

3d The Father and the Son

Read John 13:31-14:11

"No one may see me and live," the Lord said to Moses. "No one has ever seen God," John echoes in his Gospel. "Whom no one has seen or can see," says Paul. Yet how can we relate to an invisible God? We cannot see Him or touch Him. Is He listening? Is He even there? At times we feel as though we are talking to ourselves!

At the Last Supper, on the night of His betrayal, Jesus told His disciples He was returning to the Father. He explained His gracious purpose in going there. Then He made a bold and startling claim: the invisible God had become visible. We can see Him if we know where to look. We can come to Him if we know the way. It is vital for us, as it was for those disciples, to grasp what Jesus is saying.



1. What are some of the difficulties you experience in relating to an invisible God?

Our minds were built to create pictures; four dimensional maps of our environment. Even in our sleep our brains take the random firings of neurons, the chaotic connection between synapses, and try to stitch them together into coherent story lines – dreams. When we approach something we cannot conceive our minds tend to balk. They tend to shy away from what our psyches consider to be unreasonable, illogical, and even psychologically painful!

God understands that about us. He never left us without a way to connect with Him. From the very beginning, before the very foundations of the world were laid, God became immanent so that we would have an interface, an exact imprint of the invisible God, to deal with.

Moses said that Hashem has been our refuge in every generation. Before the mountains were born, before He gave birth to the universe He made sure we knew He was our God.¹

Peter informs us that the Messiah was destined before the foundation of the world.²

John says that Jesus preceded the universe and it was through Him that all things were created.³

His pre-existence, His pre-eminence, His status as our Creator led the Spirit to ask in Psalm 2:

- **Psalms 2:1-12 HCSB** Why do the nations rebel and the peoples plot in vain? (2) The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers conspire together against the LORD and His Anointed One: (3) "Let us tear off their chains and free ourselves from their restraints." (4) The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord ridicules them. (5) Then He speaks to them in His anger and terrifies them in His wrath: (6) "I have consecrated My King on Zion, My holy mountain." (7) I will declare the LORD's decree: He said to Me, "You are My Son; today I have become Your Father. (8) Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your inheritance and the ends of the earth Your

¹ Psalm 90:1-2

² 1 Peter 1:18-21

³ John 1:1-4

possession. (9) You will break them with a rod of iron; You will shatter them like pottery." (10) So now, kings, be wise; receive instruction, you judges of the earth. (11) Serve the LORD with reverential awe, and rejoice with trembling. (12) Pay homage to the Son, or He will be angry, and you will perish in your rebellion, for His anger may ignite at any moment. All those who take refuge in Him are happy.

When the Son was chosen to be the immanent aspect of the Godhead, we too were foreseen, predestined and adopted. Paul said that Adonai, in His choice of the Messiah, also chose us in that Messiah before the foundation of the world. He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ.⁴ John quotes Jesus as saying that we were given to Him before the world's foundation.⁵

2. Read John 13:31-14:11. God is glorified when His character is revealed. How will Jesus glorify God, and how will God glorify Jesus (John 13:31-32)?

Notice two elements in John 13:31. "When he (Judas) had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now...'" These two elements, Judas leaving and Jesus beginning with "NOW the Son of Man is glorified..." indicate that the presence of the traitor had brought a tremendous restraint to Jesus' conversation.

It's like when you are speaking of confidential issues with a close friend and suddenly a third person walks in. The conversation ebbs, and then swings in a different direction because a limit that didn't previously exist was just imposed on the line of discussion.

That this was true was hinted at by the Master when He said, "Not all of you are clean" and "I speak not of you all." Now that terrible restraint had been lifted, Jesus breathed a deep sigh of relief and of what does He speak? His betrayal? No. Does He describe the terrible sufferings that are about to take place and ask for sympathy? No. He bursts into a panegyric statement that the hour of His glory had arrived! In five brief clauses He repeated the word "glorify" five times! And how is this to take place? The zenith of the Trinity's glory is found in His death on the cross! Jesus said that if He could glorify the Father in this manner, that the Father would in turn glorify Him. We see this clearly in:

- **Philippians 2:9-11 HCSB** For this reason God also highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, (10) so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow--of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth-- (11) and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

When we elevate the Messiah in our minds; glorify Him with our mouths and exalt Him with our lives, we are glorifying God the Father.

- **Matthew 5:16 HCSB** In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.
- **1 Peter 2:12 HCSB** Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that in a case where they speak against you as those who do evil, they may, by observing your good works, glorify God in a day of visitation.

3. If you had been with Jesus for three years and had placed all your hopes on him, how would you respond mentally and emotionally to his statement in John 13:33?

