

JOHN — WEEK 20

I'M GOING AWAY



F. Michael Slay  
*A DEEP Study*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

## The cover image is *Ecce Homo* (Behold the Man) by Caravaggio

Jesus is going away, but says He will be back and will make Himself manifest to them, but not to the world. Judas wonder how He can do that. That answer is the Holy Spirit.

This sparks a long “change in perspective” explanation. Everything depends on Him and on The Father. Love for Jesus and the resulting obedience are key.

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John, Week 20 — I'm Going Away  
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1 John 14:22–26

*Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”*

*Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.*

*“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”*

At first, it doesn't sound like Jesus is answering Judas's question. The beginning of His answer is context. But then He says, *“My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”* Now we're getting somewhere. This is about God's presence in our lives.

After repeating His point about loving Him and keeping His word, He details how the Holy Spirit will *manifest Jesus to them, and not to the world.*

In other words, the answer to Judas's question is that they'll know the Holy Spirit, but the world won't.

Jesus keeps calling the Holy Spirit the Helper. Now He details some of the help. *“He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”*

This just reinforces what was said back in John 14:16b–17a. *He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth.*

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, who will teach you all things. That's the answer to Judas's question. The truth taught by the Holy Spirit will manifest Jesus *to us, and not to the world.*

There's another great truth taught in this passage—the trinity. Judas asks about how Jesus will make Himself manifest. Jesus answers that the whole trinity will make itself manifest through the Holy Spirit.

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But how about us? How is Jesus manifest in us?

The answer is still the Holy Spirit. But how can we know we have the Holy Spirit? What can we detect?

This is an important, tough question. There are many views on this subject, but this passage clearly says that the Holy Spirit teaches and reminds. In combination with the name, *“Spirit of truth,”* in John 14:17 we see that the Holy Spirit's presence in us is spiritual and mental. He enlightens us.

That enlightenment is the manifestation. Look back. Are you a different person than you used to be?

That's the Spirit's influence. That's how you know.

2 John 14:27–31

*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.*

*"And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here."*

It sounds blunt when Jesus says, *"If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I."*

It is blunt. It makes a strong point that needs to be made. This is part of Jesus preparing the disciples for the immense trials they will be enduring soon.

He's emphasizing the word "love" (agapé). Agapé isn't about feelings; it's about putting someone else's well-being above your own. Jesus is saying, *"If you cared about Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I."*

Okay, but is this criticism really what they need to hear right now?

Yes. This helps steel them for what's coming. Loving Jesus in this way shifts their focus from themselves to Him and His priorities. That's what they'll need in order to not lose faith in the coming trials.

And that's what the next paragraph fills in. Jesus points out that they've now been given advance notice and that the conversation is about to end. *I will no longer talk much with you.* Furthermore, He's doing this so *that the world may know that I love the Father.*

Lesson over. *"Arise, let us go from here."*

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Even though Jesus is preparing His disciples for the coming trials, that's not the primary purpose. It's that they will believe.

*"And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe."*

They need to get through the coming trials, keeping their focus on Him and His priorities, but their faith is the true objective. These guys will be called on to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. If they have any doubt that their message is true, they'll be worthless.

But they won't have any doubt. They'll know that Jesus called everything in advance. And if they forget, the Holy Spirit will, *"bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."* — John 14:26b

3 John 15:1–6

*“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

*“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”*

This might be the most egotistical statement in all human history. Jesus is claiming credit for anything any Christian will ever do.

And that’s exactly right—and exactly important. Christians must see themselves as dependent on Christ. No matter what our faith is, no matter what we have done, we have no grounds for bragging.

The analogy Jesus uses here is particularly apt because, not only does the branch draw all its nourishment and strength from the vine, but the branch is also part of the vine. What a beautiful and exciting truth that is. We are part of Christ. *Abide in Me, and I in you.*

But there’s a tough flip side to this—disconnect from the vine and you’re toast. *“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”* Also, *“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away.”*

But then He adds, *“and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”* What an amazing point. Why did He add it? What is this “pruning?” It sounds painful; is it a warning?

