom and bride would drink from a cup of wine over which a betrothal benediction had been pronounced.

The groom would leave the home of the bride and return to his father's house. There he would remain separate from his bride for a period of twelve months. This period of separation afforded the bride time to gather her trousseau and to prepare for married life. The groom occupied himself with the preparation of living accommodations in his father's house to which he could bring his bride.

At the end of the period of separation, the groom would come to take his bride to live with him. The taking of the bride usually took place at night. The groom, best man, and other male escorts would leave the groom's father's house and conduct a torchlight procession to the home of the bride. Although the bride was expecting her groom to come for her, she did not know the exact time of his coming. As a result, the groom's arrival would be preceded by a shout. This shout would forewarn the bride to be prepared for the coming of the groom.

Shortly after arrival [at the groom's father's house], the bride and groom would be escorted by the other members of the wedding party to the bridal chamber (*huppah*). Prior to entering the chamber, the bride remained veiled so that no one could see her face. There in the privacy of [the bridal chamber, the bride and groom] would enter into physical union for the first time, thereby consummating the marriage that had been covenanted earlier.

After the marriage was consummated, the groom would announce the consummation to the other members of the wedding party waiting outside the chamber...John 3:29

Upon receiving this good news, the wedding guests would feast and make merry for the next seven days. During the seven days of the wedding festivities, which were sometimes called "the seven days of the huppah," the bride remained hidden in the bridal chamber. At the conclusion of these seven days, the groom would bring his bride out of the bridal chamber, now with her veil removed, so that all could see who his bride was.

In the examination of the analogy [of Jesus' promise to His disciples], the first thing that should be noted is the fact that the Scriptures regard the Church to be the Bride of Christ...Ephesians 5:22,23

In addition, just as the Jewish bridegroom took the initiative in marriage by leaving his father's house and travelling to the home of the prospective bride, so Jesus left His Father's house in heaven and traveled to earth, the home of His prospective Church, over 2,000 years ago.

In the same manner as the Jewish bridegroom came to the bride's home for the purpose of obtaining her through the establishment of a marriage covenant, so Jesus came to earth for the purpose of obtaining the Church through the establishment of a covenant. On the same night in which Jesus made His promise in John 14, He instituted communion. As He passed the cup of wine to His disciples, He said: "This cup is the new testament in my blood"...1 Cor 11:25

This was His way of saying that He would establish a new covenant through the shedding of His blood on the cross. Parallel to the custom of the Jewish groom paying a price to purchase his bride, Jesus paid a price to purchase His bride, the Church. The price that He paid was His own life blood. It was because of this purchase price that Paul wrote the following to members of the Church: "know ye not that...ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"...1 Cor 6:19,20

Analogous with the Jewish bride being declared to be sanctified or set apart exclusively for her groom once the marriage covenant was established, the Church has been declared to be sanctified or set apart exclusively for Christ (Eph 5:22-33; 1 Cor:1:2; 1 Cor 6:11; Heb:10:10; Heb13:12).

In the same manner as the Jewish groom came to take his bride to live with him at the end of the period of separation, so Christ will come to take His Church to live with Him at the end of His period of separation from the Church
John 14:3

Analogous with the Jewish bride not knowing the exact time of the groom's coming for her, the Church does not know the exact time of Christ's coming for her. In the same way that the Jewish groom's arrival was preceded by a shout, so Christ's arrival to take the Church will be preceded by a shout...1 Thess 4:16

Similar to the Jewish bride's return with the groom to his father's house after her departure from her home, the Church will return with Christ to His Father's house in heaven after she is snatched from the earth to meet Him in the air...1 Thess 4:17; John 14:2,3

Corresponding with the Jewish bride remaining hidden in the bridal chamber for a period of seven days after arrival at the groom's father's house, the Church will remain hidden for a period of seven [years] after arrival at Christ's Father's house in heaven. While the seven-year Tribulation Period is taking place on the earth, the Church will be in heaven totally hidden from the sight of those living on the earth. Just as the Jewish groom brought his bride out of the bridal chamber at the conclusion of the seven days with her veil removed, so that all could see who his bride was, so Christ will bring His Church out of heaven in His Second Coming at the conclusion of the seven-year Tribulation Period in full view of all who are alive, so that all can see who the true church is...Col 3:4

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John 14 and 1 Thessalonians 4

A significant number of commentators note that our Lord's statements in John 14:1-3 parallels another New Testament passage—1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Renald Showers points out a number of similarities between the two passages. However, it was the late Mennonite commentator, J. B. Smith, who demonstrated just how extensive the relationship of these two passages really are. Dr. Smith made word-for-word comparisons between the Rapture passage (1 Thess. 4:13-18) and a clear Second Advent text (Rev. 19:11-21) and found no significant parallels.

