

Did Jesus Refer to the Rapture



By [Andy Woods](#)

Good evening everybody. If we could take our Bibles and open them to John 14:1, although we're going to allude back a little bit to John 13. If you want a title for this session we could call it this: Did Jesus Ever Refer to the Rapture? Who's ready for the rapture? You know, I was thinking about it the other day and I don't have a single problem in my life that the rapture wouldn't fix. And I'm just about ready for that to happen? Lord, any time!

Kind of dialing back just a little bit, back into John 13, Jesus gives there what I would summarize this way: three troubling predictions. The first prediction is in verses 21-30 and it deals with Judas' departure. The second prediction is in verses 31-35 and it deals with Jesus' departure. And the third prediction is in verses 36-38 and it deals with Peter's denials.

So Jesus says, of the disciples, one of you is going to betray Me. There's the prediction, verses 21-25. And then He gives a sign, take a look at verse 26, ?Jesus then answered, ?This is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.? So it's very clear at this point that Jesus is going to be betrayed by Judas: that's troubling prediction number 1.

Then you move down into verses 31-35, here's troubling prediction number 2, He is going to be leaving. Now that's in verses 31 and 33; this no doubt shook them to the core of their being because He had been with them for over three years, He was their mentor, their role model. He was their God and now He's leaving.

But then He says in verses 34-35 there is something that you are to do in My absence. Take a look at verses 34-35, ?A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. [35] By this all men will know that you are My disciples? by your ability to win arguments? oh, I'm sorry, it doesn't say that, ?By this all men will know that you are My disciples by your love for one another.?

So He must leave, they must love. And then in chimes the Apostle Peter, that we learned about in the last session, the apostle with the foot-shaped mouth, as I like to call him, everyone is going to betray your Lord, except me. Totally relying upon self-energy, self-confidence, human ability. And Jesus makes this prediction, there are the end of the chapter, verse 38, ??Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.? Peter, you're about to fall flat on your face in failure and through that process you're going to learn a valuable lesson, how badly you need the Holy Spirit to minister. And of course, Peter is going to learn his lesson because when we get into Acts 1-10 Peter is the main man, isn't he, as he is relying upon the Spirit there at the beginning of the church age.

Now we move away from these three troubling predictions and then we run into something that transitions naturally into all of this, which is a prediction of comfort where we're going to be spending our time today, John 14:1-4, Jesus now says, ?Do not let your heart be troubled;? why were they troubled? Because of the three troubling predictions in the prior chapter. ?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] And 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.'?

What I hope to convince you of tonight is this is the first reference, those verses, to something that we learned about in the prior session, briefly, the rapture of the church, the first reference to it really in the whole Bible. The doctrine of the rapture of the church specifically the doctrine that Jesus is coming back to rescue the church before the tribulation begins, is under severe attack today. That's one of the reasons that convinces me it's true. Why would the devil work so hard to debunk something that isn't true anyway?

Here's a quote that I found recently on the internet, one gentleman says: 'I personally do not believe that by the year 2020 any credible person will be teaching the secret pre-trib rapture doctrine,' a little caveat here, we don't teach it secret, how could millions of people disappearing from the earth be a secret? I think the events that are coming the next five years will utterly destroy the doctrine. You know, it's interesting, when the rapture occurs some people are just going to go up kicking and screaming; they are going to go up nonetheless though, if they're a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is John 14:1-4 really a rapture passage? I've sort of divided my outline up this way: 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, we're going to get a heavy exegetical workout because we're going to be going word by word through John 14:1-4. And then lastly, if time permits and the rapture doesn't come first, I'm going to try to show you what other people, who deny the rapture would teach about these verses. I'm going to try to show you why their arguments really don't hold up.

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. I have about five or so quick reasons to go through and I can go through this fast because Tom covered it so nicely in the prior session.

