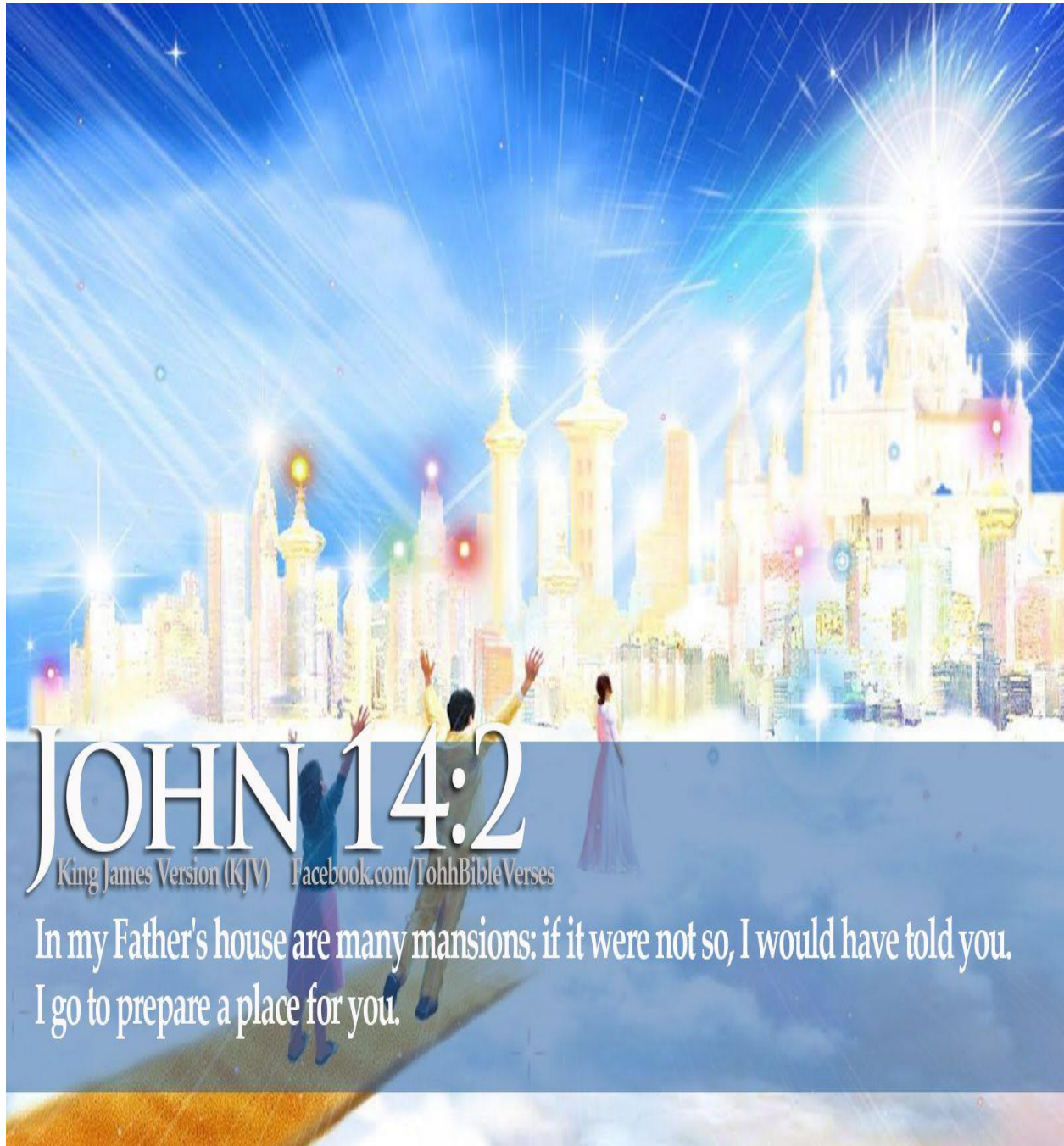


# IS HEAVEN A HOUSE OR A CITY? DO WE HAVE MANSION OR ROOM?

**By David Lee Burris**



## Barnes' Notes on the Bible

**In my Father's house** - Most interpreters understand this of heaven, as the special dwelling-place or palace of God; but it may include the universe, as the abode of the omnipresent God.

**Are many mansions** - The word rendered "mansions" means either the act of dwelling in any place ([John 14:23](#), "we will make our abode with him"), or it means the place where one dwells. It is taken from the verb to remain, and signifies the place where one dwells or remains. It is applied by the Greek writers to the tents or temporary habitations which soldiers pitch in their marches. It denotes a dwelling of less permanency than the word house. It is commonly understood as affirming that in heaven there is ample room to receive all who will come; that therefore the disciples might be sure that they would not be excluded. Some have understood it as affirming that there will be different grades in the joys of heaven; that some of the mansions of the saints will be nearer to God than others, agreeably to [1 Corinthians 15:40-41](#). But perhaps this passage may have a meaning which has not occurred to interpreters. Jesus was consoling his disciples, who were affected with grief at the idea of his separation. To comfort them he addresses them in this language: "The universe is the dwelling-place of my Father. All is his house. Whether on earth or in heaven, we are still in his habitation. In that vast abode of God there are many mansions. The earth is one of them, heaven is another. Whether here or there, we are still in the house, in one of the mansions of our Father, in one of the apartments of his vast abode. This we ought continually to feel, and to rejoice that we are permitted to occupy any part of his dwelling-place. Nor does it differ much whether we are in this mansion or another. It should not be a matter of grief when we are called to pass from one part of this vast habitation of God to another. I am indeed about to leave you, but I am going only to another part of the vast dwelling-place of God. I shall still be in the same universal habitation with you; still in the house of the same God; and am going for an important purpose - to fit up another abode for your eternal dwelling." If this be the meaning, then there is in the discourse true consolation. We see that the death of a Christian is not to be dreaded, nor is it an event over which we should immoderately weep. It is but removing from one apartment of God's universal dwelling-place to another - one where we shall still be in his house, and still feel the same interest in all that pertains to his kingdom.

