

Text in FOCUS



Text in Focus number - 003

JOHN 14:1-3

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THE ISSUE

John 14:1-3 has been used for centuries as a text in which Christians of this day and age are supposedly told that they have awaiting and reserved for them, in heaven, a house or mansion. A house or mansion prepared especially for them by God. This concept is presented as a comforting message, and indeed it is, but John 14:1-3 does not support this widely held romantic interpretation. It is also a text which many expositors equate with the rapture, with Jesus returning from heaven to receive His elect, again the facts actually fail to support these common myths.

An example of the above interpretations can be seen in Albert Barnes' *Notes on the Bible*: (extracted from the digital program *E-Sword*, Barnes often reflects the prevailing views of the 1800s.)

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....

I go to prepare a place for you - By his going is meant his death and ascent to heaven. The figure here is taken from one who is on a journey, who goes before his companions to provide a place to lodge in, and to make the necessary preparations for their entertainment. It evidently means that he, by the work he was yet to perform in heaven, would secure their admission there, and obtain for them the blessings of eternal life. That work would consist mainly in his intercession...**Ye may be also** - This was language eminently fitted to comfort them. Though about to leave them, yet he would not always be absent. He would come again at the day of judgment and gather all his friends to himself, and they should be ever with him. So shall all Christians be with him. And so, when we part with a beloved Christian friend by death, we may feel assured that the separation will not be eternal. We shall meet again, and dwell in a place where there shall be no more separation and no more tears.

Another example—of viewing this text as one which alludes to the rapture—is the foot-note seen in all the editions of the Scofield Reference Bibles. This view is amazingly pervasive amongst most Protestants! as seen in their works, such as: *The Rapture: Pre-, Mid-, or Post-Tribulational*, (Reiter, Feinberg, Archer and Moo). Along with the texts in I Thessalonians and I Corinthians 15, most Protestants (basic dispensationalists) classify John 14:1-3 as dealing with the rapture. Thus I propose that two misconceptions exist herein: (1) that this passage concerns the rapture of the church, and, (2) that this passage says that Jesus Christ is now in heaven preparing a place for His people in which to dwell in heaven. These are the issues.

THE SOLUTION

First the passage in the King James Version: (John 14:1-3):

Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* [!] ye may be also. [*there* is not in any Greek manuscript, it was added in various translations.]

We will correct the above two items, in this order; first the error of supposing that this text alludes to the rapture of the church. Most readers immediately zoom-in on the word for "receive" which in some versions is rendered as "take" (ESV, for example). It is the passive form of the Greek word (from παραλαμβάνω) as in Luke 17:34, in which we read that "one will be taken..."; passages which are

concerned with the Day of the Lord. [Why or where "taken" can be understood as: one may be taken for judgment, or one may be taken for salvation, commentators cannot decide]. Focusing upon this term "receive", as heard in many sermons connects this Lucan passage (17:34) with John 14, at least in their minds. Actually the Greek word for "receive" (from παραλαμβάνω) is best rendered here as "receive" (KJV et al), it can also mean to welcome, or receive with. Jesus is saying that His 11 apostles (that is who He is literally speaking to!) will again be with Him, even after He goes. He will return and receive them to Himself. He does not state that He is taking them anywhere. He is to receive them to Himself, after He returns! So the scene is this: Jesus leaves (is crucified), goes to heaven and draws up plans for the earthly temple, after Israel repents, He returns **TO EARTH** and receives to Himself the 11 or all (?) believers. Where or how do readers suspect that Jesus is taking them anywhere? There are some English translations which wrongly imply this, for example the CEV reads for verse three:

After I have done this, I will come back and take you with me.

