

John 14

Heaven

PREFACE

God's Word contains the answers to all of life's problems and needs. As we apply God's Word to our daily lives, the Holy Spirit strengthens us, our faith grows, and our lives are transformed.

But for many the bible is a complex book, too huge to tackle.

By selecting important chapters of the Bible (20 from the Old Testament, 20 from the New Testament) and focusing on them, I hope to encourage you to get into God's Word. To help accomplish this, I have prepared a visual memory aid for each key chapter. The aids are purposely *weird* in order to increase retention. Each aid has three elements:

1. The *book* of the Bible
2. The *chapter*
3. The *theme* of the chapter

By studying the memory aid several times and focusing on it, you will recall the image and consequently the book, chapter and theme.

Remembering these key chapters will enrich your daily life. It will also help you to relate God's Word to others. As you write greeting cards or speak with people, you will be able to apply God's Word directly to their problems or needs.

At times, you will be unable to speak directly to a person. Send them a Key Chapter booklet! They are designed for sharing!

Each Key Chapter booklet is presented in the same format:

1. *Background* for the chapter
2. *Key verses* of the chapter
3. *Thoughts* on the theme of the chapter

Bible classes and small study groups will find the third section helpful for discussions. The *thoughts* will provide a variety of applications upon which to reflect.

God will not let his Word return void (Isaiah 55:11)!

He will bless you abundantly as you meditate on his Word (Psalm 119:48)!

He will enable you to be a blessing to others as you spread his Word (Genesis 12: 2-3)!

Soli Deo Gloria,
Paul R. Schroeder

Explanation of the Memory Aid

1. The BOOK of the Bible:
Think of a tractor: *John Deere* = **JOHN** (the beloved)
2. The CHAPTER:
The *number* in the sky = **CHAPTER 14**
3. The THEME:
The stars indicate *heaven* = **HEAVEN**

JOHN 14: BACKGROUND

John does not leave us in doubt regarding the purpose of his writing. He clearly states in John 20:31: “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

A major emphasis of the gospel of John is the *deity* of Christ. John records seven miracles Christ performed. He also records seven claims Christ made regarding himself as the great I AM:

1. “I am the bread of life” (6:35)
2. “I am the light of the world” (8:12)
3. “I am the gate” (10:9)
4. “I am the good shepherd” (10:11)
5. “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25)
6. “I am the way and the truth and the life” (14:6)
7. “I am the vine, you are the branches” (15:5)

Partly because of the soaring heights to which his gospel takes us, early church artists selected the eagle to represent John.

From the first chapter of the gospel, where John presents the eternal pre-existence of Christ, till the end where he reports seeing the risen Lord (and in his Revelation account where he pictures the ascended Christ at the right hand of the Father), John urges his readers to *believe*. Their belief must be centered and rooted in the truth that *Jesus Christ is true God!*

John wrote his gospel approximately 50 years after the ascension of Christ. He reviews many pertinent facts and teachings regarding Christ. Among them are the Lord’s promises to send the Holy Spirit and his promise to return-both addressed in the 14th chapter of John.

Jesus’ return and the promise of heaven are the focal points of the future for all believers. The presence of the Holy Spirit comforts us (and sends us as he was sent) as we wait.

To see how the teachings of Jesus relate to each other, read the 13th through 17th chapters of John as a unit. Observe how Jesus answers the many questions of his disciples.

KEY VERSES OF JOHN 14

Verses 1, 17

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

In both of these verses, Christ offers his personal comfort—indeed a peach “which transcends all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). I (like many Christians) often experience his calming presence in my most troubling times.

Verses 2-3

In my father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Peter had asked Christ a question (John 13:36). Christ had not answered immediately. First he wanted to reveal to Peter an insight regarding his willingness to “Lay down his life.” Now he proceeds to answer the question of where He was going. Jesus explains that he was about to go back to the Father—but through the cross, conquering sin and death and all the barriers between God and people. Yet, he would not leave his followers destitute. He would return by the spirit to give peace. Plus, he would make a final return on the last day.

Verse 6

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Beautiful! Now we see Jesus answering a question asked by Thomas. Jesus not only claims to be the way to the Father but also promises to lead his followers to the Father (see John 6:44).

Verse 9

Jesus answered, “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father?”

Yet another question was asked, this time by Philip (vs. 8). It is comforting to notice the disciples felt they could approach Jesus with such questions. His patience and love are also available to us as we struggle with unfathomable truths.

Verse 12

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

The world will have a fuller exposure to Christ through the Spirit. Today millions are reached with the Word by the miracle of radio and television as well as by the personal testimonies of Christians.

