

“I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS”
[I AM SERIES—[MT 28:18-20](#)]

I. CHRIST IS *REALLY* WITH US

A. ARGUMENTS RAISED AGAINST THIS FACT

1. Jesus is in heaven—not here
2. This is just metaphorical language—symbolic but not real
3. The Holy Spirit is with us—not Jesus Himself

B. FIRST ARGUMENT—JESUS IS IN HEAVEN—NOT HERE WITH US

1. Biblical issue

- a. He *did* ascend—and is present with God the Father
- b. What the Bible does *not* say
 1. That His spiritual body is spatially limited
 2. That He is not—or cannot—be here too
- c. Such views present several difficulties
 1. Say His divinity is still limited by His earthly corporality
 2. Ignore the fact He now has a spiritual body

Our bodies will be like His glorious body—[Phil 3:21](#)

Our bodies will be spiritual—[Cor 15](#)
 3. Argue against His promise to be with us *always*
 4. Compartmentalize the divine nature of the Trinity
 - God is omnipresent—as the whole Trinity
 - The Father, the Holy Spirit—and **the Son**
- d. Biblically consistency says He is present *both* there and here
 - *Physically* present in heaven with the Father
 - And *spiritually* present here with us

2. Scientific issue

- a. Limitations and scope of science
 1. Cannot prove or disprove God’s supernatural attributes
 2. Traditionally argues against metaphysical impossibilities
 - what is not perceptible or measurable does not exist

3. But recent scientific research has begun to challenge this

b. Metaphysical possibility of different dimensions

1. How many dimensions do we have—in traditional science?

- 3-dimensions—length, width, height—is that all?
- What about the 4th dimension—time?

2. What do recent scientists say?

a. Since early 20th century—they have postulated many more

b. Efforts to develop a **Theory of Everything (TOE)**

1. Effort—to explain in one mathematical model how the fundamental forces of nature and matter are integrated

a. Four forces of nature

1. **Gravity**

2. **Electromagnetism**

3. **Weak force**—deals with emission of electrons that produce radioactivity

4. **Strong force**—binding force that holds protons and neutrons together in atoms

b. Matter—the sub-atomic components

1. **Quarks**—combine hadrons, such as protons and neutrons in atomic nuclei

2. **Leptons**—sub-atomic particles with six flavors, including electrons, muons, and neutrinos—not subject to the strong force

3. **Gauge bosons**—particles that carry the basic forces of nature—gluons, bosons, and photons

2. Basic idea:

Unify the theory of relativity with sub-atomic electromagnetic theories of quantum mechanics—to determine a unified theory of quantum gravity

c. This has led to ‘string’ and ‘super-string’ theories

d. Each formula requires postulation of more dimensions

○ 6-D theories—early 20th century

- Combined work of Theodore Kaluza (Pole) and Oskar Klein (Swede)

- 3-D invisible spheres curled up within the 3-D visible spheres we see
- 10-D theories—mid 20th century
 - Eugenio Calabi (U. of Penn) and Shing Yung Tau (Harvard)
 - 6-D geometrical shapes wrapped in 3-D reality we see—plus time
- M-Theory—since the 1990s
 - 11 dimensions—variation of 10-D theories, adds unifying dimension
 - 11th dimension—once called ‘membrane’

3. Quantum physics—opens new views about reality

a. Basic idea

1. Energy is not continuous, but comes in small but discrete units—called quanta.
2. The elementary particles behave both like particles *and* like waves.
3. The movement of these particles is inherently random.
4. It is *physically impossible* to know both the **position** and **momentum** of a particle at the same time—the more precisely one is known, the less precise our measurement of the other is.
5. The atomic world is *nothing* like the world we live in.

b. Invisibility—Science operates on faith in the unseen!

