

# When will we be with Him?

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Let us turn to **John 7: 32-36**

## **John 7: 32-36**

- 32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.
- 33 Therefore Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me.
- 34 "You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come."
- 35 The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?
- 36 "What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"

Why did the Lord Jesus speak to the Jews in this way: that they would not find Him and would not be able to go to where He was going? Was the Lord Jesus addressing all the people there or was He targeting a certain group of people? Is it so that all would not be able to go where He was going? Were there people there who could go to where He would be going?

From **the gospel of John**, we do see that the Lord Jesus Himself told His disciples that they would be where He would go.

**John 14: 1-3**

- 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 and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

The Lord Jesus told the Jews: "*where I am, you cannot come*" but here, He told His disciples: "*where I am, there you may be also*". What did He mean by this?

The Lord Jesus wanted His disciples to know that there would come a time when He would leave them physically. His time on earth would come to an end in terms of His physical presence with them during the time of His ministry on earth. At the event of the cross, He would die for the sins of the whole world and so, He would leave this world.

But He told them: "*Do not let your heart be troubled. I will go away but I am going away to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.*" So here, the emphasis is different. The Lord Jesus was telling His disciples: "Do not be troubled, do not be disheartened. You will be with Me. *I go to prepare a place for you.*"

So what does this mean? Why is it for some people the Lord Jesus would say: "*where I am, you cannot come*"; for some other people, He would say: "*where I am, there you may be also*"?

In **verse 1**, we see the Lord Jesus saying: "*Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.*"

This is the context. There is a condition that will render us such that we can be with the Lord.

Not everyone will be with the Lord in the sense of being in His presence, having deep fellowship with Him, being in a context that will be very meaningful for us in eternity.

“...believe in God, believe also in Me” – Why did not the Lord Jesus just say “believe in God”? Why did He say: “believe in God, believe also in Me”?

Bear in mind the Lord Jesus was addressing the Jews and basically, the Jews would easily say, “I believe in God” and they thought that they truly believed in God. But the Lord Jesus helped them to understand, “If you truly believe in God, you will believe in Me.” The Lord Jesus was sent by the Father into this world and He represented the Father: He spoke on His behalf, He revealed His glory, He communicated the intentions of God; and He said: “He who has seen Me has seen the Father”.

He who rejects the Lord Jesus would reject God. There were Jews who thought they believed in God and yet they did not believe in the Lord Jesus. And we see that in the context, the Lord Jesus makes it quite clear why they did not believe in Him. The reason basically was: something was wrong in their hearts. Their belief in God was not the right kind: it was a self-centred kind of belief. They were seeking for something for themselves rather than submitting to God and His ways.

There were times when they believed in the Lord Jesus, but it was a wavering kind of belief. They could believe for a while and when the Lord Jesus said something they did not like, then that belief would fade. They would follow Him for a while but when His demands were strong, they would turn away. So they thought they believed in God but in reality, they did not because what the Lord Jesus said and what the Lord Jesus did were from God and they were in fact rejecting God and His ways.

This can also be true of us today. We say we believe in God and we also say we believe in the Lord Jesus. But in reality, we could be doing many things, living our lives in such a way that we do not really believe in Him: We are not properly following Him, obeying Him, doing the things consistent with what we say we believe – that is not truly believing in Him.

But of course, we can genuinely believe in Him and also not believe in Him because there are different depths, qualities, of belief. Even the disciples could at times doubt, wonder. Thomas was doubtful (*Did the Lord Jesus really rise from the dead?*) until the Lord Jesus appeared to him.

In our lives, we may also from time to time doubt in terms of our walk with God, our relationship with Him, even though we sincerely believe. Let us consider our faith more seriously. Let us not treat it lightly: “I have received the Lord Jesus as my Saviour, I have been born of the Spirit; I am on my way to heaven; all is well.”

We need to go deeper than that and consider the meaning of a true belief in God and belief in the Lord Jesus. Believing in God is not just a recognition that God exists or even that God is good, or that God has provided a salvation plan for forgiveness. Believing all this is still not sufficient. Believing that the Lord Jesus is the Saviour of the world is also not sufficient.

The belief that is revealed in the Scriptures has, at its heart, a commitment: a commitment to follow God and His ways; a commitment to live for Him, to walk with Him, to do the things that are pleasing to Him.

If we are lacking in this direction of our lives, then there is a grave danger in our beliefs.

A belief that is not strong in commitment to God will render us very easily a victim of deception by the evil one and we can easily fall in times of spiritual battles.

That is because without a sufficient commitment to God and His ways, the evil one has much room to work in our hearts to give us many alternatives so that we can easily excuse ourselves and say, "I believe in God; I am a Christian; I will go to heaven" and yet in reality, we are absorbed by the things of the world, we are following the ways of the world.

The Lord said: "...I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself". This is on condition that we believe in Him: we are committed to Him, we will follow Him. We will be with Him only if our hearts are with Him – there is that oneness with Him; there is identification with Him: His values, His direction, His purposes. The more our hearts are one with the Lord, the deeper our fellowship with Him will be, and the more meaningful it will be when we leave this world and meet Him.

**John 8: 21** tells us that there is a different group of people that the Lord Jesus addressed in contrast to His disciples.

**John 8: 21**

Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."

So in this context, the Lord Jesus was telling this group of people: "...you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come." He said: "...unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

So our relationship with the Lord has to do with the degree and quality of our love for Him, our preparedness to walk with Him, to do His will.