Number 1, The significance of the Upper Room Discourse: we can divide the Gospel of John as follows: Number 1, chapter 1, there's a heavenly genealogy (I like to call it that) linking Jesus to the heaven from which He came. Number 2, really it spans all the way to the end of chapter 11, we have His public ministry, featuring His various signs, and of course last session we learned there were seven signs that He did.

The first sign is the transformation of the water into wine at Cana of Galilee. You know, it's interesting, there's two verses unbelievers know; they know the verse don't judge, and they know about that changing the water into wine. Other than that they don't know too much about the Bible. But the last sign is the resuscitation, as I like to call it, of Lazarus from the dead there in John 11. And all the way through John's Gospel Jesus, as a Jew? do we all know Jesus was Jewish, He was not Southern Baptist, He was not Presbyterian, He was a good Jewish individual. He would make trips to Jerusalem which is what Leviticus 23 tells Jewish individuals to do. And He makes about five trips to Jerusalem through John's Gospel and the last trip is recorded there in John 13, and He is traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

And then what happens is the triumphal entry, chapter 12, and this is essentially where Jesus presents His Messianic credentials to the nation and the nation rejects Him. If you look at John 12:37 just for a minute, I think this is the turning point in John's Gospel. It says, 'But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him.' It's very clear at this point that national Israel is not going to accept Jesus as their King, and that leads, naturally, into the Upper Room Discourse, where Jesus, as we learned in the prior session, begins to reveal in seed form, germ form if you will, an entire new age that's on the horizon, while Israel nationally is in a state of unbelief, and we call that the church age. What is God going to do while the kingdom is in a state of postponement? And then what follows after that is the passion narratives which deal with His crucifixion and His resurrection.

What's the big deal about the Upper Room Discourse. Well, we already learned, and we've seen quotes from Dr. Chafer, who writes this: 'The Upper Room Discourse, in which the above passage is found, is the seed plot of that form of doctrine which is later developed in the epistles.' Jesus is laying out in the Upper Room Discourse church age truth which has never been taught before, which the epistles, now we know what the epistles are, the epistles are not the wives of the apostles. The epistles are the letters, the

epistles come along and water those truths and bring them into full form.

And there's a ton of truths that Jesus reveals here, that gets developed in the epistles. The believer's oneness in Christ. The Spirit's permanent residence in the believer. The believer's union with Christ. The believer's opposition to the world. The necessity of the believer staying in fellowship with Christ. And then I have another slide on that; and then I have another slide on that? and then I have even another slide on that. So as you study those on your own you see Jesus is revealing a ton of doctrine, which is brand new, which the epistles will later bring to full form.

So it would not be surprising, would it, to discover the truth of the rapture in the Upper Room Discourse, since the rapture is part of church age doctrine. The rapture is how the earthly mission of the church will conclude. So as an interpreter I shouldn't be shocked to discover a truth about the rapture in these verses.

And this makes the Upper Room Discourse very different than the Olivet Discourse. The Olivet Discourse is called that because it took place on the Mount of Olives. I asked one of my classes, who knows why we call it the Olivet Discourse and a student raised their hand and said well, that's because we get all of it, and that would be the wrong answer. We call the Upper Room Discourse the Upper Room Discourse because it took place in the Upper Room. 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. As we saw in the last session, the Olivet Discourse is farewell to Israel; the Upper Room Discourse is hello to the church. 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 is hello to the church, 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. You might want to jot down Jeremiah 30:7, that Israel will go into a time of distress and be converted through it, 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 unwritten material that is going to be formed in the epistles, which is going to take the Upper Room Discourse material and develop it further.

So I'm really not shocked at all if we should discover the rapture in these verses.