## Pulpit Commentary

Verse 2. - **In my Father's house are many mansions**; or, **abiding-places**, homes of rest and peace and sojourn. "**My Father**" is the grandest name of all - the Divine fatherhood, as conceived in the consciousness of Jesus and revealed to them. Had not he who dwelt for ever in the bosom of the Father come forth, as he alone could, to reveal "the Father" and what the Father had been to him in the eternities? "**My Father's house**" is the dwelling-place in which devout believing souls would abide forever ([Psalm 23:6](#); [Psalm 90:1](#)). In the vast home filled by my Father's glory and lighted by his smile of recognition and reconciliation, in the high and holy place ([Isaiah 63:15](#); [Deuteronomy 26:15](#)), are "many mansions" prepared from the foundation of the world ([Matthew 25:34](#)). Heaven is a large place; its possibilities transcend your imagination and exceed your charity. Thoma quotes all the grand hopes which Paul's Epistles and that to the Hebrews contain, that Jesus made heaven and home by his presence there ([Philippians 1:23](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:14, 17](#)), and he supposes that the Johannist put these words into the lips of Jesus. One conclusion forced upon the reader, so far as this passage is concerned, is that there is no reason why this Gospel may not have been written long before the close of the first century. **If it were not so**; **i.e.** if there were any doubt about it, if the revelations already made do not avail to prove as much as this, if you have been cherishing nothing better than vain illusions on this subject, **I would have told you**, for I came forth from God, and know these many mansions well. I would have told you, for all things that I have heard from the Father (up to **this** time possible for you to receive) I have made known to you. Here surely is a colon, if not a period. Many interpreters, by reason of the ὅτι which Lachmann, Tischendorf, Westcott, and Meyer believe to be the correct reading, link the following sentence in different ways to the preceding; **e.g.**, some say ὅτι is equivalent to "**that**," and read, "I would have told you that I go, etc.; but against this is the simple statement of Ver. 3, where Jesus proceeds to say that he **is** going to prepare, etc. Others, translating ὅτι "**for**," differ as to whether the departure of Jesus and his preparation of a place for his disciples refers to the first or second part of the sentence. Surely the ὅτι, "**because**" or "**for**," opens out a new thought based on the whole of that sentence: "Because, seeing if it were not so, I would have told **you**," because our relations are so close as to have involved on your part this claim on my frankness, **for I am going to prepare a place** - to make ready one of these many mansions - **for you**. Over and above the vague mystery of the Father's house, my departure is that of your "**Forerunner**," and my presence will make a new resting-place - it will localize your home. As you have made ready this guest-chamber for me, I am going to make ready a presence-chamber for you in the heavenly Jerusalem. Lange objects to this view of Lucke, Calvin, and Tholuck, that it involves a diffusion of knowledge and revelation among the disciples, of which there is no proof. This does not seem bettered by another rendering preferred by him, viz. "If it were not so, would I have told you I go to prepare a place for you?" But then this mode of interpretation implies a previous definite instruction as to the part he himself was going to take in the furnishing of the heavenly mansion. Of that most certainly there is no proof. John 14:2

## MacLaren's Expositions

### 'MANY MANSIONS'

#### John 14:2.

Sorrow needs simple words for its consolation; and simple words are the best clothing for the largest truths. These eleven poor men were crushed and desolate at the thought of Christ's going; they fancied that if He left them they lost Him. And so, in simple, childlike words, which the weakest could grasp, and in which the most troubled could find peace, He said to them, after having encouraged their trust in Him, 'There is plenty of room for you as well as for Me where I am going; and the frankness of our intercourse in the past might make you sure that if I were going to leave you I would have told you all about it.. 'In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.'

#### **I. Now note in these words, first, the 'Father's house,' and its ample room.**

There is only one other occasion recorded in which our Lord used this expression, and it occurs in this same Gospel near the beginning; where in the narrative of the first cleansing of the Temple we read that He said, 'Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise.' The earlier use of the words may help to throw light upon one aspect of this latter employment of it, for there blend in the image the two ideas of what I may call domestic familiarity, and of that great future as being the reality of which the earthly Temple was intended to be the dim prophecy and shadow. Its courts, its many chambers, its ample porches with room for thronging worshippers, represented in some poor way the wide sweep and space of that higher house; and the sense of Sonship, which drew the Boy to His Father's house in the earliest hours of conscious childhood, speaks here.

Think for a moment of how sweet and familiar the conception of heaven as the Father's house makes it to us. There is something awful, even to the best and holiest souls, in the thought of even the glories beyond. The circumstances of death, which is its portal, our utter unacquaintance with all that lies behind the veil, the terrible silence and distance which falls upon our dearest ones as they are sucked into the cloud, all tend to make us feel that there is much that is solemn and awful even in the thought of eternal future blessedness. But how it is all softened when we say, 'My Father's house.' **Most of us have long since left behind us the sweet security, the sense of the absence of all responsibility, the assurance of defense and provision, which used to be ours when we lived as children in a father's house here.** But we may all look forward to the renewal, in far nobler form, of these early days, when the father's house meant the inexpugnable fortress where no evil could befall us, the abundant home where all wants were supplied, and where the shyest and timidest child could feel at ease and secure. It is all coming again, brother, and amidst the august and unimaginable glories of that future the old feeling of being little children, nestling safe in the Father's house, will fill our quiet hearts once more.



And then consider how the conception of that Future as the Father's house suggests answers to so many of our questions about the relationship of the inmates to one another. Are they to dwell isolated in their several mansions? Is that the way in which children in a home dwell with each other? Surely if He be the Father, and heaven be His house, the relation of the redeemed to one another must have in it more than all the sweet familiarity and unrestrained frankness which subsists in the families of earth. A solitary heaven would be but half a heaven, and would ill correspond with the hopes that inevitably spring from the representation of it as 'my Father's house.'

But consider further that this great and tender name for heaven has its deepest meaning in the conception of it as a spiritual state of which the essential elements are the loving manifestation and presence of God as Father, the perfect consciousness of sonship, the happy union of all the children in one great family, and the derivation of all their blessedness from their Elder Brother.

The earthly Temple, to which there is some allusion in this great metaphor, was the place in which the divine glory was manifested to seeking souls, though in symbol, yet also in reality, and the representation of our text blends the two ideas of the free, frank intercourse of the home and of the magnificent revelations of the Holy of holies. Under either aspect of the phrase, whether we think of 'my Father's house' as temple or as home, it sets before us, as the main blessedness and glory of heaven, the vision of the Father, the consciousness of sonship, and the complete union with Him. There are many subsidiary and more outward blessednesses and glories which shine dimly through the haze of metaphors and negations, by which alone a state of which we have no experience can be revealed to us; but these are secondary. The heaven of heaven is the possession of God the Father through the Son in the expanding spirits of His sons. The sovereign and filial position which Jesus Christ in His manhood occupies in that higher house, and which He shares with all those who by Him have received the adoption of sons, is the very heart and nerve of this great metaphor.