If our hearts are not with Him, we will be separated from Him. And there are different degrees of separation, just as there are different degrees of closeness. How close we are to the Lord in fellowship depends on how deeply our hearts are one with Him; so too, there are different degrees of separation from Him. We may love the Lord, but if it is not sufficiently deep, then we will also not enter into a deep fellowship with Him.

In **John 14: 19**, the Lord Jesus made another statement that is helpful for us to consider in this context. He said:

**John 14: 19**

"After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also..."

The Lord Jesus said: "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also..." So here the Lord Jesus contrasted the world with the disciples. He said: "the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me". So this tells us that there is a separation. There are two groups of people involved: the world and the disciples.

An interesting aspect to consider is to notice that the word "will" ("you *will* see Me") is in italics in the New American Standard Bible, which means that it is not present in the original Greek but the translators put it there because they think that that will help to communicate the meaning. So if you read it without the word "will", you will read it as: "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you see Me; because I live, you will live also..."

From all that I can see in the context and the meaning that is intended, it is very likely that both meanings are possible and appropriate. Whether the word “will” is present or absent, the meaning is helpful and important for us to ponder over. And in terms of the reality that the Scriptures tell us, both aspects are true.

What I mean is if you remove the word “will”, the meaning basically would mean: *"After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you see Me"*. That means: “In that situation, when I leave this world physically, the world will not see Me but you see Me”. That means in the situation where the Lord Jesus was physically taken away from them, the world looking at Him in the physical realm would not see Him because He would not be in this physical world, He would have left the physical world.

But He told His disciples: *"But you see Me"*. Even though I have left physically from this earth, *you see Me*.” How? In the spiritual realm: In the spiritual realm, those who love the Lord Jesus will see Him even though physically, He is not there.

And this is what He told the disciples: *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

The Lord Jesus told His disciples: “I will be leaving this world but *I am with you always*”. And one of the aspects that is relevant, applicable in terms of the Lord Jesus being with us is the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. The Holy Spirit will come and He will dwell in our hearts and He will reveal the Lord Jesus to us. We will know Him in our hearts, we will see Him. The Holy Spirit will bring to our remembrance the things that the Lord Jesus had spoken.

So if we believe, if we are committed to Him, if we love Him, if we walk with Him, we will always see Him. He will never be separated from us.

But to the world, they would not see Him because they looked at it from the physical perspective. He was there as a man, He had died. They would not see Him anymore.

So this is one aspect that we can consider: Are we living our lives such that although the Lord Jesus is not physically with us, we actually behold Him in our lives each day, we go through life each day walking with Him, appreciating Him, listening to Him, following His example; He is real in us, He dwells in our hearts?

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”. “...to live is Christ” – Christ was alive in Paul each day, each situation that he was going through. If we live our lives in that way then we will find life very meaningful and we can go through each day rejoicing, knowing the Lord’s presence, His enabling, and we will be able to live a life that is pleasing to God, and we can overcome the evil one.

But there is another aspect that we can consider and that is: "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also... You will see Me not just in the spiritual realm. You will see Me because you will be with Me in heaven. After you die, after you leave this world, you will be with Me, you will see Me."

The Lord Jesus told the criminal on the cross: "Today you shall be with Me in paradise." The criminal on the cross was going to die physically. The Lord Jesus assured him: "Because of your faith, because of your preparedness to repent, to trust Me and to follow Me, you shall be with Me in paradise".



And this will be true of those who believe in Him: "...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 this aspect of it can refer to the future: After we leave this world, we will be with the Lord.

So the question is: Which group do we belong to – the world or the disciples, and the degree of that meaning?

If our hearts are very much captured by the world, even though we are believers, it will be a problem: The quality of our lives on earth will not be rich, our knowledge of the Lord will be superficial, our fellowship with Him will be something that is neither pleasing to the Lord nor very satisfying to ourselves. Just like the church in Laodicea – lukewarm – and the Lord Jesus said: "I will spew you out of My mouth". It is something that is distasteful to the Lord.

He is the Lord. If we acknowledge Him as the Lord, let us live for Him as it should be: with all our hearts, with all that we have. And if we do that, then we will behold Him each moment, each day of our lives, and life will be very rich and very meaningful. And we can look forward to the time when we leave this world.

Whether we are young or whether we are old, one day we will leave this world. What will it be? What kind of relationship will we have with the Lord? That depends on whether our heart is with the world or our heart is with the Lord: what is the quality of that oneness? That would determine the meaningfulness of our time on earth as well as our time in eternity.

Notice that in the Scriptures, the term "eternal life" refers to both our present time on earth as well as in eternity.

“He who has the Son has the life” – we have eternal life when we have the Son now: when we believe in Him, when we walk with Him, we have eternal life now.

But the Scriptures also tell us if we are faithful to Him, in the life to come, in the world to come, we will have eternal life – that eternal life in a different context, in heaven, in eternity. And God will grant to us a very meaningful life in eternity. But that quality will depend on how we live our lives now: the depth of our oneness with Him, the quality of our identification with Him, the degree to which we will obey Him and walk in His ways; how far have we learnt to deny ourselves, to discard the world and to follow the Lord.

So then let us come before the Lord and ask Him to help us to ponder over the quality of our belief in Him.

Are we truly identified with Him? Do we really seek what is meaningful to Him?

Or are we still very much preoccupied with many things in this world – there are longings in our hearts, there are desires and attractions that affect us so much? If so, we need to come to the Lord, to seek His forgiveness, His teaching, His enabling, that we may deal with these areas such that the Lord will have the freedom to have fellowship with us in a meaningful way each day and He will prepare a good place for us in heaven.