When it comes to a comparison between John 14:1-3 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 we see amazing parallels. That John 14:1-3 is a Rapture reference is supported by the progression of words and thoughts when compared to Paul's more extensive Rapture passage (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Observe the following comparison:

John 14:1-3...

Trouble 14:1

Believe 14:1

God, me 14:1

Told you 14:2

Come again 14:3

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18...

Sorrow 4:13

Believe 4:14

Jesus, God 4:14

Say to you 4:15

Coming of the Lord 4:15

Receive you 14:3

Caught up 4:17

To myself 14:3

To meet the Lord 4:17

Be where I am 14:3

Ever be with the Lord 4:17

Dr. Smith notes the following observations as a result of these comparisons:

- The words or phrases are almost an exact parallel.
- They follow one another in both passages in exactly the same order.
- Only the righteous are dealt with in each case.
- There is not a single irregularity in the progression of words from first to last.
- Either column takes the believer from the troubles of earth to the glories of heaven.

Conclusion

In light of comparing Scripture with Scripture, it appears obvious that Jesus' teaching in John 14:1-3 and Paul's revelation in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 speak of the same event. Dr. Smith concludes, "It is but consistent to interpret each passage as dealing with the same event—the rapture of the church." How else does one explain the progression of eight specific words/phrases in exactly the same order, in two different passages, by two different spokesmen? It is clear that these passages refer to a single future event—the Rapture of the church.

We learn that the church's Blessed Hope was first revealed by our Lord on the eve of His crucifixion to His disciples as they grieved over His departure. Later, the doctrine of the Rapture was explained in greater detail via Paul's revelation to give comfort to the Thessalonians who were faced with a similar problem of departing loved ones that Jesus dealt with in the Upper Room with His disciples. Now, 2,000 years later and half-way around the world, today's church can be comforted by the Blessed Hope that in the next moment of time we could be face-to-face with our Lord, in the Father's house, via the Rapture of the Church.

<https://www.pre-trib.org/articles/all-articles/message/the-rapture-and-john-14/read>

Exposition of John 14:1-4...

John 14:1...Verse 1 says, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me." In verse 1, Jesus is comforting them over the announcement of His departure, which troubled them, as we saw that in chapter 13.

John 14:2...3 observations

My Father's House...

Now take a look at verse 2, John 14:2, Jesus says, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places...I go to prepare a place for you." Now we've got three words we have to understand, or phrases, number 1, "My Father's house," what does that mean? Number 2, "many dwelling places," what does that mean? And number 3, "I go," what does that Mean?

Let's start with the "Father's house." Where is, exactly, the "Father's house"? The Father's house is God's unique dwelling place in heaven. That's where God lives. Remember the Lord's prayer, "Our Father, who art in heaven." Where is God? He's in heaven. And this is where Jesus ascended to following His bodily ascension. Psalm 110:1 says this of Christ, "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool," or a footstool for Your feet. Where is the Father's house then? It is the unique dwelling place in heaven, it's the dwelling place where Jesus ascended in Acts 1.

Many Dwelling Places...the Greek word monai

Which leads us to a second word we have to understand, what does he mean by "many dwelling places." The Greek text doesn't say "mansions." Where do we get this idea of mansions? The Greek New Testament was translated into Latin in the 4th century and when they translated this word they used a word which sounds like mansions in Latin. Finally, when the English translators came along and they took this Latin translation and translated it into English they put in the word "mansions," That's what William Tyndale did and that's why "mansions" shows up in the King James Version.

But when you study this word in the Greek it really does not mean mansions at all; the Greek word is monai, which means a temporary dwelling. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament calls it a watch house. In Greek vocabulary it's the idea of an inn.

The fact of the matter is it means a temporary dwelling. Now, in a sense though that helps us because where is our ultimate destination as Christians? It's not heaven. Now our role in heaven is very important for seven years, but it is ultimately the earth. Revelation 5:10 specifically says that "they," (that would be us) "will reign upon the earth." The whole progress of God is towards this earthly millennial kingdom which Jesus will preside over, and we will be there with Him ruling and reigning with Him.

