

I. Introduction:

- A. This morning I have the pleasure to consider several of the most beloved scriptures in all the Word of God.
1. What Christian has not been moved at some point in his life by the words of **John 14** – *“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.”*
 2. Arguably **Psalm 23** is the best known and loved of all scriptures – *“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”*
 3. And how about **1 Corinthians 2:9** – *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”*
- B. These and a dozen other scriptures bring up a theme – a topic – that I’d like you to think about.
1. We are told in these verses that God is – or has been – making **preparations** for His people.
 2. What a blessed thought. And what huge considerations.
 3. I know that this contains an accommodation to our weak minds, but there is reality behind the strictly human terminology.
- C. We know that the infinite and omnipotent **God doesn’t need to plan** things before getting them done.
1. And He doesn’t need **time** in order to complete things.
 2. The Lord Jesus, in speaking to us, once said, *“What king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?”*
 3. Kings may need to weigh possibilities, but God is not bound to human limitations, and He doesn’t need to think about, or consult anyone, before doing anything.
 4. As is illustrated in creation, all He needs to do is say, *“Let there be light, and there is light.”*
 - a. He didn’t have to prepare the sun first in order to generate that light.
 - b. He didn’t have to produce a few elements or create some physical laws about combustion or nuclear reactions in order to create light.
 - c. In fact, He didn’t have to think about it – what was necessary, what results might occur.
 5. The eternal God is not like a man who has to plan, buy supplies, think through how to carry out His project and then when everything is ready, He begins.
- D. And yet, that is what the Biblical terminology suggests, because we, weak-minded humans beings, need something upon which to hang our intellectual hats.
1. Despite the theological weaknesses, I am going to use that anthropological word to try to highlight some Biblical truth.
 2. I hope that it will be a blessing to the children of God, and that it will whet the appetite of those who are not.

II. God has been making some blessed preparations for His people.

- A. Let’s return together to **John 14**.
1. *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”*
 - a. *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.*
 - b. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*
 2. It’s important to understand to whom Jesus was speaking, when He says, *“Let not **your** heart be troubled.”*
 3. The context shows Jesus speaking to Peter earlier and afterwards to Thomas and Philip.
 4. In other words these comforting words are given to the disciples of Christ, and through them to believers and disciples today.
 - a. *“Ye believe in **God**, believe also in **ME**.”*
 - b. Christians not only believe and trust the God of the Jews, but also specifically in Christ, the Son of God.

5. Furthermore, they have a relationship with him which is so special He will personally return to earth to gather them around Him.
 - a. And they will at that point remain with the Lord forever.
 - b. *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*
6. So Christ is talking to the children of God.

B. Well then, to what does *“my Father’s house”* refer?

1. If you want to say, *“the Kingdom of God,”* I will not argue, and we will return to that in a moment.
2. If you prefer to think of **heaven**, feel free to do so. *“In heaven are many mansions.”*
3. But some theologians get all knotted up over the word *“mansion”* – insisting that it should be nothing more than a simple *“abode”* or *“dwelling place.”*
4. We don’t have a lot of information about Heaven, but since we do know a bit about the Lord, I don’t mind picturing apartments in Heaven being on a scale of million-dollar mansions or penthouse suites today.
5. *“Mansion”* is perfectly permissible as far as I am concerned.
6. I guarantee that most glorious home you might envision on earth will not begin to compare to what the saint will enjoy in Heaven.
7. And without more information, we’ll have to leave it at that.

C. But we notice, the Lord Jesus, our Saviour, has said, *“I go to PREPARE a place for you.”*

1. Lay aside the fact that this is the Son of God; lay aside the fact that God doesn’t need to plan and prepare.
2. Let’s just think about the word *“prepare”* on a **human level** – before we raise it to the **divine**.
3. Doesn’t preparation involve **forethought**?
 - a. Doesn’t this suggest that the Lord has given this some consideration?
 - b. If the God whose instantaneous thought is perfect, what about which about which He thinks and plans?
 - c. When the infinite God **considers something**, it’s safe to say that it is **considerable consideration**.
4. Secondly, when you and I prepare for something, we **choose to prepare**.
 - a. I have not thought about adding a new wing to my house, because I don’t want a new wing to my house
 - b. I am not preparing for a trip to Russian, because I have no intention of traveling to Russia.
 - c. I don’t want to go to Russia and I haven’t give a single thought to adding on to my house.
 - d. But Christ has prepared a place for your eternal future, because He has thought about it and chosen to do so.
5. Furthermore, when we prepare for a big job, there is usually **effort** or **work involved**.
 - a. We might have to go to the bank and borrow money, draw up plans, contact a contractor.
 - b. There may be a lot of stress in preparing for that new wing on the house.
 - c. Of course, the Lord doesn’t experience stress, but the whole idea suggests effort on His part.
6. I know we can’t say that God put any sweat into His mansion building, but the implication of the word involves the Lord’s labour on our behalf.