Jesus said, "Children, I am with you a little while longer. You will look for Me, and just as I told the Jews, 'Where I am going you cannot come,' so now I tell you."

⁴ Ephesians 1:3-6

⁵ John 17:24

What a terrible loss they must have felt! What a tragic foreboding! Small wonder they were demoralized and ran.⁶ We tend to look at them with a slight hint of condescension and an inner impression that we would not have left the Messiah unattended in His time of torment. However, He had already told them, “I’m going and you can’t come with me. I’m going to die and there’s not a blessed thing you can do about it.” In fact, when Peter protested, Jesus rebuked him for it and called him a tool of Satan!⁷ How confused and lost they must have been. In that type of mental environment most people simply lock up in despair and do nothing. That’s exactly what we see happened with most of the disciples.

Two major differences were Peter who turned his despair into anger, denying the Messiah,⁸ and John who (though he ran away that fateful night of Judas’ betrayal) remained steadily at the foot of the cross, ready to serve the Lord however he could.⁹

4. To what extent can you identify with Peter’s response (John 13:36-38)?

At first Peter didn’t seem to understand that Jesus was referring to His death. He said “where are you going?” He seemed to think that they were going to move their proceedings to a different locale. Once Jesus repeated “you can’t follow me now but you will later” Peter finally seemed to get that the Master was referring to death because he responded with “I will lay down my life for you.”

I don’t think Peter was particularly proud or brash as he is often portrayed. I don’t think, as some, that he simply ignored Jesus’ admonition to love one another and went straight to his own agenda. I believe Peter was responding to that admonition. It’s as though he was saying, “Love you? You actually question my love and loyalty for you? Let me make it clear. I would DIE for you.”

The difficulty with Peter’s response (and unfortunately all too often mine) is that love is not just how we feel. We are moved to heights of passion at various times. We are equally moved to passivity at others. Love must be a willfully chosen attitude that reveals itself in action. In our enthusiasm we quickly make bold statements of love and affection for the Christ. In our worship songs, with our hands upraised, we mouth all types of extreme commitments to His cause (and rightfully so). However, just as Jesus knew Peter would betray Him, He is all too aware of our proclivity for betrayal.

If we want to truly demonstrate our love for the Lord we need to “not think more highly of ourselves than we ought.”¹⁰ Instead of bragging we should demonstrate simple, quiet, humble obedience to whatever the Lord commands. Like John we should patiently wait at the foot of the cross, ready to serve the Lord in whatever capacity. Like John the odds are that we will receive a command to care for another person or persons on the Lord’s behalf.

5. How would Jesus’ words in John 14:1-4 calm the troubled disciples? How can these words be a special comfort to people approaching the end of physical life?

Knowing that there will be an end to our sufferings can be a tremendous source of hope. Placing our faith in and drawing near to the God who is the rewarder of those who seek Him,¹¹ means that there is nothing in this world so horrible that He can’t give us the strength to overcome it. If we turn our despair and confusion into an opportunity to more fully seek God,

⁶ Mark 14:50-52

⁷ Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33

⁸ First – John 18:15-18; Matthew 26:69-70; Mark 14:66-68; Luke 22:55-57; Second – Mark 14:69; Matthew 26:71-72; Luke 22:58-59; John 18:25; Third – Mark 14:70-72; Matthew 26:73-75; Luke 22:60-62; John 18:26-27

⁹ John 19:26-27

¹⁰ Romans 12:3

¹¹ Hebrews 11:6

at some point God will step up and say “Congratulations! You sought me! You found me! Let me reward you with Myself. Welcome into the joy of your Master!”

6. Thomas asserts they do *not* know what Jesus claims they know (John 14:4-5). What has Thomas failed to grasp (John 14:6)?

Like all humans, Thomas tended toward too much literalism, too small a mindset. It takes time and the help of the Holy Spirit to realize the full depths and riches of the words of the Master. However, we need to give Thomas this; he was honest and plainly told the Lord what he didn't understand. On both occasions when Thomas expressed doubt or confusion, here and after the Master's resurrection,¹² the Lord answered his questions. We should take courage from this. After all, James the half brother of our Lord said,

- **James 1:5 HCSB** Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without criticizing, and it will be given to him.

7. How would you explain each aspect of Jesus' claim in John 14:6?

As the way, Jesus is our path to the Father. As the truth, He is the reality of all Hashem's promises. As the life, He is the spark that ignites life in our dead, dark and forsaken souls.

8. What is involved in embracing Jesus as our way to the Father?

In any study of Jesus' teaching on salvation what is striking is His constant focus upon Himself as the source of salvation. 'Come to me, follow me, believe in me, drink of me'¹³ are his constant cries. He says, 'I am the way the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me'.¹⁴ According to Jesus, it is through a personal relationship with Him that one comes into the experience of salvation.