But I think we must go a step further than that, and recognize that in the image there is inherent the teaching that that glorious future is not merely a state, but also a place.. And from the representation of my text, though we cannot fathom all its depths, we can at least grasp this, which gives solidity and reality to our contemplations of the future, that heaven is a place, full of all sweet security and homelike repose, where God is made known in every heart and to every consciousness as a loving Father, and of which all inhabitants are knit together in the frankest fraternal intercourse, conscious of the Father's love, and rejoicing in the abundant provisions of His royal House.

And then there is a second thought to be suggested from these words, and that is of the ample room in this great house. The original purpose of the words of my text, as I have already reminded you, was simply to soothe the fears of a handful of disciples. There was room where Christ went for eleven poor men. Yes, room enough for them! but Christ's prescient eye looked down the ages & saw all the unborn millions that would yet be drawn to Him uplifted on the Cross.

'Many mansions!' the thought widens out far beyond our grasp. Perhaps that upper room, like most of the roof-chambers in Jewish houses, was open to the skies, and whilst He spoke, the innumerable lights that blaze in that clear heaven shone down upon them, and He may have pointed to these. The better Abraham perhaps looked forth, like His prototype, on the starry heavens, and saw in the vision of the future those who through Him should receive the 'adoption of sons' and dwell forever in the house of the Lord, 'so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.'

Ah! brethren, if we could only widen our measurement of the walls of the New Jerusalem to the measurement of that 'golden rod which the man, that is the angel,' as John says, applied to it, we should understand how much bigger it is than any of these poor sects and communities of ours here on earth. If we would lay to heart, as we ought to do, the deep meaning of that indefinite 'many' in my text, it would rebuke our narrowness. That one word 'many' should deepen our confidence in the triumphs of Christ's Cross, and it may be used to heighten our own confidence as to our own poor selves. A chamber in the great Temple waits for each of us, and the question is, Shall we occupy it, or shall we not? The old Rabbis had a tradition which, like a great many of their apparently foolish sayings, covers in picturesque guise a very deep truth. They said that, however many the throngs of worshippers who came up to Jerusalem at the passover, the streets of the city and the courts of the sanctuary were never crowded. And so it is with that great city. There is room for all. There are throngs, but no crowds. Each finds a place in the ample sweep of the Father's house, like some of the great palaces that barbaric Eastern kings used to build, in whose courts armies might encamp, and the chambers of which were counted by the thousand. And surely in all that ample accommodation, you and I may find some corner where we, if we will, may lodge for evermore.

I do not dwell upon subsidiary ideas that may be drawn from the expressions. 'Mansions' means places of permanent abode, and suggests the two thoughts, so sweet to travelers and toilers in this fleeting, laboring life, of unchangeableness and of repose. Some have supposed that the variety in the attainments of the redeemed, which is reasonable and scriptural, might be deduced from our text, but that does not seem to be relevant to our Lord's purpose.

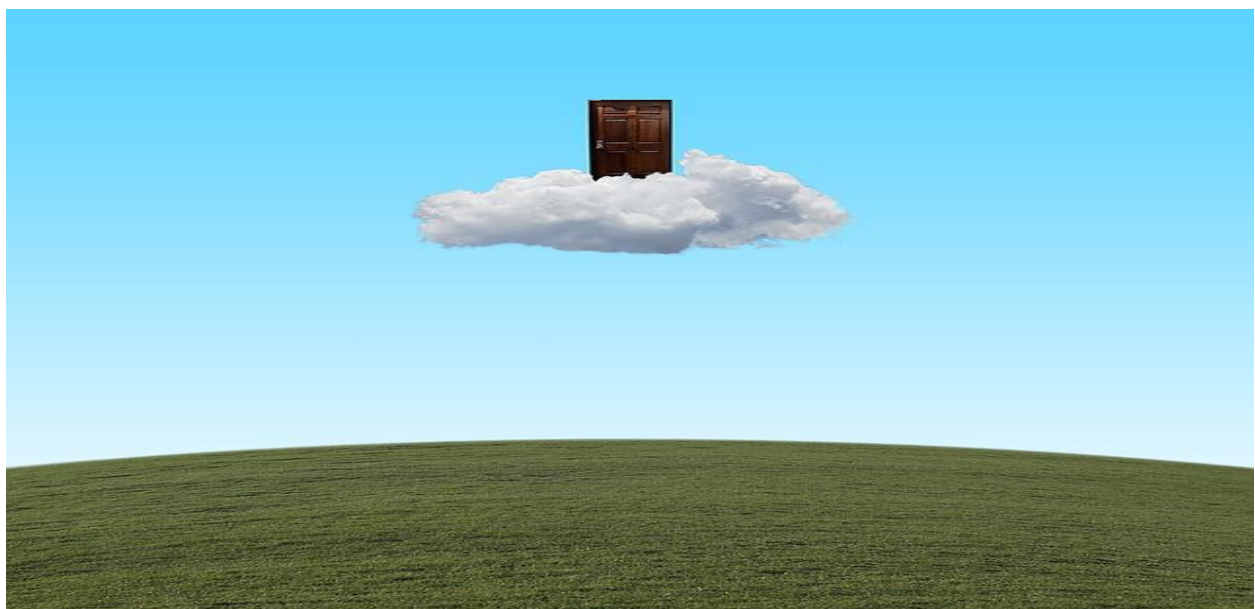
One other suggestion may be made without enlarging upon it. There is only one other occasion in this Gospel in which the word here translated 'mansions' is employed, and it is this: 'We will come and make our abode with him.' Our mansion is in God; God's dwelling-place is in us..

## **II. In the next place, note here the sufficiency of Christ's revelation for our needs.**

'If it were not so I would have told you.' He sets Himself forward in very august fashion as being the Revealer and Opener of that house for us. There is a singular tone about all our Lord's few references to the future—a tone of decisiveness; as if He was speaking of what He had beheld 'We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.'

He stands like one on a mountain top, looking down into the valleys beyond, and telling His comrades in the plain behind Him what He sees. He speaks of that unseen world always as One who had been in it, and who was reporting experiences, and not giving forth opinions. His knowledge was the knowledge of One who dwelt with the Father, and left the house in order to find and bring back His wandering brethren. It was 'His own calm home, His habitation from eternity,' and therefore He could tell us with decisiveness, with simplicity, with assurance, all which we need to know about the geography of that unknown land-the plan of that, by us unvisited, house. Very remarkable, therefore, is it, that with this tone there should be such reticence in Christ's references to the future. The text implies the rationale of such reticence. 'If it were not so I would have told you.' I tell you all that you need, though I tell you a great deal less than you sometimes wish.

The gaps in our knowledge of the future, seeing that we have such a Revealer as we have in Christ, are remarkable. But we know as much as we need. We know that God is there. We know that it is the Father's house. We know that Christ is in it. We know that the dwellers there are a family. We know that sweet security and ample provision are there; and, for the rest, if we needed to have heard more, He would have told us.