The second preliminary comment is what I would call the eschatology (eschatology just means future) eschatological flavor of the Upper Room Discourse. Many people say you can't find the rapture here because John's focus is not on the end of the age and the end of the world. Now I will admit that there's more teaching in the Olivet Discourse on the end of the age than in the Upper Room Discourse, but you can see from this chart here that John's Gospel makes many, many references to the end times: the two final resurrections, Israel's future acceptance of a future antichrist in lieu of the true Christ, Christ's promise to preserve and resurrect the believer in the last days, the coming of the Holy Spirit who would disclose things to come.

I believe this, that Jesus revealed a lot more about the future in the Upper Room Discourse than is recorded in John's Gospel. Why would I say that? Because John tells us that his book is very selective; he doesn't tell us everything Jesus said or did, he just focuses on a few things. And at the end of the book he says you know, I suppose if I told you everything Jesus said or did the world itself

could not contain the books written thereof. And so there probably were many other things about the future that Jesus disclosed in this conversation in the Upper Room that are not found in our biblical text. [John 21:22, 'And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.']

So because of the eschatological flavor of the discourse I'm open to a rapture interpretation.

A third reason why I think we ought to be open to a rapture interpretation of John 14:1-4 is the writings of the earliest church fathers. George Gunn, who wrote a very good paper on this subject, entitled *The Father's House, Are We There Yet?* Goes through various church fathers, like Papias and Irenaeus and Tertullian and even Origen, and Cyprian, and he shows that the earliest church fathers interpreted John 14:1-4 with a heavenly and eschatological grid. But then George Gunn says this: 'Interestingly, references to John 14:1-3 virtually disappear when perusing the writings of the Nicene and Post Nicene fathers. This is a bit surprising given the abundance of material in these latter writers when compared with the anti-Nicaeans. I would assume the rise of Augustine and amillennialism and its optimistic interpretation regarding the present arrival of the Kingdom of God, the kind of help held out in John 14:1-3, cease to hold relevance.'

What happened to the church? Well, up north you see a school there called Antioch, and that was the dominant way of Christian thinking for the first two centuries of the church. All of the people that were influenced by the school of Antioch took prophecy literally. But what began to develop down south in a place called Alexandria, Egypt, was an allegorical method of interpretation. In other words, I know the text says what it says, but I know one thing, it doesn't really mean what it says type of viewpoint. A lot of these folks would do real well on the current United States Supreme Court, by the way.

But they began to approach the prophecy in a nonliteral fashion and they began to say that we are in the kingdom of God now, it's called amillennialism. Now if we are currently in the kingdom I have to say this, I must be living in the ghetto section of town because I just don't see kingdom conditions. But if you believe that we are in the kingdom and this is the home of the church on earth, then you stop looking for the any moment appearing of Jesus Christ to rescue us from the world. That doctrine becomes irrelevant because we, after all, are in the kingdom. And so as the church began to be influenced by the Alexandrian School of Interpretation, the teaching on the rapture began to be lost. It was there in the earliest church fathers. There is a fourth reason why I'm very open to a rapture interpretation and that's because of the Jewish marriage analogy. The book of Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 22-33 says we are the bride, He is the groom. [Ephesians 5:22, Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. [24] But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. [25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, [26] so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word [27] that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. [28] So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; [29] for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, [30] because we are members of His body. [31] FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. [32] This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. [33] Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.'] Now a Jewish wedding had certain phases or stages to it and I won't go through all ten phases or stages, Dr. Renald Showers, in his book, *Maranatha--Our Lord Come*, has a great description, but you can analogize these various stages, or phases, to as the church, as the bride, our future program with the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, in step 1 there was a marriage covenant; the groom initiated, the covenant was established upon payment for the bride and does that not sound an awful lot like Christ's sacrificial death for us? And then we move into step 2 where the bride is set apart. The bride is set apart exclusively for the groom. Does that not sound an awful lot like the situation we're in now where we have been positionally set apart for the groom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The third step was the preparation of the bridal chamber where the groom separated from the bride and returned to his father's house to prepare the bridal chamber. My goodness, that sounds an awful lot like John 14:2, doesn't it. '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.'