Verse 14

You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

All genuine prayer is in the name of Christ and within the will of God. All true prayer is answered. (See the Key Chapter booklet *Matthew 6: Prayer*).

Verse 15

If you love me, you will obey what I command.

A simple statement of fact. (See the key Chapter booklet *James 2: Works*).

Verses 16-7, 26

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

The Spirit of God is a gift sent in Christ's name. The spirit not only comforts and helps us, but also leads us into all truth.

Verse 18

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Jesus will come again!

Verse 19

Before long the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

Because he lives, we will live also. Read John 5:24; Romans 6:4 and 1 Corinthians 15:20 to gain additional insight.

Verses 21, 23

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.

Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

Christ makes a promise (vs. 21). Judas (not Iscariot) has a question (vs. 22). Christ restates the point and expands the thought. Clearly Christ expects people's actions to prove the validity of their faith. (See Key Chapter booklet *James 2: Works*.)

Verse 27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Peace with God—what a great gift of God! He does not do his giving as the world gives—fickle and unreliable. His giving is certain, constant, and eternal. His mood does not change and his desire for us never falters. (See 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; Titus 1:2; 1 Peter 4:19.)

THOUGHTS ON John 14

Day 1

The word heaven is defined in various ways in God’s Word (in addition to being in part of the created universe (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 8:3)

- As the abode of God and the angels (Psalm 115:16; Matthew 6:9; 18:10b)
- As the place to which Christ ascended (Acts 1:11).
- As part of the new creation of a united heaven and earth after Christ’s return (Rev. 21:1; Ephesians 1:10)

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The common denominator: heaven is being with the Lord—in the direct presence of God.

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Matthew 13, in seven parables, describes the kingdom of heaven (kingdom of God). By means of these earthly stories we are taught spiritual truths. The following are the major parables:

† Parable of the weeds: Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43. The reference to the “son of Man” in verse 37 does not deny the deity of Jesus. It was a prophetic title Jesus applied to himself (See Daniel 7: 13-14). Evil, when sown, may not be perceived as evil. Satan sows it, and it grows to do its destruction later. It will become known by its fruits. The plants may look similar for a while, but the fruit will be clearly discernible.

The gatherers were perplexed. Wasn’t the church to be holy and pure? Where did the problem come from? It came from the enemy—Satan!

There is always a temptation to use force in stamping out error. History gives us ample illustrations of this: inquisition; heresy trials; witch-hunts; crusades; etc. Some patience is needed for a while. Both plants are left to grow side by side. But judgment will come. Until then there will always be some trouble and evil in the church. We must wait on the Lord.

No one wants a sloppy attitude toward error. Obviously error should be fought against vigorously, as Scripture teaches us. Just a reminder: Ultimately the “Lord of the harvest” will do the gathering. He will make no mistakes. He knows those who are his.

The ungodly are doomed (Matthew 3:10, 12; 7:19; John 15:6; Hebrews 6:8; 10:26-27).

Believers are “children of light”—children of the Father of lights (James 1:17) in whom there is *no* darkness (1 John 1:5).

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Day 2

† Parable of the hidden treasure:

Matthew 13:44—Spiritual treasure is different from earthly treasure. In fact, earthly treasure often hinders the finding of the spiritual.

Spiritual treasure is to be sought, although at times it may be found when the person is not looking for it., i.e. the Samaritan woman in John 4. At such a time the joy is even greater.

† Parable of the pearl:

Matthew 13: 45-46—There are various interpretations of this parable:

- Christ is the pearl—when we see him as Savior, we forsake all to follow him.
- The church is the reassurance. Christ is the seeker. Christ gives his all for the church.
- The church is the treasure that humanity is seeking. People find the message of salvation and surrender.
- Christians discover a deeper spiritual insight (pearl), leading to a more complete sacrifice of their lives to God.

By far, I prefer the first interpretation. Nicodemus was such a seeker (John 3: 1-21).

† Parable of the drag net:

Matthew 13: 47-50—Bad fish were those without scales or fins (Leviticus 11: 9-10) or those that were dead, putrid (Leviticus 11:11).

There will be a judging and separating (1 Corinthians 4:5; Matthew 18:17).

Final judgment will come from above (Matthew 13:41; 24:31; 25:31).

The end for the wicked is God's wrath and judgment (Romans 6:21; 2 Corinthians 11:15; Philippians 3:19; Hebrews 6:8; 1 Peter 4:17; Matthew 8:12; 24:51; 25:30).