## **Mansions in the temple?**

*Mansion* in today's English implies a magnificent home. However, its original meaning was much simpler: just a home, dwelling or an abode (*Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*). Translators of the King James Version chose it because it closely reflected the meaning of the original Greek word in John 14:2. The New Revised Standard Version translates it as "dwelling places"; the **New International Version and the English Standard Version, as "rooms."**

The same word is translated as "home" in John 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 home with him."

There were a number of apartments or living quarters built into the walls of Solomon's temple. Priests and Levites lived in them; they also used them as offices and storage facilities. Here are some Old Testament references to them:

- 2 Kings 23:11 speaks of King Josiah removing idolatrous images that were "at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by *the chamber* of Nathan-Melech, the officer who was in the court."
- 1 Chronicles 9:33 tells of temple "singers, heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites, who lodged in *the chambers*."
- 1 Chronicles 9:26 tells of storage facilities: "For in this trusted office were four chief gatekeepers; they were Levites. And they had charge over *the chambers and treasuries* of the house of God."
- 2 Chronicles 31:11-12 records that King "Hezekiah commanded them to prepare *rooms* in the house of the LORD, and they prepared them." These chambers were for storing "the offerings, the tithes, and the dedicated things."
- Jeremiah 35:4: "I brought them into the house of the LORD, into *the chamber* of the sons of Hanan the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by *the chamber* of the princes, above *the chamber* of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door."
- Jeremiah 36:10: "Then Baruch read from the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in *the chamber* of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe."

Jesus' disciples would have been familiar with these living quarters ("mansions") in the temple. As His custom was, Jesus used these familiar physical things to illustrate a spiritual truth. Herod's temple also had such rooms: "The walls of the temple appear to have been 5 cubits thick, and against these, on the North, West, and South, were built, as in Solomon's Temple, side-chambers in **three stories**, 60 cubits in height, and 10 cubits in width (the figures, however, are uncertain), which, with the outer walls, made the entire breadth of the house 60 or 70 cubits. Mid., iv.3, gives the number of the chambers as 38 in all" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, "The Temple of Herod").

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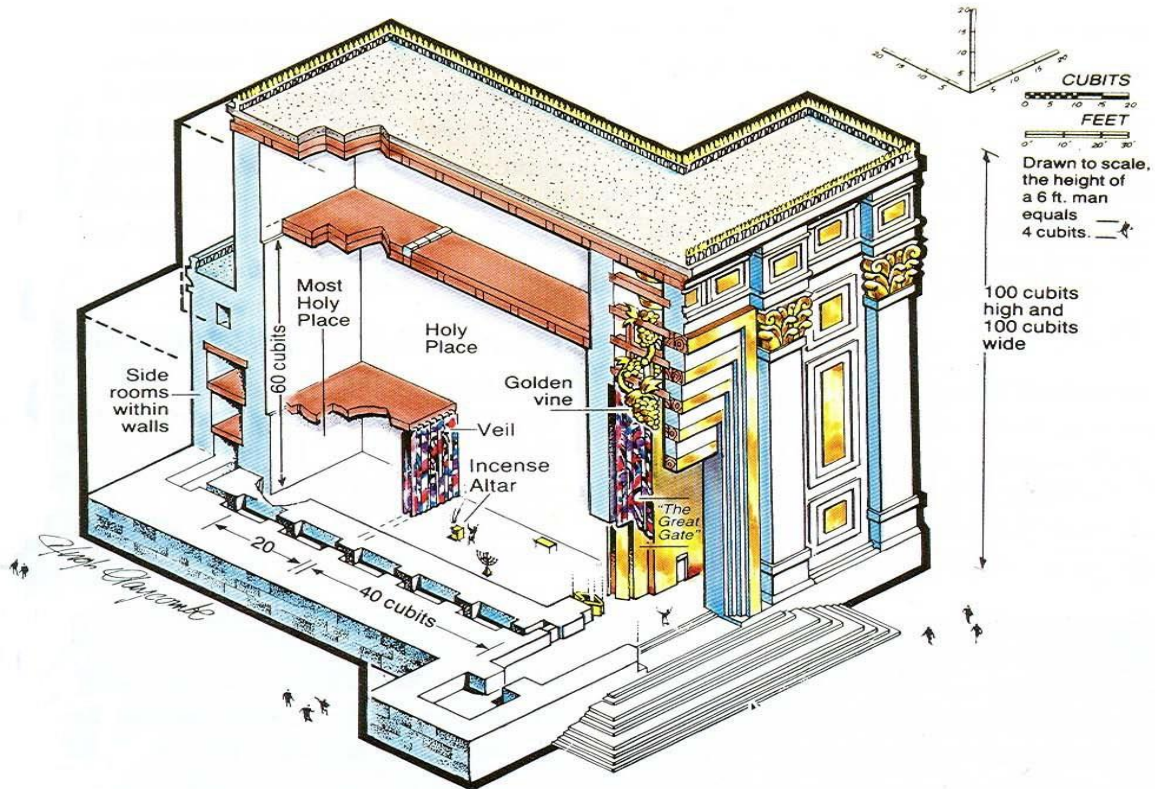