The fifth stage was the betrothal period where the bride set herself apart for the groom, it was sort of a loyalty test. And that sounds a lot like the time period that we're living in now, where we have been set apart for the Lord Jesus Christ, we are to remain pure and away from the system and thinking of the world, and one day at the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ we will either be rewarded or not rewarded, based on our progress in this area under God's power.

And then notice number 5 here, the bride is retrieved, the groom returns at an unknown time preceded by a shout, with escorts, to retrieve the bride. Does that not sound an awful lot like John 14:3, 'If I go and prepare a place for you, I will? what? ?come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.?'

The final five steps of this Jewish marriage analogy are quite fascinating to study and unfortunately we don't have time to look into all of that but having looked into this carefully myself, every step of this Jewish marriage, from step 1 to step 10, is a dead ringer for our future with Christ and part of that future involves the rapture of the church.

Let me give you a final reason here, number 5 I think this is, why I am open to a rapture inter-pretation of John 14:1-4, and that's because of its parallel with other rapture texts. Now if you ask people, even people that hate the rapture (and there are a lot of those out there today, unfortunately) if you ask them what is the clearest passage in the Bible that reveals the doctrine of the rapture they would all say 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, where Paul says: 'But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. [14] For if we believe thieve that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. [15] For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not prevent those who have fallen asleep. [16] For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. [18] Therefore, comfort one another with these words.'

When you compare our passage, John 14:1-4 to a passage which most would say is the clearest rapture passage we have, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, there is a fascinating vocabulary and conceptual and chronological parallel. Jesus don't be troubled, Paul says don't sorrow. Jesus says believe, so does Paul. Jesus says believe in God, believe in Me. Paul says believe in Jesus, believe in God, Jesus said I told you, Paul says I say to you. Jesus says I am going to come again, Paul says the coming of the Lord. Jesus says I'm going to receive you to Myself, Paul says caught up. Jesus says I'll catch you up to Myself; Paul says to meet the Lord. Jesus says when I catch you up you are going to be where I am; Paul says we will be forever with the Lord. Do you see the verse numbers.

And so what you have is a one to one correspondence here in concept. The scholar that really published on this and started to make this idea clear was a scholar from a previous generation named J. B. Smith, and this is what he says of the two passages. '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 the earth to the glories of heaven.'

J. B. Smith said you know, let's see if this works with other passages. Let's try it with Revelation 19, which is not a rapture passage, and he says this, comparing John 14 with Revelation 19: 'Hence it is impossible that one sentence or even one phrase can be alike in the two lists, and finally, not one word in the two lists is used in the same relation or connection. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find elsewhere any two important passages of Scripture that are so diverse in the words employed and so opposite in their implications. We believe the comparison of these words of these two passages describe different events.'

See, we take John 14:1-4 and you compare it to a rapture passage, our clearest one, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, there's an exact one to one correspondence. But that correspondence doesn't work when you compare it to a second advent passage.

And that's why Paul, I believe, in the Thessalonian passage, says, 'For this we say to you by the word of the Lord,' it's almost as if the Lord has spoken this truth somewhere before. And I believe Paul is making reference back to a conversation that Paul learned of, that Jesus had with the disciples in the Upper Room when He unfolded the truth of John 14:1-4. This shouldn't surprise us, should it,

if Dr. Chafer is right, the Upper Room discourse in which the above passage is found is the seed plot of that form of doctrine which is later developed in the epistles, including the rapture, or how the church age will end.

See, we haven't even gotten to the biblical text yet and what we can see is that there are five very strong reasons why we should be open to a rapture interpretation.

Having said all that, now let's move into John 14:1-4 and let's see if we can work our way through these verses. Verse 1 says, 'Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.' Now we're going to come back to verse 1 a little bit later but in essence what is happening here is Jesus is comforting them over the announcement of His departure, which troubled them and we saw that in the prior chapter, in chapter 13.

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 to in Acts 1.

