

John 14:28

28 You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

## **“If You Really Loved Me”**

### **John 14:28**

In John 14:28, our Lord expresses His love for His disciples and us in a very tangible way. He is about to lay down His life on behalf of His sheep. He will be made sin for us, He who knew no sin. He would bear the divine wrath for our sin, all that we might be saved. Yet, here in this verse He said, ***“If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father.’”*** This would be true, if His disciples really loved Him. We will look at this verse in two parts.

#### **I. The Fact of His Deity**

#### **II. The Focus of His Statement**

#### **I. The Fact of His Deity**

A. Before we turn our attention to the issue of the disciples' love for Him, we must deal with another issue in this verse. Many cults insist in the face of overwhelming Biblical evidence that somehow Jesus Christ is not fully God.

1. Their favorite tactic on this text is to have someone read it without context and say, “When Jesus says that the Father is greater than He is, He clearly is saying that He is not equal to God. Therefore Jesus must be a divine creation; ‘a god’ in contrast to the one true and living God.”

2. Because I do not want you to be confused, we will take some time to try to establish what Jesus said here and what He did not say. It is important that you not let these people confuse you.

B. Is Jesus simply “a god” who was first created? The Scriptures say no. The idea that He is a lesser god is not even remotely possible.

1. Here is what the True and Living God says about Himself in the Old Testament. (*Isaiah 45:21-22*) **“Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; there is no one besides Me. Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.”**

2. Three times the LORD Himself declares there is no other God but Him. When we come to the New Testament, we discover the reality stated in *Hebrews 1:1-2*. **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”** We find God revealing Himself to us in His Son who is clearly presented as very God of very God. How do we understand this in view of God’s clear statement that beside Him there is no other?

3. This is where the wonder of the Triune nature of God comes in. The New Testament teaches us that our one God eternally exists in three persons. God the Son became incarnate in human flesh and He is our Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament revelation will not allow for a created god. It only reveals the eternal true and living God who has always existed in three persons!

C. The key to understanding any text is its context. Listen to what John, the author of the Gospel of John, already said about the person of Jesus Christ.

1. *John 1:1-3* **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.”** Evidently, these verses teach the deity of Jesus Christ. There are two realms of reality, the was and the became. Jesus is an always was.

2. **John 5:16-18** *“Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”* The Jews understood our Lord’s claims and John did not dispute this reality.

3. **John 20:28** *“And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’”* There is no question that Thomas is voicing the opinion of all of the other disciples. Jesus Christ is the Lord and the God! He is God incarnate in human flesh. After all this, did John simply change his mind about the deity of Christ?

D. Don Carson is helpful in this area. He said that this is like our saying the Queen of England “is greater than we are.” She may have more political clout, money, and influence than we have but she is still human. Jesus asserted that He submits Himself to the Father in the order that exists in the Trinity.

## II. The Focus of His Statement

Having invested the bulk of our time on the deity question, I do not want us to totally miss what our Lord said in this verse. Look again at our text. ***“You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.”***

A. Jesus told His disciples He was going away. and that He would come back to them. He would come to them in the person of the Holy Spirit. He would not leave them “fatherless.” So far, we in some measure understand.

1. Then He rocked the disciples and made us sit up and take notice! ***“If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said I am going to the Father.”*** Jesus indicated that the disciples did not really love Him as they should. For if they loved Him, they would rejoice with Him that He was going back to the Father. Think about **John 17:5** where Jesus prayed, ***“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”*** Jesus was going back to take His rightful place in the glory of heaven. He was once again going to enjoy the glory that was always rightfully His!

2 If the disciples had really learned to love Him as they should, the desire for what was best for Him would have consumed them and they would have rejoiced in His being glorified. However, they did not do this.

B. This is a convicting thought for us today also. We do not always love Him like we should. Like these disciples, sometimes we are far more concerned about our own griefs and sorrows, more than we are of Christ Himself.

In the final analysis, Jesus is chiding His own disciples about being too self-centered and not concerned about Him. I can't help but think of the accounts I have read over the years of those who willingly laid down their lives for the truth. These were folks who willingly gave all, that the Lord of Glory might be praised.

What if that were required of you and me? How deep is our love?

***529 O, How I Love Jesus***