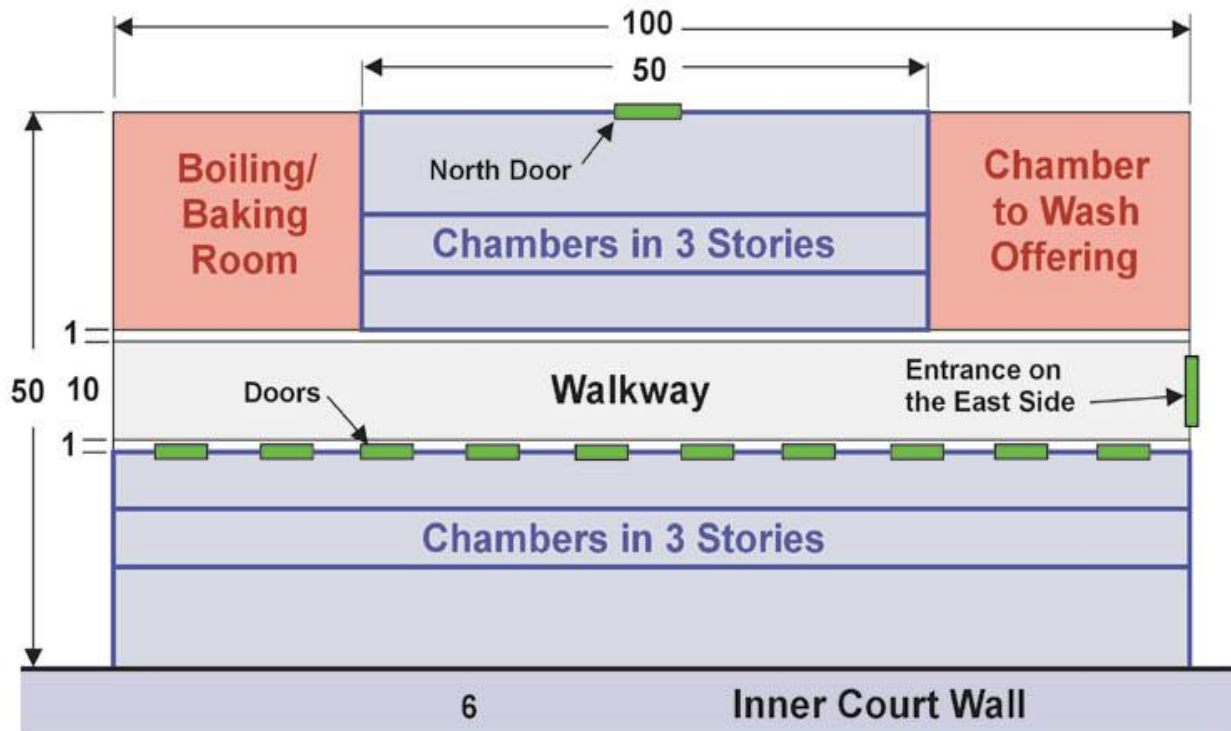
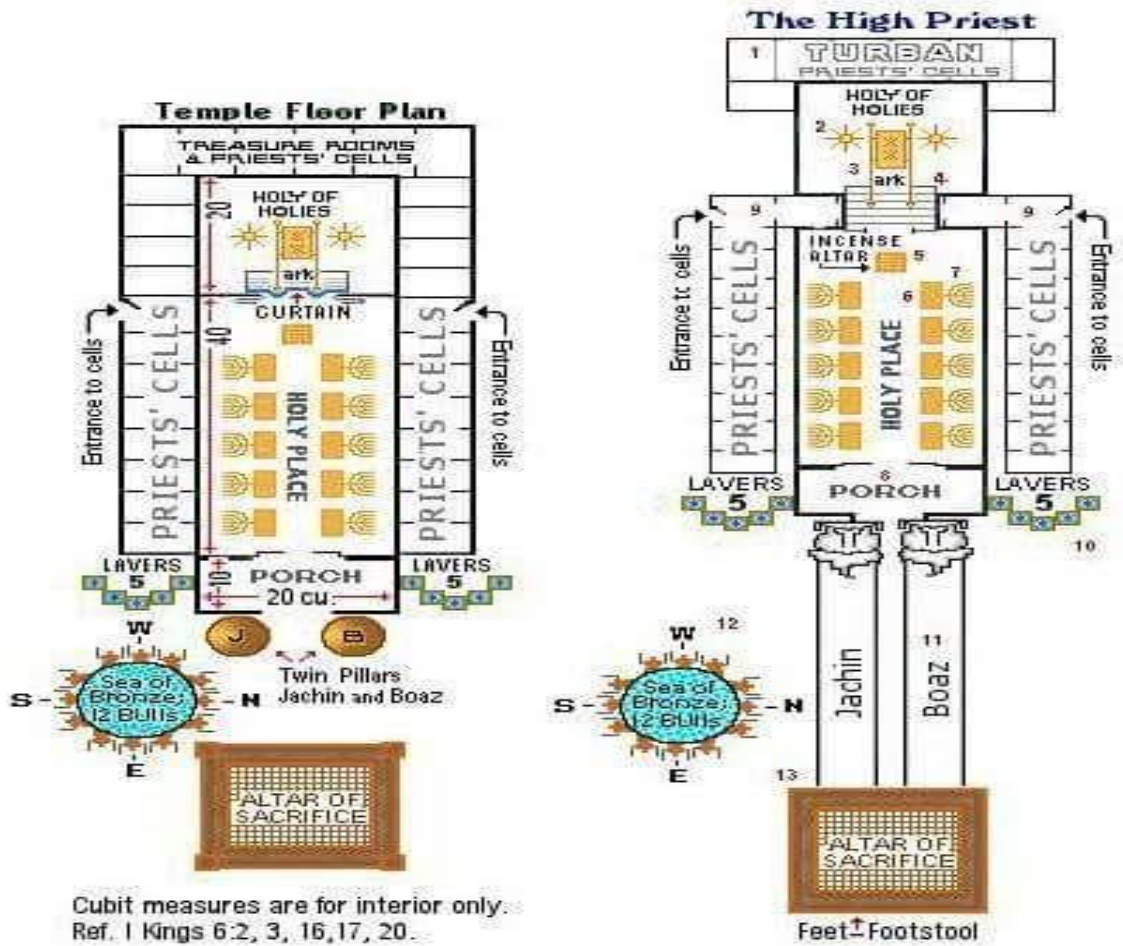


