

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE
John 14:1-6
Message 4

INTRO: We are in John 14:2. We have looked at verse 1, where Jesus told the troubled disciples to not let their hearts be troubled, but to believe in Him. And then He sought to draw their eyes off their present troubling situation to place far away; a place that would be worth every bit of what ever the devil and this world would ever deal them, and much more too. So He began with these words, "In My Father's house..."

We considered those words and the meaning. It was the view of this speaker that He is informing them of a very, very special place. So, to understand the meaning of the words, 'In My Father's house' we went back to the OT tabernacle that Moses built and the temple that Solomon built, and we found that they are called Jesus' Father's house. But then we learned something very amazing. Those houses were simply copies of the real house of the Lord, which is in heaven.

Now I did not have time to tell you exactly where that place is in the last message, so let me do that. To go to this place, we have to pass through the first heaven, the atmospheric heaven. We have to pass through the second heaven, which we call outer space. Scientists think that the amazing space ship, the Hubble, is now nearing the edge of outer space. Well, that is a long, long, long way away. But whether it is reaching the edge of outer space or not, to go to Jesus' Father's house we have to pass through this second heaven into the third heaven. Listen to 2 Corinthians 12:2, the Apostle Paul speaking of a personal experience. He says, "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago -- whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body, I do not know, God knows -- such a one caught up to the third heaven." And then he tells us the place he was caught up to was Paradise.

Now, from the Bible we know exactly where that is. It is in a city, a city built by God. We know exactly how big it is. It is 1500 miles square. So, to get to Jesus' Father's house we have to go to the third heaven. And there, though this city is so huge, it seems but a speck in this vast expanse of the third heaven. And in that city, which is as high as it is wide and long, we have to go to a very special place called Mount Zion. You can learn all this in

the book of Revelation. And when you come to Mount Zion, you are right next to Jesus' Father's house. It is an incredible place. In that house, if you will study the tabernacle or the temple, you will find a very special room. And in that very special room, which is also as long as it is wide and as wide as it is high, dwells God Almighty. And after Christ ascended, He was seated on a throne beside God (Col. 3:1). Here is the center of the center of the center of everything. From here the whole universe is ruled. This is Jesus' Father's house. That is the place we found in our last message.

And now we want to see what these words mean, "there are many mansions". "In My Father's house are many mansions."

B. The Comforting Information (2-3)

1. The Proposition (2)

a. The content of this proposition cont'd (2b)

There was a time when I quoted a verse as describing heaven. And I understood it to mean that we cannot really know all that much about heaven. Here it is, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." It seems to be a quote from Isaiah 64:4, and the translation of it is very difficult. But, what I had failed to notice was the verse that immediately follows. Paul says, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God."

And so, the whole of what I have called the proposition in John 14 is this, "In My Father's house are many mansions...". We have looked at the words, "In My Father's house..." Now we want to look at the next words which tell us that there are many mansions in Jesus' Father's house.

So let us begin with this word translated *mansions*. You might be disappointed to know, as far as I can tell, the original word here

has nothing to do with what we think of when we think of mansions. Our understanding of the word 'mansion' might go a little way towards describing the Father's house, which I have no doubt is far beyond a mansion. But that is not what the word translated 'mansion' in our text speaks of.

The word translated 'mansion' is the Greek word 'monee'. It comes from the Greek verb 'meno', which simply means to abide or remain or stay. So the noun simply means *an abiding place* or *a place to stay*. It is a place to stay. In English today the word mansion speaks to us of an impressive house, usually of a wealthy person. But originally, the English word *mansion* came from the Latin word *maneo*, meaning *to dwell*. It spoke of any place of residence according to Webster's 1828 dictionary. Our English word 'manse' also came from this. This is a pastor's house built by the church for him to stay. So, what we are talking about is a place to stay. So our verse could read, "In My Father's House are many places to stay." Don't let this information disappoint you at all regarding the place where we are going, but such are the facts.

Maybe you heard of the rich man that packed his bags with bars of gold before he died. When he died, he took those bags along and when he arrived at this city, an angel said, "So, what do you have here?" So the man opened the bags, and the angel said, "Pavement! You brought pavement?" No, this place will be no disappointment. The streets are paved with gold!

Well, now that I have told you some heavenly things, let me tell you some earthly things again. Now, for the information I am about to give, I have spent painstaking hours gathering it. It was very difficult for me to find this information and I spent many, many hours seeking it out. I even spoke by phone with Gershon Solomon, of the Temple Mount Faithful in Israel, though I did not find from him what

I was looking for. He was most gracious and spoke with me at length about the temple.

So, now, let us go back to the thought of the tabernacle and temple that were built here on earth, which were also called, the Lord's House. Jesus said in His Father's house there are many dwelling places. He is talking about His Father's house in heaven. What can we learn about that from the earthly tabernacle and temple?