Which leads us to a second word we have to understand, what does he mean by 'many dwelling places.' Now I know what you're thinking, you're thinking about your mansion in the sky and I really don't want to burst too many bubbles here but I'm about to destroy a great deal of Christian worship and a great deal of Christian singing, because the fact of the matter is the Greek text doesn't say 'mansions.' I know it's disappointing. Where do we get this idea of mansions? Well, the Greek New Testament was translated into Latin in the 4th century and when they translated this word they put in a word, it sounds an awful lot like mansions in Latin. And finally, when the English translators came along and they took this Latin translation and they 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. And I was talking like this at a church one time and then all of a sudden I saw the worship team kind of huddling off in a corner, and they got up and did the closing song and that was the end. And I said what were you guys huddling up about? They said oh, man, when you said all that stuff about no mansions we had to change all of our closing songs.

So I know it's disappointing, but the fact of the matter is it doesn't say mansions, 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 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. So don't get too attached to your dwelling place in heaven, you're not going to be there for very long, only seven years, at most, or at least I should say.

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.

So far so good, right? But verse 3 is tough because we've got five concepts to unpack here. 'I will come,' concept number 1; number 2, 'again,' number 3, 'and receive you to Myself,' number 4, the preposition 'to,' number 5, the word 'where.' So let's see if we can look at these one by one.

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 is 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 language, particularly Greek, what you discover is 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.

Notice, if you will, Dan Wallace, in his grammar, he says: 'The present tense may be used to describe a futuristic reality. The present tense may describe an event wholly subsequent to the time of speaking, although as if it were present. Only an examination of the context will help one see whether this use of the present tense stresses immediacy or certainty.'

Now Sweete in his commentary says look, 'sometimes a future event can be described in the present tense because of its imminence, meaning it can happen at any moment.' That's the teaching of the rapture; the rapture can happen at any moment. The rapture can happen before this presentation is over, and if you're praying for that to happen, please don't say that to me, that might hurt my feelings. Some of you may be praying for that to happen as I say that. And this idea of erchomai in the present tense, used to describe a future reality, this is very common in John's writings; I have the verses down at the bottom of the screen that you can look at when you get time.

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. Lensky says that. And then in another theological or a Greek dictionary called BDAG, which stands for Bauer, Danker, Arndt & Gingrich, that's what those BDAG initials stand for. BDAG says this of the adverb 'again.' 'Jesus will come back as He came the first time.' And notice that BDAG also says this word communicates one more time, again, not again and again and again, but a once more, one-time event.

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 paralambán, BDAG defines paralambán 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. Notice what The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says: pros with the accusative, this is very common and 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 how can we sort of summarize a little bit out of verse 3? Christ will return to spatially remove believers and take them to be with Him. 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 BDAG defines hopou as a specific place. BDAG says 'a specific location in the present and is used in connection with the designation of a specific place.'

So how do we sum all of verse 3 up? We can summarize it this way: 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.?

And then let's take a look at one more here. Notice verse 4, Jesus says, "and you know the way where I am going," "going" is the verb *hupagō*?, translated "going." BDAG says it's used especially of Christ and His going to the Father. It's used especially of Christ and His going to the Father and 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.

In fact, one of the verses that BDAG quotes there is John 16:5 which says, "But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'" 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.

Let's put the whole thing together, let's see if we can make sense of this jigsaw puzzle. What's the whole thing teaching? Christ would 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 spatially 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.

If everything that we have said so far is accurate, then this is, and this was made reference to in the prior session, this is brand new teaching. 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: "But here in John 14 the Lord gives a new and unique revelation. He speaks of something that no prophet had promised or even could promise. Where is it written that the Messiah would come and instead of gathering His saints into an earthly Jerusalem would take them to the Father's house, to the place where He is. This is something new.?"