I go...the Greek word poreuomai

And then we've got this other word where He says "I go," now notice what He says here, He says, "I go to prepare a place for you." Jesus came from heaven, didn't He? John 16:28 says this, "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father."

What is Jesus saying here? That He is going back, when He says "I go" He is going back to the very heaven from which He came. That's what He is telling His disciples. Jesus came from heaven, He is going back to the heaven from which He came.

In other words, Jesus is talking about the ascension. In fact, the word translated here "I go" is the Greek word *poreuomai*, which is the same word used to describe Christ's ascension in Acts 1:10-11. He was going, Acts 1:10, *poreuomai*. It says a little bit later in verse 11, He will come again just as "you have watched Him go into heaven," *poreuomai*. [Acts 1:10-11, "And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. [11] They also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.'"]

And in fact, that same word, *poreuomai*, is also used to describe the ascension of Christ in 1 Peter 3:22, where it says, "who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven..." so what is "I go"? "I go" is the ascension of Jesus Christ.

What can we conclude from John 14:2? John 14;2 teaches that Jesus Christ will return from the very heaven from which He came in order to prepare temporary dwelling places for His disciples

John 14:3...4 observations...

I will come...the Greek word erchomai...Present tense...futuristic present

First, Jesus says in verse 3, reading the verse, "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." So what does He mean here when He says "I will come"?

The Greek word here is *erchomai*, and this seems to pose a problem for the rapture view because it's in the present tense. People say well, if this is the present tense how could it be speaking of a future rapture? But in Greek, there is something called the futuristic present; some things that are going to happen in the future are presented in the present tense because it's so certain that they're going to happen. That's what you call the futuristic present.

The rapture can happen at any moment. And this idea of *erchomai* in the present tense, used to describe a future reality, this is very common in John's writings.

Again...the adverb *palin*...

Now also in verse 3 what does He say? He says, "I will come again," this is the adverb *palin*, "I will come again." Now what is this saying? What it's saying is Jesus is going to come back in the same way He left. A prominent Greek lexicon says this word communicates one more time, again...not again and again and again, but a once more, one-time event.

Receive you to Myself...the Greek word *paralambano*

And then also in verse 3 what does Jesus say? When "I come again" I will "receive you to Myself." Now the Greek word for receive is *paralambano*, A prominent Greek lexicon defines *paralambano* as this: To take into close association, to take to one's self, to take along with...I will take you to Myself, with Me to My home.

Notice also the preposition "to," the Greek word *pros*. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says...*pros* with the accusative denotes movement towards, spatially to or towards someone or something, primarily with an intention of expressing movement. It's talking about the physical removal, in other words, of these disciples from the earth.

So, Christ will return to spatially remove believers and take them to be with Him.

There...the Greek word *hopou*

And that takes us to our final word there in verse 3, the word "where." Notice what Jesus says, "that where I am you may be also." The Greek word translated "where" is the Greek word *hopou* and notice that *hopou* denotes a specific place.

Summary of John 14:3...

So how do we sum all of verse 3 up? Jesus will return to take the believer to the place where He is; this can hardly be the earth since there would be no need for Him to build the heavenly dwellings spoken of in the prior and the preceding verses.

John 14:4...Going...the verb hupago

Notice verse 4, Jesus says, "and you know the way where I am going." The verb *hupago*, translated "going," is used especially of Christ and His going to the Father. In fact, John's Gospel is filled with the use of this verb describing Jesus' return to the Father's house. So I believe what verse 4 is describing is also the ascension...So "going" here is just like the verb *poreuomai*, "I go" back in verse 2. Therefore both verse 2 and verse 4, I believe, are speaking of the ascension of Jesus Christ that we see in Acts 1.

Overall recap...

What's the passage teaching? Christ will return through His ascension to His Father's heavenly abode. He would then prepare temporary dwellings for His disciples, He would return for His disciples in the future, His return would be just as personal as was His first coming and ascension. He would physically take believers to be with Him by drawing them to Himself. The purpose of this event is so that the believers could dwell in their prepared temporary heavenly dwelling places and be with Christ where He is.

This information would serve as a comfort to the disciples who were troubled over the announcement of His soon departure. Christ unfolded the reality of this event for the purpose of comforting His disciples.

Something like this has never been disclosed anywhere before in the Scripture up to this point in time. Arno Gaebelein, a great interpreter from a prior generation, says this:

"... Here in John 14 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 this 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.... 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 of a coming to judge the nations, but a coming which concerns only His own."

Arno C. Gaebelein, *The Gospel of John*, p268.