

The Place Prepared for the People Prepared

How often have we read through certain passages of the Bible numerous times without truly understanding what they meant in whatever context they were written (*John 14, Matthew 6 as well as others*)? We call them “well known passages”, mainly because we’ve read them or they’ve been read in our hearing so often we might even have them memorized. A couple of those passages that we understand as simple I would like to look at as they relate to each other, as one piece of a puzzle does to the rest. And not to take credit for being the first to recognize this through personal study since these, as many others, may well have been the teachings that so many have realized and taught before.

When Jesus told His disciples in John 14 that He needed to “go to prepare a place for” them, how often have we thought of the words of the song “Mansion Over The Hilltop” as though that song relates to us the meaning of the place that Jesus was talking about? Do our songs dictate truth of Scriptures or are the Scripture supposed to direct our songs? What is this “place” Jesus said He needed to “go to prepare”? Where is it, and how does such a place relate to both the living and dead saints under both Covenants? The answers to these and other questions are found in other scripture and can be easily understood through a basic study of them.

Joh 14:2 In My Father's house (*Gk.3614- abode*) are many mansions (*Gk.3438- a staying, that is, residence; abode*): If it were not so (*Gk.1490- otherwise*), I would have told you. I go to prepare (*Gk.2090*) a place (*Gk.5117- a spot [generally in space, but limited in occupancy], that is, location*) for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." (*KJV*)

In John 14 we understand that in Heaven there are “many abodes” and that Jesus told His disciples He needed to go back to Heaven to prepare a specific ‘spot’ for them. One that would be limited in its citizenry by obedience to what is required to enter one’s name in its registry, i.e., “the Lamb’s book of life” (*Rev 21:27*). Such names have been “written in the book of life from the foundation of the world” (*13:8; 17:8*). This is the same book Moses alluded to in *Exo 32:32*. Verse 3 (*Jn 14*) reveals something that many of us may not of considered. I hadn’t until recently. What Jesus returned to build is the same ‘spot’ (*and the passage says nothing about it remaining in Heaven*) that He is coming to “take” to Himself, so that when He returns to reclaim this ‘spot’ it will “be holy and without blemish” (*Eph 5:27*). Wasn’t Christ speaking about the church? Remember, “Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her” (*v. 25*) and as the Ephesian epistle shows the relationship between husbands and wives, the church is subject to Christ as she is His bride. This is the same word for “place” as it relates to the “woman” of *Rev 12* who also had “a place prepared”.

Rev 12:6 and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place (*Gk.5117*) prepared (*Gk.2090*) by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

Rev 12:14 But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the (“her”- *Interlinear*) place (*Gk.5117*) where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

Who is this “woman”? Her “crown of twelve stars” (*12:1*) shows her to be O.T. spiritual Israel, *12* referring to the patriarchs. Out of her came the Messiah (*specifically from the tribe of Judah- Gen 49:10; Heb 7:14*) but she continues to exist as “the new and living way... opened for us through the Curtain, that is, through [Christ’s] flesh” (*Heb 10:20*) once “her Child was caught up to God and to His throne (*Rev 12:5- Christ’s ascension- Dan 7:13*)”. She is spiritual Israel, the church that Jesus went to prepare a place for before her persecution that came first by Satan’s influence on the Jews and then via the Romans. Here’s where we take a look at another piece of the puzzle, Rev 21:2 as it relates to Act 2:1-2.

Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, **prepared as a bride** (*Jn 14:2*) adorned for her husband.

Act 2:1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. *2* And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

The “holy city, New Jerusalem” is none other than the “kingdom” Daniel described (*7:14*) that Jesus received when He was “exalted at the right hand of God, having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit” that those at Pentecost witnessed in their “seeing and hearing” (*Act 2:33*). The church’s origin is Heaven. When Jesus returned to Heaven He went there to prepare the “city” as though making preparations for His bride, the church. The church is the place that Jesus received and prepared “for those who love God... who are called according to His purpose” (*Rom 8:28*) to become His bride that He will come again and take to Himself “in order to present [her] holy and blameless and above reproach before Him (*the Father*)” (*Col 1:22*). O.T. Israel, a.k.a. “the church in the wilderness” (*Act 7:38-KJV*) had the Father as her Husband...