It shouldn't surprise us to discover that the rapture in seed form here, because remember what Dr. Chafer said about the Upper Room Discourse: "the Upper Room Discourse in which the above passage is found is the seed plot of that form of doctrine which is later developed in the epistles including the rapture.?"

Well, we've got rapture deniers, don't we? We've got people that will get on the internet, they'll get on blogs and they'll tell you the rapture is an unbiblical doctrine. In fact, they'll even call people that believe in the rapture "the rapture cult." Disparaging type comments! And I'm going to shift the burden of proof to them. If this is not the rapture, John 14:1-4, then you tell me what it's talking about! And I have never found much of a convincing answer they have given. So let me give you, by way of our outline here, we're in Roman numeral III, where we're going to answer the non-rapture arguments. There's about five of them and here's what the rapture deniers say as an alternative.

The first inadequate alternative is they say this is just talking about the believer's death. I mean, when we die Jesus comes and gets us. And I'm going to show you in a minute that I don't think that's what it's talking about at all. Now I realize that this is given at funerals and things like that, and usually at a funeral it's not the best time to get in a theological argument with somebody, so be careful how you use this information.

But the fact of the matter is, I don't think this is talking about the believer's death at all. Now why would I say that? Because Jesus says in verse 3 the adverb "again." Remember what we learned about that adverb "again" as defined in BDAG: it specifically says, I've got the underlined phrase "once more." Jesus is coming back once more, He's not coming back again and again and again and again and again and again, which would be the case if He came and got the believer and took them to heaven every time a Christian died.

Beyond that, as best as I understand the Bible, Jesus doesn't come and take us to heaven when we die, that's the job of the angels.

Luke 16:22 says this, "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom".

Beyond that, Jesus seems to remain in heaven when the believer dies. Remember the first martyr of the church age, a man named Stephen. Acts 7:56 says Stephen was dying as his body and soul were separating. It says this: "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." Where is Jesus as Stephen is dying? He's standing at the right hand of God, He's not coming back to fetch or get Stephen.

Beyond that, Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5:8 says, "absent from the body" is to be what? "at home with the Lord." [2 Corinthians 5:8, "we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."] It's the believer that goes to the Lord upon death and not vice versa. It's not the Lord coming to the believer, it's the believer going to the Lord. So use of this as describing the death of the believer, although that's popular funeral preaching, I don't think it really works.

All right, what's their second option? They say this has nothing to do with the rapture, this is talking about the believer's salvation. So every time a human being trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ and is saved, what they say is Jesus is coming and getting that Christian. Well, again we have a major problem with that, and that's that pesky adverb "again," which you'll recall BDAG defined as "once more." Jesus is not coming back again and again and again and again and again, repeatedly, as would be the case if He comes and gets every believer or individual that becomes a believer because they become saved. He is coming back once more, it's not talking about multiple events here, it's talking about a singular event.

And you'll notice that all of the language gets spiritualized and de-literalized if this is just talking about salvation. You have to start allegorizing the specific localized language. You have to allegorize "Father's house," "dwelling place," "a place" "where I am," "where I go" all that gets kind of symbolized, it sounds a lot more like the Augustinian school of interpretation. And that's not our view, we believe this is speaking of literal things. We take prophecy literally.

All right, what's your third option? The third option is this is talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When Jesus says, "I will come again and receive you to Myself," people say the only thing this is really talking about is Jesus is going to come out of the tomb and once he comes out of the tomb He's going to meet and have a private meeting with the disciples. John 14:18-20, Jesus predicted He would do this, by the way. He says, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. [19] After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. [20] In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." So I will come out of the grave and meet you. Now He did do that, didn't He?

John 20:19 puts it this way: "So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." The same thing happens in John 20:26 eight days later. The same thing happens in John 21:1 where He manifested Himself to them on the Sea of Tiberias. [John 20:26, "After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." John 21:1, "After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested Himself in this way."]