# Solomon's Temple

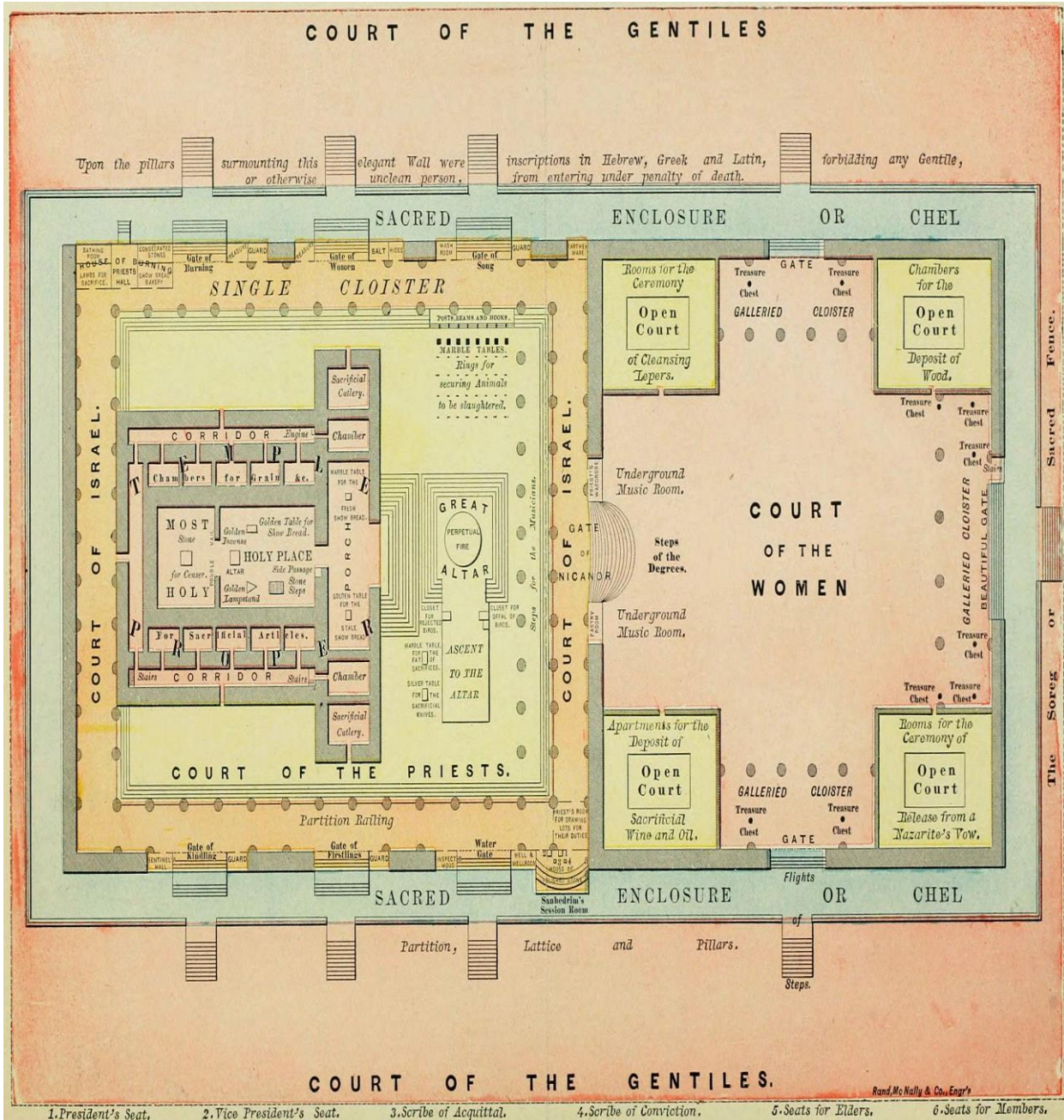
The First Temple, erected by King Solomon, was built to replace the Tabernacle and house the Ark of the Covenant. The Temple was completed in 957 BC after seven years of labor, but it was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC.

GRAPHIC BY KARBEL MULTIMEDIA, COPYRIGHT 2008 LOGOS BIBLE SOFTWARE









## A metaphor for security

That truth is further borne out in the implication within the Greek of a *lasting* stability, or *staying* in a home or residence. The *Complete Word Study Bible* compares it to a synonym that means “a place where one dwells permanently.” The context of John 14:2-3 proves that this was Jesus’ intent. The chapter begins, “Let not your heart be troubled.” Or, “Do not be worried and upset” (Good News Translation). Why might they have been anxious?

They were “completely bewildered and discouraged. Jesus had said He was going away (John 7:34; 8:21; 12:8, 35; 13:33), that He would die (12:32-33), that one of the Twelve was a traitor (13:21), that Peter would disown Him three times (13:38), that Satan was at work against all of them (Luke 22:31-32), and that all the disciples would fall away (Matt. 26:31). The cumulative weight of these revelations must have greatly depressed them” (John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, comments on John 14:1-14).

The promise, in fact, was a reassurance of previous promises Jesus had made to the disciples.

## Not merely rooms, but *thrones*

He had spoken of this on several earlier occasions. On one instance, Peter, speaking on behalf of the 12 apostles, essentially asked Jesus, “What’s in it for us, after we’ve given up so much to be Your followers?” Jesus’ reply at that time:

“Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28).

This was too much to take in at that time. There would be a resurrection, a return to life after dying. That in itself was a marvelous concept! But more than that, the new life would be eternal—without end. They would be spirit, not physical beings. They would never again be subject to aging, injury, disease or death.

Every aspect of Jesus’ words defied imagination! It is no wonder that Christ needed to repeat the promise shortly before His death. Indeed, it would be years before the disciples grasped the full implication of them.

## Reassurance about their place in the Kingdom

So, in John 14:2-3, Jesus used the fact that priests had assigned rooms in the temple to remind the disciples that they would have places in the Kingdom He was preparing.

It was one more reassurance that He wasn’t abandoning them. - *Cecil Maranville*



## DUAL APPLICATION INTERPRETATION:

# Mansions In The Sky? Rethinking John 14:2

19/11/2018 MIKE RAITER

It's one of our most loved Bible verses. It's a staple of many funeral services. It's proven a wonderful comfort in times of grief. I'm speaking about our Lord's promise to his distressed and confused disciples that he is going away to prepare a place for them. Where is Jesus going? To his Father in heaven, of course. And what will Jesus be doing when he gets there? Well, he'll be very busy. Because he will "prepare a place for you" ([John 14:2](#))—and since there will be lots of "you", that's an awful lot of preparation. Then, "I will come back and take you to be with me." It is a picture—and we assume it's only a picture—of Jesus (presumably with his army of angelic bricklayers, plumbers and electricians) building myriad of homes for the eternal dwelling of his people.

**It is a picture—and we assume it's only a picture—of Jesus building myriad of homes for the eternal dwelling of his people.**

## Heavenly Houses?

This teaching is part of what's known as Jesus' Farewell Discourse ([John 14-17](#)). He's in the Upper Room celebrating the Passover with the Twelve. They're only hours away from his arrest, trial and execution. The purpose of these last words is to prepare the disciples for his departure, and for the extreme time of trial that they too, will face. He tells them that very shortly he'll leave them for a place to which they cannot come (13:33). He assures them they shouldn't be troubled by all that's about to happen. Rather, they're to trust in God and trust in him (14:1). And they needn't be troubled because this separation he's preparing them for will only be temporary. He will come back and take them to be with him.

Jesus then gives this lovely picture of him going to his Father's house in which there are many rooms, or, in the old KJV, many "mansions". It's a word today that conjures up images of large celestial estates. Perhaps we envisage ourselves roaming eternally in our very own Downton Abbey or Buckingham Palace.

The KJV word rendered as 'mansion' is *mone*, which most modern versions translate more accurately and prosaically as 'place'. It simply means 'room' or 'dwelling place'. And it only appears twice in the New Testament—both times in this chapter. The other is in v.23: "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home [our *mone*] with them".