Isa 54:5 For your Maker is your Husband, the LORD of hosts is His name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth He is called. *6* For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God.

... just as N.T. Israel, the church, has Jesus as her Husband.

2Co 11:2 For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one Husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come (*Rev 21:2*), and His Bride has made herself ready (*via her “having [been] cleansed... by the washing of water with the word”- Eph 5:26*); *8* it was granted her (*the church/bride of the Lamb*) to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"-- for

the fine linen (*remember she is already clothed in Christ- Gal 3:27*) is the righteous deeds of the saints.

- Since “all our [own] righteousneses are as filthy rags” (*Isa 64:6-KJV*), their “righteous deeds” were/are their overcoming the accuser “by the blood of the Lamb” (*12:11*). Adam tried covering his nakedness with “fig leaves” but only through a sacrifice “did the LORD God make coats of skins, and [clothe] them” (*Gen 3:7, 21*), thus covering their shame.

Rev 19:9 And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

- The “marriage supper of the Lamb” came on Pentecost as “those who are invited” began to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (*Rom 13:14*) once “called... through [the] Gospel” (*2 The 2:14*). That is our R.S.V.P. If any were to try to enter the holy city “by another way, that man is a thief and a robber” (*Jn 10:1*) since “the way” (*Jn 14:6*) is only open to the “Jew [who] is one inwardly” whose “praise in not from man but from God” (*Rom 2:29*). Only those who wear the wedding garment are invited (*Mat 22:11*).

Another simple passage that almost everyone can cite that relates to the above pieces of this great puzzle we call the Bible is what has been called “the Lord’s prayer”, possibly since it originated with Him as the O.T. Law did to Moses.

The Lord’s Prayer, Disciples’ Prayer or Model Prayer

Mat 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name (*Ps 111:9 ... “holy and reverend is His name”*). 10 Thy kingdom come (*which it did on Pentecost; remember this is the ‘spot’ Jesus told His disciples He was going to ‘prepare’*). Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (*KJV*)

Jesus taught His disciple to pray for the kingdom to come, which it did on Pentecost in the form of the “place prepared”, or “Holy City New Jerusalem, **coming** down out of Heaven”. The Hebrews writer used the term “we receiving a kingdom” (*12:28*) meaning it is still coming as “a great multitude, which no man could number” are being added to it (*Rev 7:9*). It is only through the church that God’s will is being “done in earth, as in Heaven”. So why do so many in the denominational world still pray for the kingdom to come in unison at funerals as though it is still “the Lord’s prayer” and not respect it as it really is; either “the disciples’ (*pre-Pentecost*) prayer” or as it “was written for our instruction” (*Rom 15:4*)? This is why, for us since the day of Pentecost, it is to be considered a model prayer when we approach the Father making “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings” (*1 Tim 2:1*) through Jesus our Lord, and only “if we ask anything according to His will [*will*] He hear us” (*1 Jn 5:14*). The only reason we might “receive not” is “because [we might] ask amiss” (*Jas 4:3-KJV*).

Joh 14:5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. 7 If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him."

Twofold aspect of the "place" or church

Remember, when portions of The Revelation were written in past tense as though they had already happened as John was writing them (*such as 20:7-15*), they were written in such a manner because of their imminent nature, as are all prophesies originating from the mouth of God via Holy Spirit (*2 Pet 1:21*).

The church militant.

Rev 20:9 And they (*Satan, Gog and Magog*) marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the **camp** (*Gk.3925- battle array, encampment or barracks*) of the **saints** and the **beloved city** (*21:2*), but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, 10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The church is made up of both those yet fighting spiritual battles (*on earth*) and those who have been "faithful unto death" (*Rev 2:10*) "in Paradise". She is "the beloved city" a.k.a. New Jerusalem. As "the camp of the saints" then, camp having to do with an *encampment or barracks*, she is the 'church militant', our weaponry, of course spiritual in nature, being "the whole armor of God" (*Eph 6:13*) and "not of the flesh" because "we destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every **thought** captive to obey Christ" (*2 Cor 10:4-5*). **This** is our fight!