So many people say John 14:1-4, that's all it's talking about, but don't see a rapture in that passage, all that's talking about is Jesus meeting the disciples after He comes out of the grave. But you see, there's a lot of problems with that view. For one thing, in John 14:2 He says "I go." Now "I go" you'll recall is the ascension, it's the Greek word *poreuomai*, "I go," we defined that earlier as the ascension you will recall. And then in verse 3, Jesus says in verse 2 "I will go," the ascension, verse 3 He says, "I will come again," now notice that verse 3 follows verse 2. See, you didn't know how easy this Bible study stuff was, did you? I mean, you came all the way to this conference to learn that verse 3 follows verse 2. And in verse 3 He says, "I will come again," so therefore the coming again in verse 3 is after the ascension.

Problem: When did the resurrection happen? Before the ascension or after the ascension? Before the ascension. And this, the order that it's laid out indicates that His coming is after the ascension. We have a chronological problem here with this. And if this all weren't enough you have again this problem with the adverb "again." Remember what BDAG said: again means to repeat in the same or similar manner. When Jesus rose from the dead, did He come from heaven? No He didn't, He came out of the grave. And

again, as we defined it earlier it means that Jesus is coming just like He left, He came from heaven, He's coming back; He left to heaven, He's coming back from heaven. That really doesn't fit the resurrection where He didn't come from heaven, He came out of the grave.

And even beyond that there's a problem with the preposition 'to,' pros, remember what we said about that, what does 'to' or pros mean? It denotes movement towards, spatially to or towards someone or something expressing movement. There was no spatial movement when Jesus came to the disciples, He did not somehow spatially move them to Himself. In fact, He went to where they were.

So you look at all of the details and the devil is always in the details, isn't he? This can't be talking about the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. So what is their fourth option? They say well, this is the coming, it's not the rapture, John 14:1-4 is not the rapture, this instead is the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. You know the story in Acts 2, how these Jews were in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, the Holy Spirit had a surprise for them, 3,000 of them are saved and this is the beginning of the church age. The Holy Spirit is poured out upon the church.

People say well, John 14:1-4 is just a short term prediction about what would take place shortly thereafter on the day of Pentecost. But again, the devil is in the details. Notice again verse 3, the adverb 'again.' Remember how 'again' was defined? The coming again of Christ would be like His first coming. He came the first time bodily so how's He coming to get the disciples? Bodily. Was there any bodily appearing of Jesus in Acts 2? No there wasn't.

Beyond that you've got a problem with this preposition again, 'to' or pros. Remember how we defined that earlier; what does that mean? It denotes movement towards spatially to or towards someone or something expressing movement. In Acts 2 where was the special movement? I mean, how were the disciples suddenly pulled somewhere, spatially drawn somewhere because of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

And there's also a problem with what Jesus says there in verse 3, John 14:3, 'I will and receive you to Myself,' the Holy Spirit did not receive believers in Acts 2, rather, believers received what? The Holy Spirit. The whole chronology is backwards according to this view that this is just the day of Pentecost. In fact, Acts 2:38, Peter says receive the Holy Spirit. [Acts 2:38, 'Peter said to them, 'Repent and each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.']

It's not the Acts 2 view, the details just don't fit. Well, that just leaves one more, and people sort of grudgingly say well, okay, it's the rapture, but it's not the pre-trib rapture, it's just the rapture. Now when you get into this subject of the tribulation and the rapture what you discover is there's many views on this subject. In fact, sometimes you feel like you're in the tribulation itself trying to navigate your way through all these views.

But the view that we represent is the pre-tribulation rapture where the church is going to be removed before the tribulation period even begins. Then you have mid-tribulationists who believe that the rapture will occur in the middle of the tribulation. Then you have post-tribulationists who say the rapture will occur at the end of the tribulation period. And if that wasn't complicated enough somebody comes along with something called the pre-wrath rapture; I call it three-quarters rapture because the church is supposed to be here for three quarters (roughly) of the tribulation period before the wrath of God starts.

