

Read also 2 Samuel 7:18-28a

Sometimes my four-year-old granddaughter says to me, “Where is God? Where is Jesus? Why isn’t Jesus here?”

She asks me harder questions than you do.

“He lives in heaven,” I tell her.

“Where’s heaven?” she asks.

I give her a deep, theological answer. “I don’t know.”

The disciples were the same. When Jesus told them, *I am going to leave you and you can’t come – but you will come eventually, and you know the way*, they replied, “We don’t know the way! How could we know the way?!?”

I feel their pain. Do you?

Imagine yourself sitting at the kitchen table for dinner with Jesus; at your own table – today, after church, and He says this to you. READ John 14:1-4

Now that’s almost too good to be true. It’s like the Flower Mound couple who just last week won a \$500,000 dream home in Colleyville when their \$100 raffle ticket was drawn for St. Jude’s Hospital fundraising benefit.¹

Now, your dream house is built for you in heaven, by Jesus - Again, let your imagination go. The word for “your dwelling place” is broad and loosely defined – it can mean everything from dwelling to mansion to apartment to building to heavenly abode. The Bible doesn’t tell us more, but John, the writer of this passage also had a vision of the city, which he wrote in Revelation. He described the city as:

- Radiant
- Like a rare jewel
- Filled with precious materials like jasper, gold, emeralds, and sapphire
- Surrounded by a wall with twelve gates, which are never shut because there is no need for protection as there are no enemies and no evil
- The city is huge – 1,500 miles square

These are all metaphors to describe something indescribably beautiful. Would you like to live there?

Have you ever had one of those salesmen call you up wanting to sell you a place they describe as similarly luxurious? I have. And, there’s always a catch.

¹<http://www.nbcdfw.com/the-scene/real-estate/Meet-The-Lucky-Winners-of-the-St-Jude-Dream-Home-124604124.html>, accessed 6/28/2011.

For the family who won the dream home there was a catch. They have to pay the property taxes before they can move in.

With Jesus' promise there's a catch too. Do you know what it is? Did you catch it?

⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*"

Ah, so Jesus Himself is the catch.

But why would that be such a problem?

Well, this conversation occurs the night before Jesus' death. He explains that He is going to give His life for them – that is the way of Jesus. That gives Him the right, the position, and the authority to go build our homes; and bring us with Him.

We can't do it for ourselves; we are too weak; unable. He was able, and He dared.

So Jesus says to us:

⁷ If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

But, Philip says something to Jesus that is completely out of order. He said something that probably made Jesus want to go get a job in a stock room and give up this Savior business.

⁸ Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

The reason it is wrong is because Philip is saying, "Jesus, just teach us about God."

This is like saying Jesus is just a good moral teacher. This is the most foolish thing to say, because it says, "I am ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher but I don't accept His claim to be God."

But here's how Jesus described Himself: "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all that He Himself is doing" (Jn. 5:20); and "For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will" (5:21); and "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son" (5:22).

There is total unity with the Father. The Father gives work through the Son; God "shows out" through Jesus.

No other religious teacher or leader has made this claim.

- Mohammed never made that claim
- Joseph Smith never made that claim

- Moses never made that claim. Rather, Moses pointed to Jesus because he saw “Him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:24-27).

So, with great patience,

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

C. S. Lewis said this:

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic . . . or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse . . .

What about you? Let's go back to that dinner table conversation with Jesus. He is talking to you and says:

¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

C. S. Lewis advises:

You can shut him up for a fool . . . or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us."²

Jesus says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.”

And know that your future is bright. For while this world has a beginning and an end for you, your real home lasts forever. While this world has the shadow of beauty, your real home is as much greater in beauty . . .

as you are to your own shadow, or
as a picture is to holding in your hand a real, sweet, juicy piece of fruit.

In the book series, *Chronicles of Narnia*, Narnia finally ends. The animals and children crossed into a new land and one of them (the Unicorn) cried:

“I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now.”³

Aslan, the lion, who represents Christ, met them there. He said, “The dream is ended: this is the morning.”

²C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 40-41.

³C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, p. 171.

And, they learned it was only the beginning of the real story. All our life in this world (which seems so real), when we get there with God's Son – at last we will find that our lives here have only been the cover [of the book] and the title page, and that with Jesus we will begin Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has ever read; which goes on forever; in which every chapter is better than the one before.

AMEN