The context of this verse is the coming of the Spirit (v.16ff) to live in the disciples. Indeed, the Spirit's coming to them is really Jesus' coming. He won't leave them as orphans, but rather, "I will come to you". So, the only other reference to 'place'/'room', in this farewell sermon, is where Jesus speaks about dwelling with his disciples now—in this new age, about to be inaugurated by his death, resurrection and the gift of the Spirit.

But it doesn't stop there. The verbal form of the noun *mone*, is *meno*, which means to 'room with' or 'stay with'. Most Bible versions render it, 'remain' or 'abide'. The theme of abiding with Jesus in the room he prepares for us, which began in 14:2, then continues into chapter 15. It's another instance where the insertion of a chapter break tends to obscure the flow of the passage. **Here Jesus switches metaphors from a home to a vineyard.** Using an image rich in Old Testament associations ([Isaiah 5](#)) he encourages his disciples to "remain in me" and assures them that he will also remain in them (15:4). This is precisely what he's promised from the beginning of the discourse: the mutual dwelling together of the Triune God and his people.

So, to what and when is Jesus referring in 14:2? We've readily assumed he's referring to heaven. We've assumed he's telling his disciples that, after he dies and rises again, he'll go to heaven and while there, get a house ready for his people. Then at some time in the (distant) future, at what we call his 'Second Coming', he'll take all his disciples to be with him in their new heavenly homes.

**Each other reference to *mone/meno* in this passage speaks not to the future, but the current experience of the disciple of the Lord Jesus. He was speaking about the present. Right here and now we live with him in his Father's house.**

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But a closer reading of the whole passage points in another direction. Each other reference to *mone/meno* in this passage speaks not to future, but the current experience of the disciple of the Lord Jesus. He was speaking about the present. Right here and now we live with him in his Father's house.

## **A Place or a Person?**

But what about v.3? "...and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am going." It sounds like Jesus is going some place else, and will come back and take us there. Surely, that's heaven. But wait, where is Jesus going? Is it some place else? The next verses answer that question. Jesus tells the disciples that they know the place where he is going (v.5). Then to Thomas' bewildered admission that they know neither the place nor the way to get there, Jesus tells them. He tells them both the destination and the means of arrival.



He announces, “I am the way...no one comes to the Father, except through me” (v.6). He will take them to the Father. So, Jesus isn’t going somewhere but to someone: And when will the disciples see the Father? Jesus says, “And from now on...” (v.7).

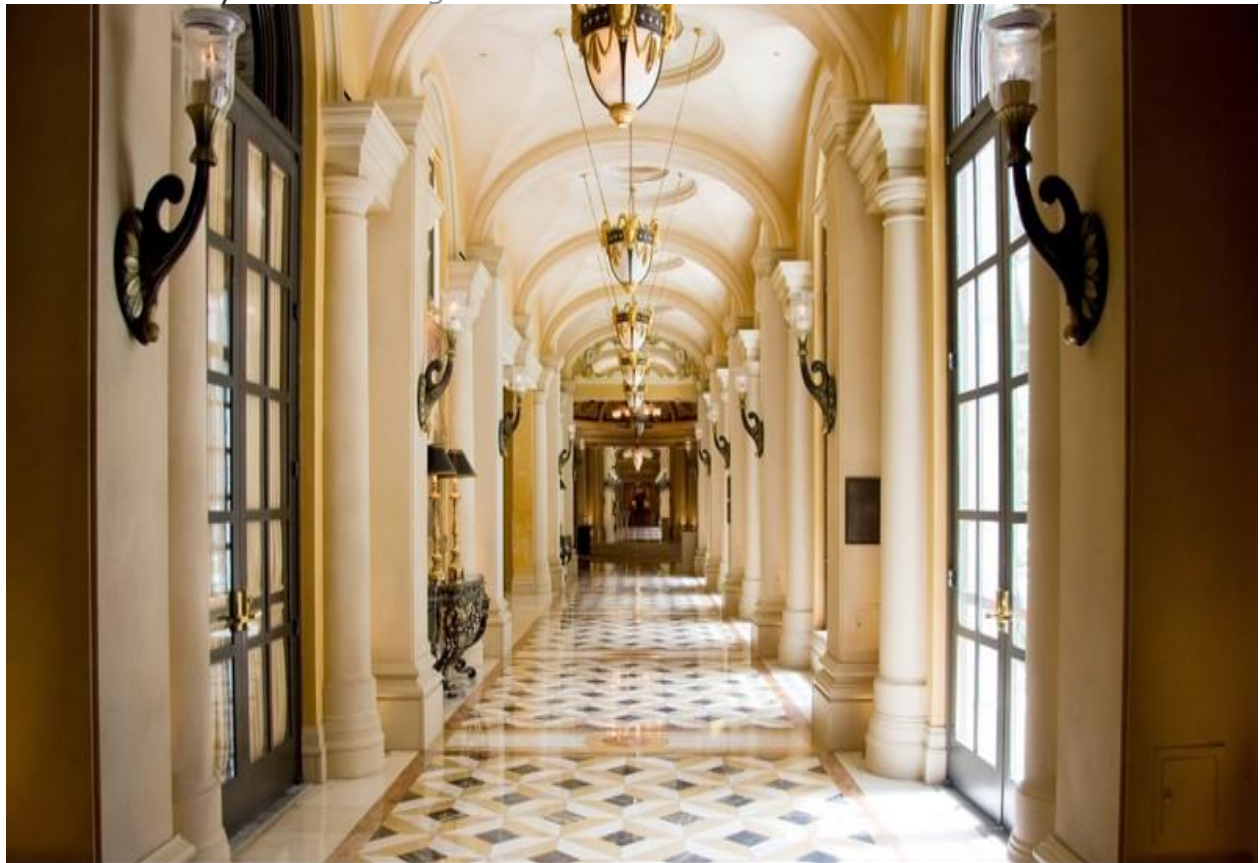
Jesus’ original hearers would have understood his ‘Father’s house’ as a reference to the Temple (cf. [Luke 2:49](#) which is usually rendered, “my Father’s house”; although this is by no means the only possible interpretation). The Temple was the dwelling place of God, and soon its doors would be thrown open for all to enter. This was dramatically symbolized after Jesus’ death on the cross when the curtain of that Temple was torn apart. The way into God’s house was made open.

In [John 14:2](#) Jesus is telling his disciples that by dying and rising again he’ll go and prepare a place, or a room, for them. And it won’t be a case of ‘book now’ before all the rooms are taken. No, once atonement for our sins has been made the way is opened and there’ll be lots of rooms in the Father’s house. Jesus will then come by his Spirit and he and the Father will make their home or abide with all his people. There’s plenty of room for all.

