

THE MANSION

*[Jesus told his disciples,] "[In] my Father's house are many rooms....
I am going there to prepare a place for you."*

—John 14:2

INTRODUCTION

Imagine sitting on a cloud all day, every day, forever, just strumming a harp. Nothing else to do. Nowhere else to go. Sound like fun? Amazingly, that's the mental image many people have of heaven. Who knows where they got it from, but it's not in the Bible. The Bible paints a very different picture of heaven. It describes a great city with streets of gold and gates of pearl, surrounded by a wall decorated with precious stones. A crystal-clear river flows through the middle of the city, lined with beautiful trees. The city will shine with God's glory all the time, and its gates will always be open. Sounds great, doesn't it? And that's just the city! There will also be mountains in heaven and all kinds of animals, all of them friendly and safe. And no one in heaven will ever be sad or get sick or die. Doesn't heaven sound a lot more interesting now?

We're going to talk about one more thing that makes heaven exciting. Today's devotion is based on John 14:2, in which Jesus told his disciples, "[In] my Father's house are many rooms.... I am going there to prepare a place for you." The devotion is called "The Mansion."

DEVOTION

Dillan and Leanne followed their parents through the beautiful mansion. They were at the Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina. Although it was finished in 1895, it was still the largest home in America. "Can you believe the size of this house?" said Dillan's dad as they admired the huge library. "Two hundred and fifty rooms. Sixty-five fireplaces. A banquet hall, a billiard room, and a music room. It even has elevators and an indoor swimming pool!"

"Don't forget the bowling alley," Dillan said, grinning.

Shaking her head, his mom said, "I can't get over how big the bedrooms are."

Leanne gazed at all the polished woodwork in the library, and at the thousands of books it contained. "I like the garden best, with all the stone walls and statues." Leaving the library, the family continued their tour. They reached the observatory, atop the main tower. From there they could see woods, meadows, a river, and mountains.

Dillan said, "I'd love to live in a place like this!"

Have you ever really thought about what heaven will be like? The Bible doesn't reveal everything about it. But you won't be living on a cloud, that's for sure. God's home will be an exciting, wonderful place. And he has a room in it just for you!

WORDS TO TREASURE

I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

—*Psalm 23:6*

QUESTIONS

1. What are you most looking forward to about heaven? Are you eager to meet Jesus face-to-face? Who else are you looking forward to seeing there?
2. Are you excited about meeting angels? What do you think *that* will be like? Do you think angels will be serious all the time, or will they like to run and play?
3. In many ways, heaven will seem very normal to us. After all, the Bible says it has streets and trees and animals. In many other ways, however, it will probably seem very unfamiliar. Why is it good that we can expect both familiar and unfamiliar things?

One answer: familiar things are comforting, while unfamiliar things are new and exciting!

4. Jesus said he was going ahead of us to heaven to prepare a place for us. What would you like *your* room in heaven to be like? Do you think Jesus knows enough about you to make your place just right for you?
5. Can you imagine all the stories that will be told in heaven? Surely there will be great tales of wonderful ways in which people served God during their earthly life. What do you want *your* story to be like? How does that change the kinds of choices you'll make as you live your life here and now?

Consider spending some time playing a game or doing an exercise to help children memorize the "Words to Treasure" Scripture verse.