

## Jesus prepares our resting-place

by Douglas E. Cox

In John 14:1, Jesus encourages believers to trust in him. Belief, or faith, is connected with *rest*, and with the promise that a "*resting-place*" is being prepared for believers, according to the Weymouth translation. Below are a few comments on portions of John 14:1-2.

John 14:1-7

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Trust in God: trust in me also.

In my Father's house there are many resting-places. Were it otherwise, I would have told you; for I am going to make ready a place for you.

And if I go and make ready a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me, that where I am you also may be.

And where I am going, you all know the way."

"Master," said Thomas, "we do not know where you are going. In what sense do we know the way?"

"I am the Way," replied Jesus, "and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you—all of you—knew me, you would fully know my Father also. From this time forward you know Him and have seen Him."

**Let not your hearts be troubled.** Having hearts free from trouble seems almost synonymous with "rest." This is also seen in Hebrews 4:11, where entering into *rest* requires faith, or believing the words of God.

**In my Father's house there are many resting-places.** The NIV has, "My Father's house has many rooms." Jesus also promised "rest;" in Matthew 11:28, he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Resting-place" conveys the idea of the

promised rest that was associated with the land of promise in the Old Testament. The metaphors of a house, or a city, imply a place, or a land. The promised rest is identified with the sabbath day, and the promised land, in Hebrews 4:4-9.

Hebrews 11:16 refers to the promised land as a country located in heaven. "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

**I am going to make ready a place for you.** Jesus refers here to a place in the heavenly kingdom. Paul wrote, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." [Philippians 3:20-21 NIV]

Jesus said, he is the door to the sheepfold. [John 10:7-9] Entry into the kingdom is through him, not by man. He possesses the key of David, which is the key to the heavenly Jerusalem. "What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open." [Revelation 3:7] The place that Jesus is preparing for us is the place we may occupy now, in this present life. Paul said that God has "raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." [Ephesians 2:6]

In Revelation 12, the church's place is called a wilderness. That is where the woman flees, in verse 6, and to which she flies with the two wings of a great eagle, in verse 14. These verses describe both the *time*, and the *place* of the church, which is represented by the woman. In each case her place is prepared by God. In verse 6, she flees from the dragon, and from the world. In verse 14, she soars with wings of eagles. I suggest these wings represent the gift of prophecy. To "flee" on the one hand, and to "fly" on the other, are contrasting figures. Yet her place, and the time periods, are the same in both verses; 1,260 days in verse 6, and *a time, times and a half* in verse 14. In the second case, however, Satan has been overcome. He is cast down from heaven, where he accused the saints.

Possessing the viewpoint of prophecy, and a divine point of view, represented by the wings of an eagle, the saints are much better equipped to understand the condition of the church, and where we are in the scheme of things. This contrasts with the condition described in Daniel 7, where the saints are dominated by a little horn with "eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." Eyes like the eyes of a man picture a *natural, human* point of view, that contrasts with the *divine* viewpoint of prophecy, and believing in God.

Jesus said, speaking of the church, and the heavenly Jerusalem: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." [Luke 21:24] This corresponds to Revelation 11:2, "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." In both prophecies the church, represented by Jerusalem, is trodden down by Gentiles. The temple itself in Revelation 11:1-2 represents the believers, and the true Israel, but Gentiles occupy the outer court of the temple.