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A Place Prepared for You

John 14:2

Many of us have experienced the American Dream. This term was popularized by historian James Adams in his 1931 book “The Epic of America.” The American Dream is the belief that anyone, regardless of their background or birth situation, can achieve prosperity, success and upward movement in society through hard work and determination. This is still possible in the United States today. Have any of you experienced times of prosperity, success and upward movement in society through hard work and determination? One of the core milestones of this concept is home ownership. Have you ever **owned a home in your lifetime**? We like the concept of owning our own home. Now as seniors, many of us are more in the process of downsizing. We do not want or need all the stuff we used to have. Since my dad was in the United States Air Force, we moved around a lot. My parents rented houses to live in for our family with 6 children. The first real home my parents owned was their home in Ohio. They bought it from my dad’s brother. We moved into it in 1974 when I was 17 years old. They lived in that house for 26 years. Home ownership was a big deal and it still is. Maybe this is part of the reason why people have liked the phrase so much Jesus said in John 14:2. *“In My Father’s house are many mansions.”*

When we think of a mansion what comes to mind? The Beverly Hillbillies of course, that big house that we do not need but we all wanted with a cement pond in the back. Why would we need a mansion in heaven? Why would we need such big individual homes in heaven? What do we use homes for down here on earth? Our homes are mainly for eating and sleeping and keeping all of our stuff. Well, since we cannot take any of our stuff to heaven, we will not need a mansion in heaven for our stuff. As for eating, I do not think we will be eating by ourselves in heaven (Revelation 19:9). We will enjoy fellowship with others and eating with others if and when we want to eat in heaven. As for sleeping, God gives us a powerful new body. I am not so sure we will need to sleep in heaven. Why do we sleep now? We sleep because our physical bodies and brains need the rest to recover from our day’s activities. I just do not see us needing sleep in heaven (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 49). Does God ever sleep? No.

The word mansion today means something to us that it **did not mean** in 1611. What did mansion mean in 1611 and for decades afterwards? We should think of a tavern in years past or more recently, a hotel. A mansion was a place where you could rent a room for the night and get a meal before heading along on your journey. Big fancy and spacious homes in 1611 were called castles. You know, a man’s home is his

castle. We do not build castles today. We build mansions. Mansions are in this world. I have not been to heaven yet, but I do not believe there are any mansions in heaven, unless you believe God's house is one huge mansion. The Greek word in this sentence is the noun **mona**. It simply means room, dwelling place, abiding place or resting place. The Greek root word is the verb **meno**. It means to dwell, to abide, to remain, to tarry. Jesus said, *"In My Father's house are many **monai**, rooms, dwelling places, abiding places, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."* **The emphasis is on the many rooms in the one place that God has for all of His followers.** This place that has these rooms is in the Father's house. The movement that is happening is God taking us out of this fallen world into His perfect and peaceful domain where we will live and abide with Him forever.

When I try and piece this concept together with scripture, my best guess is that God's house is described in Revelation 21 as **the New Jerusalem**. John, the writer of Revelation, was carried away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and shown *"the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God"* (21:10). The city was laid out as a cube, its length, breadth and height are equal (21:16). Each side is about 1,400 miles long, wide and high (21:17). That distance is from here in Sun City, AZ straight north to the Canadian border, and from here going east to the Mississippi River. Then join those two lines going east and north to somewhere in the Great Lakes. It is also as high as it is wide. This New Jerusalem is massive! Think of it as something bigger than the moon. John wrote, *"But I saw no temple in it (the New Jerusalem), for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life"* (Revelation 21:22-27).