We don’t have much to go on here. Yes, pruning sounds painful, but it’s not for a real branch, so that’s not clear. One thing we can be sure of though, pruning means less branch and more fruit.

So, the takeaway is that the Father is going to “prune” us back so that we are less, but we bear more fruit.

Yeah, that’s painful.

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Forewarned is forearmed. Christians get pruned.

The analogy isn’t precise enough to give us any details. Pruning doesn’t seem to be some specific kind of trial. The point is just that the Father cultivates our growth, and this can get “complicated” (painfully so).

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. — Romans 8:28*

That said, we need to be careful about uttering platitudes to people in pain. When people can barely get through the day, help them with that. Leave teaching doctrine for a calmer time.

4 John 15:7–8

*“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”*

One of the most exciting lessons in Biblical Greek—definitely my favorite—is about the purpose construct. When you have the word “hinna” (ἵνα) followed by a verb in the subjunctive, hinna means “for the purpose that.”

That wording is long and clumsy, so translators typically just render it as, “so that,” or just, “that.” In the last part of this passage, in Greek, the verb “bear” is in the subjunctive and “that” is “hinna.”

So, that last clause is literally, “for the purpose that *you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*”

Thus, the “this” in the preceding clause, “*By this My Father is glorified,*” isn’t referring to the fruit we bear; it’s referring to verse seven.

*“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”*

That, not our works, is what glorifies God. This agrees with John 14:13.

*And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

We often think too much of ourselves and our works. Today’s passage is often misunderstood to say that our *fruit* glorifies God.

It actually says that God glorifies Himself—same as in John 14:13.

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Do not take this to mean our works are worthless. If they were, Jesus wouldn’t call them fruit. There is glory in things we do. For example, we can “give glory to God.”

But it is important to understand that God’s glory comes principally from Himself.

It’s why He created the universe.

It’s why He created us.

It’s why Jesus went to the cross.

We get to be part of all this—which is plenty glorious right there—but we’re not the central characters.

Keep this concept front-and-center as we walk through John’s account of Jesus’s betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection. God’s glory is the central, unifying theme of everything that happens.

And watch for more of those purpose constructions. They’ll explain what’s actually going on.

5 John 15:9–11 (ESV)

*“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”*

Sure enough, that last sentence is another purpose construction. The first “that” is *hinna* in the Greek and the first “may be” is in the subjunctive. (The second “that” and “may be” aren’t in the Greek, but including them in the English translation yields the correct meaning.)

So, why did Jesus tell them *these things*?

So that His *joy may be in you, and your joy full*.

This is important. The disciples are about to be in a world of hurt. Jesus has warned them in just about every way imaginable, but there’s no way they can be totally prepared for what’s coming.

So, Jesus tells them many things that they need to know “so that” they’ll have His joy fully.

Of course, this is long term; their joy will be full eventually.

But the next few days are going to be pain city.

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This is a lesson for us too. You might call it “the secret of happiness” (or joy).

*Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love.*

This sounds like legalism, but it’s not. It’s the secret of happiness, not the secret way to heaven.

Disobeying Jesus is the path to pain, in the same way that children disobeying their parents is the path to pain.

And notice how the parent thing works. A child disobeying his or her parent’s commands can lead to a spanking.

But that’s not the real point or the real pain. Disobey the command to look both ways before crossing the street, and a child might have pain that makes a spanking feel like eating cake. Sometimes, good advice is simply good advice.

The same principle holds for Jesus’s commandments. Violating them brings misery and pain. That’s definitely not the path to joy.

When the author of life gives you advice on how *your joy may be full*, you’d best pay attention.

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. How are you a different person than you used to be?
2. Do you struggle to rejoice over an unexpected turn of events?
3. How have you been "pruned"?
4. What's the most glorifying thing you've ever seen?
5. What's the best practical advice you've ever heard?

*Items for prayer:*