The church victorious.

Our goal is to become part of the 'church victorious' once we've breathed our last. This group constitutes the faithful dead "from the blood of innocent Abel" (*Mat 23:35*) along with "the Gentiles" who were "a law unto themselves" (*Rom 2:14*) and the "144,000" (*Rev 7:4*) represented by the souls of the faithful Israelite along with those "under the altar" (*Rev 6:9*). There number continues as "a great number that no one could number" (*Rev 7:9*) as many faithful brethren "[pass] from death to life" (*Jn 5:24*) where they continue to "follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb" (*Rev 14:4*) and "over such the second death has no power" (*20:6*).

Rev 15:2 And I saw, as a glassy sea having been mixed with fire (**1 Pet 1:7*). And the ones overcoming the beast, and its image, and its mark, of the number of its name (*this group under the Roman persecution*), were standing on (*Gk.1090*) the glassy sea, having harps of God. (*LITV- Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*)

*1Pe 1:7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of **Jesus Christ**.

This is the same place Paul said he was “hard pressed between”. His “desire [was] to depart and be with **Christ**... but to remain” would have been better for the saints at Philippi (*Php1:23-24*). And the “sea of glass” still denotes a separation thus those of the ‘church victorious’ are in the spirit realm of Paradise, not Heaven. So the question begs then; what is the “second death”? Here is where **John** presents the subject of Hell in Rev 19:20-21:8.

Hell

Of all N.T. personalities, **Jesus** spoke on the subject of Hell the most. Why would the loving **Son of God** speak about such a horrid place if not because **God** is “not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (*2 Pet 3:9*)? So if we are to emulate **His** love in such a way, shouldn't we also be so concerned with the souls of our fellow man? Shouldn't we also be “speaking the truth in love” (*Eph 4:15*) when it comes to this or any subject that may offend since “by doing so [we] will save [ourselves] and [our] hearers” (*1 Tim 4:16*)? But unless we don't truly understand the horrors of Hell where condemned souls are to “be tormented day and night and forever and ever” (*Rev 20:10*), how are we to be able to picture it in the minds of those whose souls we are trying to save?

I have often tried to understand the thoughts that would go through the minds of those loved ones who, at the moment of the resurrection, would see someone they knew who was a faithful **Christian**, ascending to **Jesus** and **His** angels, only to, at that moment, realize that they weren't going with them. That they were to be lost and there was no way to redeem themselves. At that point it would be too late. How terrifying a thought that would be. They would be spending an eternity in such unfathomable, agonizing pain asking themselves over and over why they didn't listen to a faithful saint who tried to share the **Gospel** with them. Why would anyone want to risk being in that position?

But before we can even begin to express the final destination of the “**many**” (*Mat 7:13*), we need to first understand the concept of eternity.

Ecc 3:11 **He** has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, **He** has put eternity into man's heart (*Heb.3820- feelings, the will and even the intellect*), yet so that he cannot find out what **God** has done from the beginning to the end.

Ecc 8:17 then I saw all the work of **God**, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out.

“God has placed in the inborn constitution of man the capability of conceiving of eternity, the struggle to apprehend (*understand*) the everlasting, the longing after an eternal life.” Albert Barnes

We are spiritual beings and the search for all things eternal can only lead us to the eternal **God** and **His** word if we want to find any answers that pertain to the concept of 'forever'.

1Co 15:53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

Once we accept that, the question then becomes what constitutes who goes where, and where is where? Is there a reward for righteous living and justice for the unrighteous? What justifies either? Should an "imperishable" man be eternally punished for what he did during his life which was "a mist that [appeared] for a little time and then [vanished]" (*Jas 4:14*)? Or should an "immortal" man who was justified later in life not be punished for his earlier crimes but enter for eternity "**the resurrection of life**" (*Jn 5:29*)?