Heb 11:1—*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen.*

c. Conclusions

1. Increasingly science seems to suggest
 - What we see is *not* the ultimate reality
 - What we see is *not* what we get
2. All this was unknown at the beginning of the 20th century!
3. Science now enables us to know/ do things once ‘impossible’
 - Flight—and walking on the moon
 - Seeing events instantaneously 1000s of miles away
 - Telephones—and phones with pictures!
4. But this is just the beginning
 - Human understanding and science are very limited
 - It is *not* scientifically impossible for God omnipresent
 - *Nor* scientifically impossible for Jesus to be ubiquitous

B. SECOND ARGUMENT—THIS IS JUST METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE

1. What we might mean by this—“Christ is with us” figuratively

- He is in the hearts and minds of believers
- His teachings and legacy continue to influence society
- He works through the words and actions of His followers
- He *is* the Church—it is the body of Christ on earth
- His memory is kept alive by our acts of remembrance

2. All these are true—but they fall short of His promise

3. Some of the problem is rooted in views about the Lord's Supper

a. Conflict over the *real* presence

1. We reject Catholic-Lutheran view of local physical presence

- Catholic—transubstantiation
- Lutheran—consubstantiation

2. Luther used 'ubiquity of Christ' to defend real presence

3. Positions on these two issues

a. Reformed theologians

1. Affirmed 'spiritual/true'—rejected 'real' presence

2. Rejected 'ubiquity'—to deny 'real presence'

3. Except Heidelberg Catechism

- Affirmed true presence
- But also affirmed ubiquity

b. Baptists

1. We reject 'presence' language—*no* sacramentalism

2. It is a 'symbol'—'thanksgiving'—'memorial'

3. But this does not necessitate rejecting **ubiquity**

- Luther was right about Christ's **ubiquity**
- His application of it to the Supper was wrong
- His opponents rejected it for the wrong reason

4. Problem—not taking Christ's presence seriously

a. The Lord *is* present at the Lord's Supper

b. But this is not *by virtue of* the Supper itself

c. He is *always* present—"I am with you always"

d. But maybe we *should* sense it more at the Supper

C. THIRD ARGUMENT—THE HOLY SPIRIT IS WITH US—NOT JESUS

1. Jesus' **promise** of the Holy Spirit—**John 14** and **15**

a. The Father would send the Holy Spirit

- In response to Jesus' request—**14:16**
- Sent in Jesus' name—**14:26**
- This was the same as Jesus sending Him—**15:26**

b. What Jesus said the Spirit will do

- Abide forever—**14:16**
- Helper—**14:16**
- Spirit of Truth—**14:17**
- Will teach us—**14:26**
- Convict: sin, righteousness, judgment—**15:8**

2. Jesus **did go away**—for three reasons

a. To be with the Father—He returned home—**14:12**

b. So we could do even greater works than He—**14:12**

c. So that He could send the Holy Spirit—**15:7**

3. But He also **promised to be with us**—[“always” in **Mt 28:20**]

a. This is promised **six times** in **John 14**

- **v v 1-4**
- **v 18**—the main promise—[begins here]
- **v 19**
- **v 21**
- **v 23**
- **v 28**

II. CHRIST'S PROMISES TO BE WITH US

A. MAIN PROMISE

- **14:18**—*I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you.*

1. WHAT THIS IS **NOT**—His promise to send the Holy Spirit

a. He already promised this—**14:16-17**

b. But the Holy Spirit did not *replace* Christ

c. The basic distinction

1. Jesus continues to be **with us**

2. The Holy Spirit is **with** us—and **in** us

- *He abides with you and will be in you—14:17*

3. But the Spirit's main relationship is **in** us

- **I Cor 3:16**—*Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells **in** you?*
- **I Cor 6:19**—*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?*