# Will it Matter if We Have Many Rooms or Mansions in Heaven?

*In heaven, the room we are assigned will not matter: We are welcome through the doors into Jesus' presence for all time. We have victory over sin, over death, and even more amazing is who we are in Christ, not where.*

Candice Lucey Contributing Writer



**[John 14:2](#)** records Jesus' reassurance that there would be a place for all believers in Heaven. "My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?"

Are these literal rooms? Will we live in actual mansions? And is the number of rooms we receive an indication of our heavenly status? A helpful start is to trace Jesus' words back to the Greek.

## In Jesus' Words

Mike Raiter writes, "The KJV word rendered as 'mansion' is mone, which most modern versions translate more accurately & prosaically as 'place.' It simply means 'room' or 'dwelling place'." Our home in heaven might not be a palace. Moreover, as Raiter says, Jesus is talking about never leaving his disciples; about dwelling with those who obey God. "We will come to them and make our home with them."

In [John 1:23](#), Jesus uses the word "mone" once more to mean "home." According to Raiter, Jesus later uses the verb form of mone, which is "meno" meaning "[remain or abide](#)." Jesus "encourages his disciples to 'remain in me' and assures them that he will also remain in them."

Jesus speaks of "dwelling with his disciples now — in this new age, about to be inaugurated by his death, resurrection & the gift of the Spirit." Jesus has promised to live in relationship with his people, just as the Father, Son, and Spirit live together.

"Home" is wherever Jesus is. Christians abide with [Christ](#) at all times even now, in the Spirit. In his article, "What is Heaven," Ed Jarret refers to the parables of [Matthew 13](#). "Rather than describing a future abode of believers, they describe the kingdom of heaven as a present reality."

"The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough" ([Matthew 13:33](#)). John Gill [wrote](#) that "to be 'leavened' by the Gospel, is to be evangelized by it, to be brought into the life and liberty of it." There is life and liberty in having the promise of heaven ahead of us.

## What about the Many Rooms?

But what do heavenly dwellings look like? Middle Eastern homes “often included many built-on additions where the extended family members lived. The [idea of the Father’s house](#) with plenty of room being prepared for His children would have [...] resonated well with Jesus’ hearers.” The experience for householders in many other cultures, during Jesus’ time and now, is similarly family-oriented & crowded. By way of contrast, many 21<sup>st</sup> century Western Christians are accustomed to their own space: To each person owning or renting a home; children with their own rooms; households featuring separate rooms for eating, watching TV, storage, office work, and more. In Western Culture, the individual is preeminent. “Self” is raised above everything else. “Self” is the monarch of a kingdom of one.

On the other hand, to be hidden in Christ with God ([Col 3:3](#)) is to be filled with his Spirit, with his kingdom. “My Father’s house has room to spare. If that weren’t the case, would I have told you that I’m going to prepare a place for you?” (CEB). This version of [John 14:2](#) depicts God’s kingdom, our future home, as a place that is never too crowded to accommodate more believers, but it does not suggest we each get a room to ourselves.

There will be space for everyone, but its dimensions and decor are not described. We might live in our own rooms or our own homes. Perhaps heaven is like the Great Hall in a medieval castle where everyone slept together in one palace, including the King.

While the most important residents of the [medieval Great Hall](#) were separated from others by a curtain, Christians are not and will not be separated from God by anything. The curtain is torn, and God dwells in Christians today.



## **Priestly and Portable**

*In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you (HCSB).*

*There is plenty of room for you in my Father's home. If that weren't so, would I have told you that I'm on my way to get a room ready for you? (MSG).*

Jesus alludes to the temple, what Jesus' audience considered to be "my Father's house." While the Message does call it a "house," one Bible version best refers to "My Father's Home" which is familiar; familial.

*You are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord ([Ephesians 2:22](#)).*

Christians are the temple, united as a family by common bond in Christ, not by their current location or their time in history. The earth is where they live, but it isn't their home. The Father's house/temple has many rooms.

Christians are commanded to throw open the temple doors and invite the spiritually homeless and thirsty into God's midst, while Christ is away preparing their permanent home.

## **What about Heavenly Status?**

Does it matter if we receive our own mansion when we die, or a room within a mansion, or the biggest, fanciest *type* of room? For Christians, the veil is removed, and why would we want to be separated from our God or our brothers and sisters? The sin that makes relationships difficult will be finished with.

As for our status in heaven, God says the “first will be last and the last will be first” ([Matthew 20:16](#)). Those who experienced the worst types of suffering will know the greatest honor in heaven.

In heaven, the room we are assigned will not matter: We are welcome through the doors into Jesus’ presence for all time. When the disciples became excited by their authority over sickness and demons in Jesus’ name, their Messiah urged them “do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” ([Luke 10:20](#))

We have victory over sin, over death, and this is the truth for those who trust in Jesus for salvation; however, even more amazing is who we *are* in Christ, not where. The room or set of rooms or the mansion where we reside in his presence will not represent us: Our faces will reflect the glory of the holy God who is in our midst and who calls us to a home we can scarcely imagine.

# compelling truth

## Will we receive mansions in heaven?

The night before His death, Jesus taught, "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" ([John 14:2-3](#)). The King James Version says, "In my Father's house are many mansions." Do Christians receive mansions in heaven?

The Greek word translated as mansion or house is *monai*, a word referring to a dwelling place. The Father's "house" is a form of *oikos*. It is the basic word for house in the Greek language. There is every indication that the believer's home will be good and even perfect, but there is nothing to indicate the exact nature of where believers will dwell. It could range from a simple home to an extravagant mansion or even heaven as "home." The type of dwelling believers will have in heaven is unclear in this passage.

In Middle Eastern culture, a father's house often included many built on additions where **extended family** members lived. The idea of the Father's house with plenty of room being prepared for His children would have been easily understood and would have resonated well with Jesus' hearers.

Another positive benefit of this understanding that we have dwelling places or rooms in the Father's house is that we will not live in separate locations; we will each dwell with the Father in heaven for eternity.

Interestingly, the descriptions of believers given in Revelation indicate people living together. There will be one heavenly city ([Revelation 21—22](#)) and believers from every people group, nation, and language worship the Lord together ([Revelation 7:9](#)). It may be that rather than individual homes, believers will all be "home" in the sense of being together with the Lord.

In [2 Corinthians 5:8-9](#), Paul also notes, "Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him." To Paul, being with the Lord was being "home" rather than a focus on a particular type of house or dwelling.

**We can trust God has a perfect place prepared for each believer to dwell together with Him. The focus is not on whether there will be individual homes or the greatness of those homes but on the presence of the Lord and in living together with other believers in perfect glory for eternity.**





Personally, what motivates me is to be rejoined  
with saved loved ones on the other side. DLB