Jackson, Wayne. "Can I Be Happy in Heaven with Loved Ones in Hell?" *ChristianCourier.com*.
Access date: June 30, 2017. <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/704-can-i-be-happy-in-heaven-with-loved-ones-in-hell>

"...Sin has not only affected us physically, it has dulled our perception of absolute holiness. Unquestionably we do not comprehend the magnitude of evil."

"Here is a burning question for deep meditation. Is it not possible that once we have escaped the frailties and limitations of the flesh, that we will have a much clearer awareness of the heinousness of sin?"

"And might we not see those who have rejected serving the Lord in an entirely different light from that entertained on earth—even though we were connected to them closely in the flesh?"

Gen 18:25 "... Shall not the **Judge** of all the earth do what is just?"

Psa 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever **You** had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting **You** are **God**.

Eternal, according to Webster, is "without beginning or end; everlasting". But how does the human mind comprehend such a timeframe. It can almost understand the concept of time unending into the future but to fathom even the thought of it having always previously existed is mindboggling. Such is the nature of **God's** existence. And such is the nature of **His** plan to redeem us back to **Him** even before man denied **Him** after the creation.

Eph 3:21 to **Him** be glory in the church and in **Christ Jesus** throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Eternal Purpose

God has always had this plan set throughout eternity to save His creation. O.T. prophecies are filled with God's eternal purpose to rescue man from his own human naturalistic desires, his self-centered lust to do as he wishes outside the bonds of morality. God established a 'moral law' that all have been subject to from the beginning when He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (*Gen 2:7*). In that plan God has always required that where sin exists a price is to be paid for reconciliation. He paid that final price through His own Son and continually proclaims that message of salvation through the Gospel via His faithful children.

Which brings us back to the subject of Hell and the question most skeptics try to burden believers with; "Why would such a loving God even create such a horrid place known as Hell?" As Jesus would often answer a question with a question, we need to respond "Why would such a loving God allow His 'only begotten Son' to die such a horrid death to rescue every soul from such a horrid place known as Hell?" If everyone was going to Heaven, why not just "eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (*1 Cor 15:32*)? Could we even imagine what went through God's mind as He watched His Own Son die at the hands of the creation He and His Son formed in the beginning (*Gen 1:26-27*)? If you were in God's position, wouldn't you then want to reward those of the faithful who answer the invitation to "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (*Rev 19:9*) and punish those who "began to make excuses" in order to be "excused" (*Lk 14:18*)?

Hell is a prepared place for an **unprepared** people. It is a place of "outer darkness" where souls "will be weeping and gnashing [their] teeth" (*Mat 8:12*). A place known as "the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death" (*Rev 21:8*), where the "devil... will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (*20:10*). So to warn someone of such a place is not 'hate speech' or 'mean speech', as some will call it out of a guilty conscience, as long as we speak "the truth in love" (*Eph 4:15*). Don't we warn our children to look both ways before crossing the street? Is that 'hate speech'? Are we doing it out of just being mean or is it because we love them and are looking out for their best interests? Paul gave an incomplete list of sins to the Galatian brethren and concluded "I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (*Gal 5:21*). If a person doesn't "inherit the kingdom of God" for all eternity there remains only one other place where his resurrected body and soul will spend; "in Hell" (*Mat 10:28*). And those are the words of Jesus.

Yes, there was a time when Hell fire and brimstone sermons got peoples' attention but those days may well be long gone and people now respond better to the truth spoken in love. There's no 'cookie cutter' method to reach the masses since everyone has their own needs. The method may change between individuals and their needs but the message should never change. It is the same message Peter preached at Pentecost, that Paul would later preach and it remains the only message that saves today; "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (*1 Cor 2:2*). So the question begs; are you in the right "spot" that Jesus said He will return for and take to Himself? Are you 'prepared' for such a 'prepared place'? If not there remains a place prepared for you but our desire is that you be made ready for the place where Jesus said "I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also" (*Jn 14:3*).

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