This corrupt "translation" though corrupt, is what many preachers intimate today! Hence it is easy for them to connect this passage with the secret rapture which Paul speaks of in I Thessalonians. In the Greek (the Majority Text) verse three is:

και εαν πορευθω και ετοιμασω υμιν τοπον παλιν ερχομαι και
παραληψομαι υμας προς εμαυτον ινα οπου ειμι εγω και υμεις ητε

In the CEV, their "with me" is the Greek προς εμαυτον: with the verb "receive" it obviously means "to welcome you to Myself", not

"with". It is true that in some syntax situations, the preposition can mean "with" as in John 1:1 (with God) or in Romans 5:1 (with God), yet at heart lies the monosemic meaning of "to" or "in front of" in both John 1:1 and Romans 5:1. In John 14:3 the rendering of the verb is important; if as "take", then "with" could be a viable rendering, however the translation as "take" is not justified here.

Normally, when the exact verb for "receive" παραληψομαι is an active voice, it is "take" but when it is a middle voice as here in John 14:3, it is "receive". John 14:3, is the only occurrence of this verb in the New Testament, as a future tense, indicative mood and middle voice (or deponent). It is seen in the Septuagint several times, Daniel 5:31, and Song of Solomon 8:2. At the Daniel example it renders the Hebrew קבל "receive". In the middle voice, it functions as to take to one's self, which is to receive. At Hebrews 12:28, we "receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken" it is not "we take a kingdom"...! In most cases, in its middle sense—the recipient does not take, but rather receives—Jesus Christ will (future tense) receive to Himself these 11, as a King at court receives special persons! This now prepares us to better grasp the second objection I have towards the typical interpretation of our passage.

Certainly Jesus Christ mentions His return, in the known prophetic world of scripture, it is that prophesied return as King. Jesus declares that he will return, verse three is clear in this regard. It does not state that He is taking the 11 anywhere, but rather that He will welcome or receive them (into fellowship!) to Himself. When He does return, He establishes His Kingdom, following the tribulation. In His Kingdom there will certainly be a millennial Temple.

In verse two of our passage, John states that there are many "mansions". Actually the Greek term (μονη) refers to rooms or

dwelling places. Mansions, is the Latin Vulgate's rendering of the original Greek πορνῆ. This explains the rendering as "mansions" as seen in the KJV. In 1611, the English word "mansion" was evolving, it originally meant "a dwelling, or resting place", it is from the Latin "mansion" which is from the earlier Greek μείνειν, "to remain or stay". In 1611, the word "mansions" also meant an "elegant manor", which is probably what the KJV revisors meant. At any rate, it is better rendered as "rooms", "In my Father's house are many rooms...". John means by "Father's house" the Temple, as seen in John 2:16, also Jeremiah 7:2ff.. The Father's House, is the Temple in Jerusalem. The Millennial Temple will be built upon the new high mountain created in Israel (Isaiah 2:2), its plans and blueprints were designed in heaven, thus Jesus' preparation in heaven, He is the architect. Now when Jesus returns He dwells in His Father's House, in the Millennial Temple (which is yet to be built). [Malachi 3:1!]. Note these quotes:

Amos 9:11-15

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name, saith Jehovah that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I shall plant them on their land and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God.

Psalm 2:6

Yet I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.

Revelation 19:16

And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written,
KINGS OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

II Samuel 7:12-16

When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

Solomon builds the type, and in the 1,000 year reign, Jesus Christ occupies the actual Millennial Temple, the one He designed in heaven! A study of Ezekiel chapters 40-48, illustrates some of the great design plans! In the temple, there will be "rooms", these rooms are for the priests, (Ezekiel 40:44-46, 42:13) rendered usually as "chambers". Israel will become a Kingdom of Priests during the great Millennial reign, Revelation 1:6. We can therefore state that the 11 will have such abodes. The Millennial Temple will be **HUGE**, it will handle all of the sacrifices from all of the nations (who will have highways leading to the Temple in Jerusalem) Isaiah 2:2, 35:5-10, 49:10-13, Psalm 68:29, all of Isaiah 60. John 14:2 refers to this great future temple.