So people say okay, it's the rapture but it's not pretribulationist, it's post or pre-wrath or mid or whatever. What did Jesus say? 'Do not let your heart be troubled.' The rapture teaching is designed to bring comfort to the believer. Can I ask you a question? Which of these views comforts you? I mean, if you're telling me that I've got to endure 42 months of hell on earth or three quarters of hell on earth, then assuming my head is not cut off by the antichrist, then I have the hope of being raptured I may be a little old fashioned but I find no comfort in that whatsoever. What comforts me is the first view, that I will escape the tribulation period and the wrath of God. I mean, why would you say 'comfort you with these words' if we are going to be plunged into the wrath of God. It just doesn't fit, it doesn't make any sense.

And remember what also Jesus said in John 14:3, He says, "I will come again and receive you to Myself". Remember what we said that meant? That meant imminence, any moment this event called the rapture could take place. All of those verses I have on the screen in the epistles, as you research them you'll see that the rapture is always held out as the very next event on the prophetic horizon. I am not looking for the antichrist. I am looking for Jesus Christ!

Now question, which of these views teaches imminence? Which of these views teaches that Jesus Christ can come back today. Mr. Mid-tribulationist, can Jesus come back today? No, because forty-two months of the tribulation period must transpire before the hope of the rapture can occur. Mr. Post-tribulationist, can Jesus come back today? No, seven years of tribulation must manifest itself before Jesus can return to rapture the church. Mr. three-quarters rapturist, pre-wrath rapturist, can Jesus Christ come back today? No, three-quarters of the tribulation period must take place before Jesus Christ can come back. Mr. pre-tribulationist, can Jesus Christ come back today? Yes.

You know, John Walvoord, the great prophecy scholar at Dallas Seminary had a plaque in his office on his wall, and this is what it said: Perhaps today. Do you know that we are the only view that says "Perhaps today." The mid-tribulationist says at best perhaps in forty-two months. The post-tribulationist says perhaps in seven years. We say perhaps today, and that fits, does it not, so well Christ's teaching on imminency, as Paul develops it in the Upper Room Discourse.

Now the second to last view has big problems, that' post-tribulationism. Post-tribulationism says the church is caught up at the end of the tribulation, only to be brought back down. If that's true, then what is the purpose of the heavenly dwellings that He's building. If we're to be caught up only to be brought back down and we have no seven year destiny to fulfill with Christ in heaven, than why is He busy preparing these temporary heavenly dwellings? It doesn't make any sense.

Hal Lindsey, in a very good book he wrote, called The Rapture, puts it this way: Since he says, "He is going to come in order that we may be with Him where He is, we would have to be with Him here on the earth, according to post-tribulationism." Do you see the problem? The dwelling place in the Father's house would be unused. This makes Jesus' whole promise ridiculous. Why would He speak of preparing a place for us in the Father's house if He didn't mean that His return would take us there?

Every view you go through that people throw out, believer's death, believer's salvation, Christ's resurrection, the coming of the Holy Spirit, non pre-tribulation rapture, every view they create or come up with has more problems than simply believing Christ's straight forward statement. John 14:1, "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 to 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."

I hope you leave this session tonight with absolute conviction that the rapture is on the horizon. I can't promise it will happen in our lifetime; I pray it will. But it is a glorious event that the Lord brings to our attention. We've looked at the preliminary reason why a rapture understanding of these verses is true. We've done an exegesis in John 14:1-4, and we've answered the non-rapture arguments.

You know, the biggest question is are you ready for Him. If it were to occur today, tonight, would you go. And of course, as was expressed so eloquently in the prior session, it's the single condition of faith alone in Christ alone, which not only saves but it ushers us into the glorious promises of God where we learn that there's a better world coming and there's hope beyond this life. And as bad as this world can get and is getting we live with any moment expectation that Jesus could come back at any moment for His church.