

John 14:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Analysis

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you— Jesus reminds them of His previous teaching (14:3). **If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I** (εἰ ἠγαπήτε με ἐχάρητε ἄν, ὅτι πορεύομαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ μείζων μου ἐστίν, ei ēgapate me echarēte an, hoti poreuomai pros ton patera, hoti ho patēr meizōn mou estin)—This verse requires careful exegesis. **My Father is greater than I** (ὁ πατὴρ μείζων μου ἐστίν, ho patēr meizōn mou estin) doesn't deny Jesus's deity but acknowledges His voluntary subordination during incarnation (Philippians 2:6-8). The Father is 'greater' (μείζων, meizōn) positionally, not ontologically—Jesus temporarily submitted to human limitations during His earthly ministry.

Jesus says if they loved Him properly, they'd rejoice at His return to glory rather than grieve His departure. His going to the Father means: completed atonement, resumed glory, and sent Spirit (John 16:7). Arians and Jehovah's Witnesses misuse this verse to deny Christ's deity, but context shows Jesus speaks of His mediatorial office during incarnation, not His essential nature (Colossians 2:9).

Historical Context

This statement came during the Upper Room Discourse before crucifixion. Jesus was preparing disciples for His departure while affirming His unity with the Father

(John 14:9-11). Early church councils (Nicaea 325, Constantinople 381) clarified that 'greater' refers to Jesus's voluntary human state, not inequality within the Trinity.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does understanding Jesus's voluntary submission during incarnation reconcile this verse with His full deity?
2. What does it mean to love Christ rightly—rejoicing in His glorification rather than selfishly wanting His physical presence?
3. How should Christians use this verse apologetically when confronted by those who deny Christ's deity?

Interlinear Text

ἤκούσατε	ὅτι	ἐγὼ	εἶπον	ὑμῖν	ὑπάγω	καὶ	ἔρχομαι
Ye have heard	because	I	I said	unto you	I go away	and	come
G191	G3754	G1473	G2036	G5213	G5217	G2532	G2064
πρὸς	ὑμᾶς	εἰ	ἠγαπᾶτέ	με	ἐχάρητε	ἂν	ὅτι
again unto	you	If	ye loved	me	ye would rejoice	G302	because
G4314	G5209	G1487	G25	G3165	G5463		G3754
εἶπον	πορεύομαι	πρὸς	τὸν	πατὴρ	ὅτι	ὁ	πατὴρ
I said	I go	again unto	G3588	Father	because	G3588	Father
G2036	G4198	G4314		G3962	G3754		G3962
μού	μεῖζων	μού	ἐστίν				
I	greater than	I	is				
G3450	G3187	G3450	G2076				

Additional Cross-References

John 14:18 (Parallel theme): I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

John 13:16 (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

John 20:21 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

John 20:17 (Parallel theme): Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

1 Corinthians 11:3 (Parallel theme): But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

John 16:7 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

1 Peter 1:8 (Love): Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

Isaiah 53:11 (Parallel theme): He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Matthew 12:18 (Love): Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

John 5:18 (Parallel theme): Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

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