He says that none can come to him except the Father first draw them¹⁵ and yet he calls men to repentance and faith.¹⁶

He emphasizes faith in himself and his atoning work as the sole basis for salvation and complete deliverance from judgment and condemnation.¹⁷

He preaches the absolute necessity for the new birth,¹⁸ for conversion¹⁹ and for sanctification.²⁰

He tells men that it is only those who do the will of God who will enter the kingdom of heaven, that those who truly belong to him will manifest the reality of that relationship by bearing the fruit of obedience in their lives.²¹

However, He balances that by teaching that justification is not by works but based solely on the mercy of God.²²

The best summary of this balance can be found in

- **Ephesians 2:8-10 HCSB** For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift-- (9) not from works, so that no one can boast. (10)

¹² John 20:25-28

¹³ Matthew 11:28–30; Marc 8:34–38; John 6:35; 7:38

¹⁴ John 14:6

¹⁵ John 6:44

¹⁶ Mark 1:15; John 3:16; Luke 13:3; John 4:15–18

¹⁷ John 3:14–16; 6:35, 47–58, 5:24, 10:27–29

¹⁸ John 3:3-6

¹⁹ Matthew 18:3

²⁰ Matthew 7:21–24

²¹ John 15:1–8; 8:31

²² Luke 18:9–14

For we are His creation--created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.

We are not saved by works,²³ but our salvation should inevitably lead to works or we may properly doubt the saving power of our faith. Again, quoting Jesus' half-brother,

- **James 2:17-20 HCSB** In the same way faith, if it doesn't have works, is dead by itself. (18) But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith from my works. (19) You believe that God is one; you do well. The demons also believe--and they shudder. (20) Foolish man! Are you willing to learn that faith without works is useless?

Or as Jesus Himself said,

- **Matthew 3:8 HCSB** Therefore produce fruit consistent with repentance.

9. Philip assumes they have *not* seen what Jesus claims they have seen (John 14:7-8). What has Philip failed to realize (John 14:9-11)?

That Jesus is mysteriously one with the Father. In essence they are one and the same, though they are distinct persons. Since the Father and the Spirit are invisible, to see God one must look toward the Son.

It's as though Jesus was saying, "Believe my words (isn't that the fundamental duty of all men?); but yet if you cannot bring yourself to believe My statement that I am one with God, remember the miracles I have performed. Remember that you have seen Me do things that only God could do. If you cannot believe Me for my word's sake, believe Me for My works."

He that has seen Jesus has seen the Father; has seen all of the Father that can be or ever will be seen; has seen the incarnate manifestation of the godhead.

- **Colossians 1:19 HCSB** For God was pleased *to have* all His fullness dwell in Him,

On a daily basis, how can we get to know the Father through Jesus?

A fundamental truth that must be understood for spiritual growth to take place is that each of us is a part of the Church and that the Church is the Bride of Christ. Those things that make for a good marriage thus make for good d'vekut.

1. Prayer. Talk things over with Him. Matthew 6:6
2. Meditation. Listen to Him Psalm 77:11-15
3. Be His helpmeet. Genesis 2:18-25
4. Say "I love you" often by obeying Him. John 14:21
5. Include Him in your daily life. Make the carnal holy. 1 Corinthians 10:31
6. Plan special times together. Find time for devotions. Ephesians 3:14-21 cp Jeremiah 29:13-14
7. Use symbols and rituals to remind you of your Love. 1 Corinthians 11:23-34
8. Be quick to say I'm sorry. Practice confession and repentance. Psalm 51:1-17
9. Trust Him. Have faith. 2 Chronicles 20:20
10. Bear Him children. Witness. John 3:3-8 cp John 15:5-8
11. Raise those children. Disciple. John 8:31-32
12. Be faithful to Him. Maintain doctrinal purity. Worship and trust Him only. Exodus 20:1-6
13. Fix Him good meals. Practice good works. John 4:31-34
14. Keep a clean house. Be pure and holy. Matthew 5:8
15. Keep spiritually fit. 1 Timothy 4:6-9
16. Stay passionate. Maintain your first love. Acts 2:42-47 cp Revelation 2:2-5
17. Remember it's "till death do you part." Remain steadfast in your faith. 1 Corinthians 15:58

²³ Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16; 3:2

18. Be humble. Daniel 9:4-7a
19. Serve those He loves. Deuteronomy 11:26-28
20. Praise Him. Luke 19:21-45
21. Follow Him. Mark 1:14-20