

Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

By the Rev. Dr. Harry Wendt, Founder of Crossways International
(Sola Publishing, Edited Version © 2023 H. Wendt)



Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book):
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary):

John 14:23-31

Year C - Pentecost, Text: John 14:23-31
Year C - Easter 6, Text: John 14:23-29

Editor's Note: *Since Dr. Wendt did not write a commentary on this text, this commentary was written by John B. King, Jr.*

As a text for Pentecost, John 14:23-31 provides a meager description of the Spirit's coming and work. Such words would have been confusing to Jesus' disciples since the description is so thin and since the events of Pentecost had yet to happen. . (Fortunately, we can supplement this text with the account of Pentecost in Acts 2.) Nevertheless, there are three verses here that provide a partial description of the Spirit's work, especially if we take them in reverse order:

"You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you (John 14:28).'"

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you (John 14:26)."

"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him (John 14:23)."

Of these verses John 14:28 provides the sequence and thus the purpose of the Spirit's work. Jesus Christ will ascend to the Father's right hand and then He and the Father will pour the Holy Spirit out upon the Church. Since the Father and the Son will become present to the Church through the mediation of the Holy Spirit, Jesus says that He will "come" after He goes away.

John 14:26 hints that the Spirit will be sent by both the Father and the Son since the Father will send the Spirit in the name of the Son. Moreover, it also refers to the work that the Spirit will do among the faithful. In particular, the Spirit will be a Helper who will teach them and bring to their remembrance the words of Christ, perhaps so that the New Testament Scriptures can be written. Since there is no reference to the Spirit's role in conversion, the work of the Spirit described here is His work within the Christian community.

Finally, John 14:23 says that if the disciples love Christ and keep His word, then the Father will love them and will come with the Son to make their home with them, presumably through the mediation of the Holy Spirit. This is significant since God's greatest gift to believers is His indwelling presence with them.

A couple of comments are in order to relate this passage to broader Trinitarian theology. Within the Trinity, it is the Spirit's role to be the bond of loving union between the Father and the Son. Hence, when the Spirit comes into our life, the Father and the Son come with Him. Conversely, we are brought into the communion of the Holy Trinity through the same Spirit who connects the Father and the Son.

As for making His home with us, this is a significant statement since home is ideally the place where we are at peace and at rest. When God makes His home with us and shares His presence with us, we have both the certainty and the security of our salvation. Since it is the Holy Spirit who causes God to dwell in us, and us in God; it is the Holy Spirit who causes us to know the certainty and security of our salvation.

However, this reference to home takes on a broader significance in Trinitarian theology. Since the persons of the Trinity dynamically interpenetrate, each enters the others as guest, and each receives the others as host. Consequently, the triune God is a hospitable and home-making God since the three persons of the Trinity receive and host each other eternally. And since God is hospitable by nature, He is hospitable to us through Christ. This means that God makes His home with and in us, and conversely, He makes us at home in Himself.

Through the Spirit, therefore, we come to know that God is our eternal home who cannot be shaken. And from broader Trinitarian theology, we discern the reason for this. God is a home for us precisely because He is eternally at home with Himself.