This New Jerusalem is one huge place. It is a big enough place for millions and millions of rooms. I am glad Jesus said, *"if it were not so, I would have told you."* If there is one person who knows the Father's house, it is Jesus. It is **His abiding place**. If things were different, He would have told us. He is telling us the truth about heaven. In this New Jerusalem we are with Jesus, the one who loves us! John wrote that only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life are able to enter God the Father's house. Not everyone can enter God's house. Not everyone is welcome in God's house. Would you allow someone into your home, to live in your home on a permanent basis who is destructive, hateful and hurtful to you or anyone else in your

home? If you did, there would come a time that you would have to call the police to get them out because of their character. God knows those people who love Him and are obedient to Him. He has their names written in His Book of Life. God does have a place for everyone else. It is not His will that anyone should go there. It is actually His will for everyone to avoid this place. John wrote, *“And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire”* (Revelation 20:15). God is not willing for anyone to perish, but all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). **God’s will can be overridden by your choice.** God gave us our own freewill. We can surrender to God’s will knowing that He loves us perfectly. And He wants the best for us. Or we can choose to follow our own will, rejecting the will of God, refusing to believe all that He has revealed. He has revealed the truth about this life (John 3:18-21) and life after death (5:28-29). If it were not so, He would have told us.

There is one other place in the New Testament that this form of the Greek word, **mona**, is used. We find the word used in John 14:23. *“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our **monan**, home with him.’”* First, I will say that Jesus is answering a question by the disciple Judas (not Iscariot). Jesus had told the disciples, *“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me”* (John 14:19). So, Judas asked Jesus, *“Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”* (14:22). Why does Jesus manifest, show, appear, be transparent to His followers and not to everyone in the world after His death and resurrection? Jesus does not directly answer the question. He will tell the disciples that what He is doing is so that *“the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do”* (14:31). Jesus is more concerned with doing exactly the will of God and not showing off His power and glory to the world. This is an important lesson for us as followers of Jesus.

As Jesus told His disciples, *“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our **monan**, home with him.”* We are not here to show off our Christianity. We are here as believers and followers of Jesus Christ to love Him and keep His word. Remember it is the gospel, His word that brings salvation (Romans 1:16). The movement that is happening here is God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit are coming from heaven into the lives of every person who demonstrates by their words and deeds that they love Jesus and keep His word. God promises to make His home in their lives. God comes to dwell, abide, to remain in His followers to change them. In the first verse we looked at, John 14:2 **Jesus is going to prepare a place for us.** The direction of this movement is from this earth to heaven. In John 14:23 **Jesus and the Father are coming into us to prepare us for His place.** The direction of the

movement is from heaven into our lives on this earth. His purpose for coming is mainly to prepare us for His place. In both verses Jesus is the one working. He is going to prepare a place for us. He is also coming into our lives to prepare us for His place. Are you ready? Are you letting Him get you ready.

How can you let Jesus get you ready?

1. **Study His word. Believe** what He teaches and reveals to you. It is always wise to confirm with others what you are learning to make sure you are listening to God correctly and not being deceived by the devil. Philip asked Jesus in this discussion, *“Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us”* (John 14:8). Jesus will tell the disciples to believe Him. Jesus said, *“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?”* (14:10). *“Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves”* (14:11).
2. **Love God by loving others.** Again, in this discussion Jesus will tell the disciples, *“If you love Me, keep My commandments”* (14:15). *“He who has My commandment and keeps them, it is he who loves Me”* (14:21). The last command that Jesus gave the disciples before He started this conversation was, *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another”* (13:34). It is very important that as disciples of Jesus Christ, we learn to love one another the way Jesus loved us. Jesus was honest with us. He spoke the truth about us. He forgave us. He is always trying to make us a better human being and a better influence in this world for the glory of God.

We have two tasks. Believe God and love Him by loving one another. Simple, yet our greatest challenge. Praise God we have His Holy Spirit, His divine presence in our lives to daily teach us and bring to our memory those teachings (14:26). For being faithful to God, He has a home for us. A mansion? No. A room, a place to stay. Yes, some day. But more important is the relationship that God develops in our lives, knowing Him who loves us and gave His life for us. That is heaven no matter where you are. Do you know Jesus? He wants you to know Him. Begin by believing the gospel, God’s good news of your salvation.

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