D. Now let’s take that scripture a step farther with ***I Corinthians 2:9*** –

1. *“As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”*
2. *“As it is written”* means that this is a quote from elsewhere in the Bible.
 - a. It comes from ***Isaiah 64***, where the prophet contrasts in prayer, God’s judgment on the wicked and His blessings on the righteous.
 - b. Isaiah rejoices with *“Thou (Lord) meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways.”*
 - c. And he says, *“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.”*

- E. Do you rejoice in the Lord and do you work righteousness in Christ's name?
1. Do you long to see His face? Are you anxious for the return of the Redeemer?
 2. Do you love Christ and the thought of Christ.
 3. Then the Lord says prepare yourself, because you can't even imagine what I have prepared for you.
 4. *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."*
- F. But **you** don't love God, do you? You love sin more than righteousness; isn't that true.
1. In that case you need what Isaiah was saying prior to that great verse.
 2. *"Oh that thou (God) wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,*
 - a. *As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!*
 - b. *When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence."*
 3. The Lord has **prophesied** and **prepared two** kinds of things – two kinds of **futures**.
 - a. One will be glorious – *"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."*
 - b. But the other will be the desolation of the earth and the words, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, **prepared** for the devil and his angels."*
 4. Which will it be that **YOU** hear from the lips of the Lord?
- G. In **Matthew 25** we have more of the Lord's blessing preparations.
1. Let your mind wander amid the words of this scripture – let the Holy Spirit take hold of your imagination.
 2. *"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:"*
 - a. Our minds can only touch the hem of the garment in trying to picture the Lord in His glory.
 - b. How many angels will be with Jehovah in his scene? *"All the holy angels"* – millions? Billions?
 - c. And the Lord Jesus will be sitting on the most ornate, most brilliant white throne.
 3. *"Before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."*
 - a. Don't picture the world divided up globally into their 195 respective nations.
 - b. The word is **"ethnos,"** and it refers to the people of all nations irrespective of nationality, speech or skin color.
 - c. *"And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."*
 - d. Will this involve those millions of angels, and will it take a few time?
 - e. Or will it occur instantly as it was in the beginning, *"And God said, Let there be light, and there was light... and God divided the light from the darkness."*
 4. Onto what side of that vast congregation will **you** be thrown?
 - a. Simply being a citizen of the United States of America doesn't make you one of God's sheep.
 - b. There will be Russians and Koreans among the sheep and millions of Americans among the goats.
- H. *"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*
1. God's sheep will at that point inherit and begin to enjoy the blessings of God's kingdom.
 2. I am not smart enough to tell you, point by point, what the blessings of the kingdom will be.
 3. But I am smart enough to know that *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of (those sheep), the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."*

- I. Notice the last words of **verse 34** – *“inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”*
 1. The God who is almighty enough to speak light into existence out of the previous darkness, has been **preparing** a kingdom from the time of that creation.
 2. What is contained in all that kingdom’s forethought and planning, choice and effort?
 3. I am anxious to find out, and I’m sure that even most heavenly-minded saints will be amazed, gobsmacked, speechless.