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For years I have had the habit of looking toward the heavens as I pray. Some memorable nights in which I gazed into the heavens stand out in my mind. Among them was a night of prayer in the lonely Negev desert at the foot of Mt. Sinai. By contrast, on another night, November 13, 1966, as I returned home from a lecture, I remember how the brilliance of the stars was dimmed as I passed small towns lit up with streetlights and gaudy neon signs. How the world detracts us from seeing heavenly things as we should, I thought. You are not required to look heavenward as you pray, but it might help your focus (See Psalm 123:1).

Day 3

Scripture uses many figurative terms to describe heaven:

- Father's house (John 14:2)
- Sabbath (Hebrews 4: 9-11)
- Being with Christ (2 Timothy 2: 11-12)
- Eternal Inheritance (1 Peter 1:4)
- Eternal Kingdom (2 Peter 1:11)
- Abraham's Side (Luke 16:22)
- Heavenly Jerusalem (Galatians 4: 26)
- Heavenly Home (2 Corinthians 5:1)
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The unrepentant, unforgiven, are excluded from heaven. No sin will be present in heaven. Therefore, no consequence of sin—illness, fatigue, worry, fear, etc.

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John described his vision of heaven in Revelation 21: 1-122

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Jesus taught three parables showing the urgency of being prepared for his return. They are pointed and direct, urging sincere and genuine faith that reveals itself in actions. All three parables are found in Matthew 25:

1. Ten virgins (Matthew 25 1-13)
2. Talents (Matthew 25: 14-30)
3. Sheep and Goats (Matthew 25: 31-46)

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There is no other way to heaven but Christ. There is no other way to be saved! Christ alone gives us access to the Father. To say there are other ways to be saved, to make Christ merely one of a number of "saviors", is blasphemy. He alone is God, and he will not share his glory with false gods. John 14:6 is a statement of fact, constantly reaffirmed throughout scripture (See Acts 4:12).

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John 14:14 is not to be taken out of context. It is not a promise that God will do whatever the whims of a prayer might request. God does not invite dictation from us and will not be manipulated by us. The verse must be understood in its context. Note verses 15 and 21. These remind us that prayer must always be within the will of God. God is not a Santa Claus or a benign puppet. Instead, Christ comforts and reassures as we will always have those things we request *that are within his will*. In the same manner, he promises to never leave us, to send us the Spirit, and to take us to himself! These promises come from a loving God!

Day 4

Church membership and profession of faith are worth nothing if our lives do not reflect obedience. The obedience Jesus calls for in John 14: 23-24 springs from his presence in our lives and the strength and comfort given by the Spirit whom God sends. (See Key Chapter booklet John 15: Growth).

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The present universe must be destroyed because of the presence of sin. These things will pass away and vanish to be replaced by a united new heaven and new earth (Ephesians 1:10; 2 Peter 3: 10-13; Revelation 21:1) which will fully express God's perfect will and holiness. Such beauty and majesty are beyond human imagination.

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Two places only in which to spend eternity: Heaven or Hell. (See Luke 16: 19-31; Revelation 20: 15-21).

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One day (unless he comes before we die, which is quite possible), Jesus will call our bodies forth from the grave. No fear then! Just ecstatic joy!

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Eternal life is God's gift (John 10: 27-28).

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Those who insist on "earning" their way to heaven have rejected God's gift in Christ (Galatians 5: 4-5).

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Jesus gives a direct promise of eternal life to all those who believe in him (John 11: 25-26). Do you believe this?

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Jesus speaks of eternal life already being the possession of the believer (John 3:36). It will be completely experienced after the resurrection.

Day 5

Without the way you cannot *go*. Without the *truth* you cannot *know*. Without the *life* you cannot *grow*.

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A person can get to heaven without money, fame, or friends—but not without Christ!

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John 14:6 makes it clear Jesus is the one and only way. Not one of many ways; not even the best of a few. He is the *only* way.

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It will be great to be in the multitude before his throne (Revelation 7: 9-17).

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We don't have to fear the future. Jesus is already in heaven! He is even now preparing a place for us.

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It is difficult for “lovers” to be apart. Soon we will be where Jesus is!

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Jesus is not a secondary God; he is God!

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In the Revelation of John, chapter 21, we are given glimpses of the beauty of heaven.

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To Jesus there is only one real test of love—obedience to him (enabled by Jesus making his home with us [John 14:23]). Obviously, much of what we glibly call love is not love at all. True love, obedient, self-sacrificing love, is demonstrated by Jesus.