

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

The Prepared Place

By Edward O. Bragwell

In John 14:2, Jesus said, *“In my Father’s house there are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you,”* in the King James Version and a few others. Some of the later translations render it rooms or dwelling places instead of mansions. According to Strong it is from the Greek word *Mone* which means, “a staying, i.e. residence (the act or the place): — abode, mansion.”

Whether it is mansions, rooms, or shacks, for that matter, is of little consequence to me. What really matters is that it is a place prepared for me. It is a place where I will be with God for eternity without any of the evil that goes with this world and with all the good that God has in store for me in heaven – which is far greater than all the good that we have in this life.

Some of the older brothers used to close their prayers with “And Lord when this life is over, give us a home in heaven, and that will be enough.” When I would hear that, I usually would think: “Isn’t that the truth.”

Most of that which we know about heaven is given to us in figurative language. We are told *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is”* (1 John 3:2 NKJV). If we don’t know what we will be like, how can we know what God, heaven and all the heavenly host will literally be like? We can be content with a knowledge of what it will be kind of like from reading the figurative descriptions of it and wait to see what it is really like when we are privileged to enter into that glorious abode. Enough is revealed to whet our appetites for it.

When men begin to speculate about the things of heaven, identifying them with the same literacy as things in this material universe, they reveal that they have a much greater imagination than knowledge of what the Bible reveals. Whether one thinks of it as a mansion, a room, or a dwelling place he needs to understand he is thinking of figurative descriptions rather than literal – of spiritual things and not material. The same is true of the “streets of gold” and other figures in the book of Revelation. We need to understand that we are only capable of understanding so much. God has given us as much as we are capable of understanding by His figurative descriptions of the place prepared. Once there, we will be capable of seeing Jesus as he is. Likewise, we should be able to see heaven as it is. ■

Must I Attend The Church Services?

By Nicolas Edwards

Some may ask this question. Many don’t recognize the importance of assembling with the saints. You must attend:

TO BE FAITHFUL. There are a lot of Christians who aren’t faithful! We are commanded to be faithful (1 Cor. 4:2; Rev. 2:10). That is reliable, trustworthy, faithful in the execution of commands. Can you be relied upon to execute the command of assembling (Heb. 10:25)?

NOT TO SIN. The one who forsakes the assembling commits willful sin (Heb. 10:25-26). *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin”* (Jas. 4:17).

TO ENTER IN. *“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city”* (Rev. 22:14). A commandment from the Lord is *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”* (Heb. 10:25).

TO FULFILL ONE ANOTHER RESPONSIBILITIES. We are responsible to love, prefer, admonish, greet, serve, forbear, teach and admonish, comfort, edify, exhort, consider, provoke one another and more! (Jn. 13:34; Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 16:20; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:16; 1 Th. 4:18; 5:11; Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25). It is impossible to forsake the assembling and fulfill all of these.

TO BE EDIFIED. A work of the church is edification (Eph. 4:11-16). Through the word, one is built up (Ac. 20:32). One reason some Christians are so weak is because of assembling forsaking.

TO BE FILLED. *“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled”* (Mt. 5:6). Evidently, some are not hungering and thirsting after the right things. Faithful Christians will attend to be filled!

TO SEEK FIRST THINGS FIRST. *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Mt. 6:33). *“Seek those things which are above”* (Col. 3:1).

TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE. We need be good *“ensamples”* (1 Th. 1:7). *“Be thou an example”* (1 Tim. 4:12). Suppose every member attended as you do. Would every member be present at every service?

FOR THE CHURCH TO FULLY FUNCTION. When you read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, you appreciate that the body is made of many members and each member is needed! The church can only fulfill its work to the fullest when every member supplies his part (Eph. 4:16). Did you know by forsaking the assembling you are hindering the church?

TO MAKE BEST USE OF YOUR TIME. *“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil”* (Eph. 5:15-16).

There are many commands of God that cannot be kept, unless we assemble with the saints. Thus, we must attend faithfully! ■



Don't Get Cheated

By David McPherson

In Colossians 2:8, Paul warned his brethren: *“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ”* (NKJV). The KJV translates it: *“Beware lest any man spoil you....”* The idea is that false teachers would lead them away from truth if they were not careful. These Christians could become the booty or spoil of wicked men who could pervert their minds through error.

There are few who enjoy cheaters or being cheated. In sports, the possibility that Barry Bonds cheated to become baseball's home run king has thousands of fans frustrated to no end. The fact that an NBA referee cheated players and fans through gambling schemes has outraged scores of hoops enthusiasts. While these may have a legitimate beef and justified concerns, there is a greater problem today. Let's get worked up about the cheating of Colossians 2.

The cheating Paul spoke of is as real now as when he penned it. Those who fail to respect the authority of Christ cheat themselves and others. Give me the Bible. Preach God's word. The doctrines and opinions of men when advanced in the religious realm are destructive. Beware friend. Check the preacher. Don't get cheated. ■

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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