When Moses built the tabernacle in the wilderness, whenever the tabernacle was set up, the twelve tribes of Israel camped around it. It was always set up with the doorway of the temple facing east. That is the way the temple in Jerusalem was built as well. And whenever they stayed somewhere in their journey in the wilderness, and they did so 40 different times, the 12 tribes were camped all around the House of the Lord. On the North side were the tribes of Dan, Asher and Naphtali. On the east side were Judah, Issacher and Zebulon. On the south side were Reuben, Simeon and Gad. And on the west side were Ephraim, Manassah and Benjamin. So, every time the camp was set up, and it was set up 40 times, you could always find your friends because they were always on the same street they had been in the first place they ever set up. I think all of this may give us some idea of how orderly heaven will be. But these tribes were somewhat removed from the tabernacle.

Now what is of great interest to me, is that the Levites, the tribe of the priests who would not possess a portion of the land, had their dwellings right around Jesus' Father's house! The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath and Merari. And Merari was on the north, right outside the tabernacle wall. The Gershonites were on the west; the Kohathites on the south, and Moses and Aaron were on the east side. This east side had the only opening into the fence which went all the way around the

tabernacle. And right here, in front of the doorway is where Moses and Aaron were camped. You see, the Levites had their dwelling places, their *monee*, at Jesus' Father's house. That, I think, begins to give us a little idea of what we are talking about in John 14:2.

So, in the center of the camp is the place God dwells. Right around this dwelling place of God is a special tribe of the twelve tribes, the tribe of Levi. And then, after that are the rest of the nation of Israel.

Well, later Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem. And like the tabernacle, he built it according to the pattern God gave him. So turn with me to 1 Chronicles 28 (read 11-13). Now look at verse 19 (read). Here we have a divine plan.

Now, in verse 12 it speaks of the chambers all around. Keil and Delitzsh say that these are, and I quote, "...all the rooms on the four sides of the courts." Now there were chambers built on three sides of the temple. But here it speaks of chambers all around the court. And it says they are for the treasuries of the house of God and for the dedicated things. And then it says there are chambers, and I quote from verse 13, "also for the division of the priests and Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD."

And Keil and Delitschz say that these chambers are also, and I quote, "for the sojourn of the priests and Levites in the service..." So, what we have here is to me very, very significant information about 'dwelling places' at Jesus Father's house!!

Alfred Edersheim, who has studied Israel and the temple extensively, says this, "It was the rule when entering the Temple to pass in by the right, and when leaving it to go out by

the left hand. The great Court of the Gentiles, which formed the lowest or outer enclosure of the Sanctuary, was paved with the finest variegated marble. According to Jewish tradition, it formed a square of 750 feet. Its name is derived from the fact that it was open to all—Jews or Gentiles—provided they observed the prescribed rules of decorum and reverence. In this court tradition places eating and sleeping apartments for the Levites, and a synagogue (pg. 18)."

Then, of another area further in he says this, "Next came the chamber of the high-priest's meat-offering (Lev 6:20), where each morning before going to their duties the officiating priesthood gathered from the so-called 'Beth-ha-Moked,' or 'house of stoves.' The latter was built on arches, and contained a large dining hall that communicated with four other chambers. One of these was a large apartment where fires were continually burning for the use of the priests who ministered barefoot. There also the heads of the ministering courses slept, and here, in a special receptacle under the pavement, the keys of the Temple were hung up at night" (21).

August van Ryn, in a book called, "Meditations in John" writes, "The 'Father's House' was a familiar thought to the disciples. The Old Testament made frequent reference to it, and our Lord Himself called the Temple His 'Father's House.' The temple in Jerusalem was a type of the Father's house in glory. A number of rooms in the Temple were for the priests to occupy while they served their course in the Temple ritual. These were their abodes during their term of worship. It is to these abodes that our Lord refers in John 14. The disciples, from their knowledge of the Old Testament, knew about these abodes in the Father's house, but they did not know about that special place which our Lord was going to prepare for His Church, so He reveals this secret to them" (pgs. 165-66) end quote.

Now let me tell you something here I want you to remember for the future. It was originally God's plan that all the firstborn would be God's priests. But later He chose the Levites for this service (Numb. 3:12-13). Maybe this was because Moses and Aaron were of this tribe and maybe partly because the tribe of Levi stood with Moses at the sin committed by Israel at Mount Sinai with the golden calf.

When Israel wandered for forty years in the wilderness, it was the task of the Levites to carry the tabernacle and all that pertained to it. They all had especially assigned sections to take care of. But once the temple was in place in Jerusalem, that was no longer necessary. And so King David divided the Levites and assigned to each family their responsibilities. There would be the porters, or the door keepers. They had dwelling places at the house of the Lord while they served. There were the singers, and they had dwelling places at the house of the Lord. And then there were the priests, and they too had their dwelling places at the house of the Lord.

Each of those areas of service, the porters, the singers, and the priests were divided into 24 units. If you will study 1 Chronicles 22-27, you will learn some wonderful things about all of this.