III. These scriptures and a dozen more speak about what God is preparing for us and for His glory.

- A. These are speaking about what is yet to be enjoyed by the people of God.
 1. But there are also scriptures which suggest that God has other kinds of preparations in place for us **TODAY**.
 2. *“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*
 - a. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*
 - b. *He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.*
 - c. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*
 - d. *Thou **PREPAREST** a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*
 - e. *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”*
- B. I’m not going to push and stretch the word *“preparest”* in **verse 5** too far.
 1. At this point let’s not talk about **forethought, choice** and **effort**.
 2. But at the same time, doesn’t this Psalm bear the fragrance of God’s loving care and perfect providence?
 3. He has prepared green pastures and still waters for His people; anointing oil and refreshing liquid.
 4. He is prepared to walk with us through the valley of the shadow of death; the moment we need Him He will be there.
 5. *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”*
 6. Doesn’t this **Psalm** suggest that when the day comes we must enter that **dark valley**, there on the **other side** is the house of Lord, with all its mansions, waiting for us?
 7. Doesn’t this **Psalm** blend seamlessly with **John 14** where we began?
 - a. *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*
 - b. *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.*
 - c. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*
- C. Consider **Psalm 31:19** as another example of the Lord’s preparations for us today.
 1. *“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast **laid up** for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!*
 2. *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.”*
 3. I don’t have time to show you other scriptures like these.

IV. Not only has the Lord made preparations for His people – His sheep, His saints, His elect.

A. But He has prepared those people as well.

1. In fact, in the multitasking heart of the infinite God, His **preparations** of the **people** has **paralleled** the **preparations** of their **mansions**.

2. **Ephesians 1:3** – *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*
- a. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*
 - b. *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”*
3. Don't we find some of the same language about the Lord's preparation of mansions and kingdom found in this scripture about the people He intends to occupy those mansions and kingdom?

- B. **I Peter 1** – *“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,*
- C. *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*
1. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*
 2. *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*
 3. *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*
- D. Notice the references to **choice** and **forethought** and **effort** of preparation.
1. Notice the reference to an *“inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved ... for you”* in the Father's house – mansions, if you like.
 2. An infinite and perfect God is not going to make plans and prepare for guests, who may never arrive.
 3. He has **prepared** the **place**, the **people**, the eternal **provisions** and the blessed **prosperity** of everything.
- E. Another scripture in this regard is found in **Romans 9**.
1. In **verse 23** – God calls **His saints** *“vessels of mercy”* – containers of mercy and grace.
 2. Furthermore he says that those *“vessels of mercy”* he had *“afore prepared unto glory.”*
 3. Like the jar into which Mom pours the huckleberry preserves, it was made before she made the jam.
 4. **Romans 9** is all about God's sovereign choice to save a few sinners – into whom he pours His eternal mercy.
 5. *“Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*
 - a. *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?*
 - b. *Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?*
 - c. *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:*
 - d. *And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory...”*
- F. Not only has God prepared a place for His sheep, but he has by his grace made them sheep – vessels of mercy.

V. But there is another side to this story which is not as wonderful as this.

- A. Please return to **Matthew 25** where we began, and let's fill in the blanks.
1. *“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:*
 - a. *And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:*
 - b. *And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*

2. *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*
3. *Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*
4. *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, **Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, PREPARED** for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”*

- B. It must be understood that these references to feeding, clothing and caring for the needy are not the reasons some were sheep and others were goats.
1. This treatment of others only proved the character of the people involved.
 2. Oh, and by the way, the sick and poor themselves could have been either sheep or goats.
 3. But this is not the point with which I want to close this morning.
- C. The last verse of this scripture uses our key word once again.
1. **Just as** there is a **kingdom prepared** for God’s **sheep** from the foundation of the world, **verse 41** says, *“Then shall he say also unto (the goats) on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”*
 2. Just as God has prepared blessings and a blessed place for those whom He saves, there is an eternal Lake of Fire prepared for those who die in their sins and rebellion against Him.
 3. Peter said that when Judas, the betrayer of Christ, died, *“he went to his own place”* – the place prepared for him.
- D. With this I come back to **John 14**.
1. Judas attempted to kill himself, and he did die, then *“he went to his own place.”*
 2. But to His true disciples, the Saviour has said, *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*
 - a. *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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*
- E. Where will **you** spend eternity? Your own place, or the place that Christ has gone to prepare?
1. There is a sense in which **you must prepare** – by **repentance** before God and **faith** in Christ.
 2. Prepare your answer. Which will it be? Your own place, or the place that Christ has gone to prepare?
 3. Don’t wrestle over the question: *“Am I a sheep or a goat?”*
 4. No, just assume you are a sheep, and turn to the Saviour.
 5. *“Lord, I believe, and trust, that you died to save me from my sin.*
 - a. *Thank you Lord for making me one of your own.*
 - b. *Thank you for preparing for me, as unworthy as I am, a mansion in the Father’s house.”*
 6. I beseech you to turn to the Saviour this morning in repentance and faith.