

John 14 – Very great and precious promises. (2) Coming back. (refs for Bible study 23/8/18).

What's your big hope? the thing you really look forward to? Ask a 1st century Christian and the answer was: 'the Second Coming of Jesus of course'. Our Lord gave his disciples (and us) very special promises. Here's one: *"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."* v3

A guarantee: *"And if I go and prepare a place for you"* 'If' does not mean doubt. Rather: *"If I'm going, and I am going..."* He did go. He went via cross, resurrection, then ascension to where he is now, i.e. heaven. His departure is the guarantee of his return. 'Do you think I'd go to all that trouble and then not come back for you?'

The Second Coming: *"I will come again"* Jesus' words are emphatic. 'I'm coming – again!' The same promise is almost the last word in Scripture, Rev.22v20. Some think Jesus meant he would come to us as we read, pray, meet together, etc. And there is a sense in which he comes to us by his Spirit, see vv18 & 23. Some think Jesus meant he would come to meet us when we die, eg Acts 7v56,59. And it is wonderfully true that Jesus does meet us when we die. But here he speaks of coming back. He speaks of his Second Coming, Acts1v11, Jn.17v24.

A personal reception: *"and receive you to myself"* Literally 'I will receive you towards me'. Often the Bible emphasises the great climactic, cosmic nature of his coming, Mk.13v25-27, 2Pet.3v10, 1Cor.15v51-52. But here the emphasis is on the personal aspect – *"Let not your heart be troubled..."* v1 – tender comfort for God's people. 1Ths.4v17-18, 2Ths.2v1. Personally received by Jesus. What a prospect!

With the Lord for ever: *"that where I am, there you may be also"*. He could've said *'that you may be in heaven'* which is of course true. But rather he says *"where I am"*. He doesn't emphasise the place, but the company. There are many things we don't know about heaven, but it is sufficient to know it's the place where Jesus is. That should be enough for us! Incidentally, though the intermediate state is wonderful, Phil.1v23, 2Cor.5v8, Jesus is looking further ahead – to his Second Coming, the Day of Resurrection and of setting up the New Heavens and New Earth.

The promise of Christ's return should:

- **Comfort us:** in our trials and sorrows, Jas.5v8. Think of all that *'where I am'* means, and contrast it with our present ills!
- **Challenge us:** what is our estimate of the things of this world? and of things where Jesus is? Mt.6v19-20.
- **Motivate us:** there's a work to be done, a world to be rescued. Who knows how long we have to do it?