Now I want to take you to one more passage. Turn to Ezekiel 40. You see, in the tabernacle, and then later in the temple we learn some very interesting things about Jesus' Father's house, and as we have learned already, they are but copies of the real thing. But, in the future, when the tribulation is done and the millennium has begun, another temple will be built, here on earth. In that house, that main part of the house, God Almighty and the Lord Jesus will dwell.

But I want to show you something else about that house. Let us begin by reading 40:1-7

(read). Here we find the first chambers. These were the dwelling places for the porters, or gate keepers. Now, you can study through this temple, and see if you can count all the chambers, or dwelling places in this temple. This is the millennial temple. This is still only a copy. It is still only an earthly temple. When you begin to get a view of these earthly copies, you begin to get an idea of what the Father's house in that 1500 mile square city is like!

Now I want to point out another thing that you may find disappointing at first, but I trust as another picture emerges, you will see how much more glorious the biblical picture is. I begin by quoting a paragraph from the messages I did on heaven. Here is what I gave regarding John 14:2, "The original word in our text is 'monee'. It comes from the Greek verb, 'meno' which means to remain or stay or abide. So 'monee' means a place to stay or remain or abide and so on. There are numerous meanings, but the Dictionary of NT Theology says, 'But perhaps the meanings which come closest to the 2 instances in the NT are a place of halt on a journey, an inn...' (III:229). Albert Barnes says, '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*'", end quote (III:229). Now not all agree with that, but there we have some ground for what I believe to be the correct understanding on the mansions of John 14:2.

Now let me show you that from the life of the Levitical tribe, those who ministered at the temple. In 1 Chronicles 24 we have the divisions of Aaron divided into 24 courses of priests. In chapter 25, we have 24 courses of singers. And in chapter 26 we find 24 courses of porters or gatekeepers. In message seven of the heaven series I described one day in the courts of the Lord. You would benefit from listening to it now.

These 24 courses of priests, porters and singers only served for one week, and then they were off for 23 weeks! The Levites had no territory allotted to them in the land of Israel. They lived in cities among the rest of the Israelis. Their most special time came when their week of service came. Then their course of priests was divided into six clans. Except for the Sabbath, each clan only served one day. So, each priest served 2 days in a year besides at the three times of the feasts of Israel! To serve in the temple was a very high honor. They could hardly wait for their turn to come. Then many of the responsibilities were given out by lot. And so, many of the priests hardly ever got to do some of the important things. They all wanted to be drawn by the lot.

Turn with me briefly to Luke 1 (read 5-9). This particular honor, I understand could only happen once in a lifetime for a priest. If he was once drawn by lot, he could never be drawn for this service again. So, some never got this opportunity.

Now, while they served for one week, I understand, they had their dwelling at the house of the Lord. This is what certain of the dwelling places were for. So, you see, these were not places to live permanently, but places to stay while they were in service. And this would only happen twice in the year for many of them, besides the three feast times!

Now, I think that all of that begins to give us some idea of what these 'mansions' or better, 'staying places' mean. Let me give it in more understandable language. Let us say that Prime Minister Stephen Harper learned to know about you, and you became his friend. And he said, "When I get back to Ottawa, to the parliament buildings, I am going to have a special place prepared for you to stay whenever you wish." That would be an idea of this dwelling place Jesus is preparing.

Now, let me take you briefly to the Psalms. We begin with that very familiar Psalm, Psalm 23 (read). Now notice that David, who is not a Levite, said, "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." The word translated 'forever', would better read as the synonymous line above reads, "all the days of my life". Now by saying he will dwell forever in the house of the Lord, does not mean He will live there. It means he will go there again and again and again. He will spend time there again and again. He will dwell there. That is the idea.

Look at 27:4-5 as well (read). Go also to Psalm 65 (read 4). Let us go to one more, Psalm 84:1-4 (read). Now some commentators think that here especially, the Levites are referred to. But you remember that the Levites did not permanently live here either. As a matter of fact, most of them served here two weeks of the year, and then on feast days, which makes five times in a year. Yet, in the Biblical text, that is considered as dwelling there.

Now, let me read John 14:2, "In My Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Now we are not talking about the parliament buildings in Ottawa. We are not talking about the white house. We are not even talking about the Knesset in Israel. We are talking about the house of the Lord in that city that is 1500 miles squared, the capital of all capitals; the capital of the universe. The place God dwells. And here, Jesus is preparing for us places to stay. You see, we'll need some place to stay when we are raptured. How about in Jesus' Father's house? Here is honor upon honor upon honor!

CONCL: So, we have concluded as to what Jesus' Father's house is. It is that temple in that 1500 mile cubed city in heaven. And now we have seen what those 'mansions' are that John 14:2 speaks of. They are dwelling places at the house of God. They are places to stay. They are not, as I see it,

permanent dwelling places but places to stay at very special times. Now, I think there will be no more messages on heaven in these verses until the very last message. And for that message you will need to remember some of the things I have begun to show you in these verses.