4. The Spirit's **in** us never *replaces* Christ **with** us

2. WHAT THIS IS NOT—His promise to return at the end of the age

a. It is not in the apocalyptic context and language of **Mt 24**

b. It fits start of this discourse—**14:1-4**—**second promise**

- To go to the Father's house and prepare a place
- To return and personally receive us to Himself
- To be with us and show us the way to the Father

c. This leads to the **third promise**—to go—and come back

14:28—*You heard that I said to you 'I go away and I will come to you'*

B. FOURTH PROMISE

- **14:19**—*the world will no longer see me, but you will see Me*

1. This explains the metaphysical problem

- a. He is with us—but not physically seen by worldly eyes
- b. We see Him with the eyes of faith

2. No real conflict with **16:16**—*you will no longer see me*

- a. That deals with His earthly role—fulfilling righteousness
- b. He finished this task—with His glorification
- c. We no longer see Him in *that* role
- d. But we do 'see' Him in His other roles [see below]

C. FIFTH PROMISE—HIS DISCLOSURE TO US

14:21—*He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and **will disclose Myself to him.***

D. SIXTH PROMISE—HE AND THE FATHER WILL ABIDE WITH US

14:23—*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.*

1. With the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost
2. This affirms the **full presence of the Trinity** with us!

III. PROOF THAT HE IS WITH US

A. HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

1. The Father—He said He would be with Israel—and He was
 - Shekinah glory—radiated from Moses' face
 - Fiery pillar by night and cloud by day
 - Miracles of deliverance and provision
2. The Son—God said He would send the Messiah—and He did
 - Miracle of the Incarnation
 - Shekinah of the Transfiguration
 - Miracle of the Resurrection
3. The Spirit
 - The miracle of the Glorification—for the Son to send the Spirit
 - The miracle of Pentecost

B. EXISTENTIAL EVIDENCE

1. Salvation
 - a. Is not just a historical fact and intellectual response
 - b. We are drawn **by** the Spirit—but not **to** the Spirit
 - c. We surrender to Christ Himself
 - d. We respond to Christ's invitation to walk *with* Him
2. Discipleship
 - a. Is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ Himself
 - b. We walk *with* Him—we talk *with* Him

I Come to the Garden Alone

I come to the garden alone
while the dew is still on the roses,
and the voice I hear falling on my ear,
the Son of God discloses.

And he walks with me, and he talks with me,
and he tells me I am his own;
and the joy we share as we tarry there,

none other has ever known.

He speaks, and the sound of his voice
is so sweet the birds hush their singing,
and the melody that he gave to me
within my heart is ringing.

IV. WHY CHRIST IS WITH US

- To redeem us—restore our relationship with the Father
- To walk along the way with us—to show the way—He is the Way
- To help us carry our burdens
- To protect us—from the evil one
- To empower us—His authority goes with us—to do the Father's will
- To continue showing us the Father
- To assure us He is coming again
- To be our Friend—restores fellowship of the Garden of Eden

SUMMARY: HE IS OUR BEST FRIEND

YOU'R MY BEST FRIEND (Don Williams):

You're my bread when I'm hungry
You're my shelter from troubled winds
You're my anchor in life's ocean
But most of all, you're my best friend

When I need hope and inspiration
You're always strong when I'm tired and weak
I could search this whole world over
You'd still be everything that I need.

I'VE FOUND A FRIEND IN JESUS

I've found a friend in Jesus, He's everything to me
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul
The lily of the valley, in Him alone I see
All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole
In sorrow He's my comfort, in trouble He's my stay
He tells me ev'ry care on Him to roll

He's the lily of the Valley
The bright and morning star
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul

He all my griefs has taken, and all my sorrows borne
In temptation He's my strong and mighty tower
I've all for Him forsaken, and all my idols torn
From my heart, and now He keeps me by His power
Though all the world forsake me, and Satan tempt me sore
Thro' Jesus I shall safely reach the goal

He'll never, never leave me, nor yet forsake me here
While I live by faith and do His blessed will
A wall of fire about me, I've nothing now to fear
With His manna He my hungry soul shall fill

Then sweeping up to glory to see His blessed face
Where rivers of delight shall ever roll