

## UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God*  
**IN KING JESUS.**

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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by – Stuart H. Pouliot

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### ***Abodes in My Father's House***

In my Father's house are many mansions (*mone*): if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (John 14:2 KJV)

It becomes very wearisome (at least for me) to hear preachers speak of dying, going to heaven, and living in heavenly mansions for all eternity, as if this is to be the entire expectation of believers. Did Jesus die on the cross just so He could save a few people and give them mansions to live in forever and ever? Doubtful!

Very seldom is any purpose attached to living in these mansions. It is as if life will go on. Granted, it is always presented as a glorious life; after all, we will see our loved ones and walk on golden streets with them as we pluck fruit from the tree of life. Others paint very romantic images of heaven as a place filled with fields of flowers and the air filled with beautiful angelic singing. However, again, seldom is there any real purpose for such a life. It all seems rather boring, especially if such an existence is to go on forever and ever. The thought of having a mansion to live in has no appeal whatsoever, even if it is a place that will never decay, never require a new paint job or a new roof. Where is the value of the cross in such an expectation?

Stop and think about this for a moment and ask yourself this question: Did Jesus die for me just so I could have a mansion in the sky and I could live eternally in that place? Is this truly your expectation? I realize many would answer that it is not the only expectation but merely a part of it. Here's another question: Could it be that Jesus was not referring to a physical mansion at all but to something far greater and far more spiritual? This is the question we need to explore.

Many translations use the words *mansions*, *dwelling places*, or *rooms*, which leads one to think of physical structures. However, other translations use the word *abode*, which, as we will see, has a greater meaning and answers the question being posed.

In my Father's house there are many abodes (*mone*); were it not so, I had told you: for I go to prepare you a place.... (John 14:2 DNT)

In My Father's house are many abodes (*mone*); yet if not I would have told you, for I am going to make ready a place for you. (John 14:2 CLV)

The Greek word for *abode* is *mone*, which means "a staying, that is, residence"; it is most often translated as *abode* or *mansion*. This noun form comes from the verb form *meno*, which means "to stay in a given place, state, relation or expectancy." It is most often translated as the word *abide*; the same word often used by John, the abiding apostle. In fact, Jesus began to unfold the meaning of the "mansions" in John, chapter 14, with the explanation found in chapter 15.

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and **We will come to him and make Our abode (*mone*) with him.**" (John 14:23 NASB)

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides (*meno*) in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide (*meno*) in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides (*meno*) in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide (*meno*) in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide (*meno*) in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide (*meno*) in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide (*meno*) in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide (*meno*) in His love." (John 15:4-10 NASB)

The word *abode* is from the same Greek word that is so often translated as *mansion*. Perhaps Jesus meant to say: *We will come to him and make Our mansion with him*. In other words: *We will make Our home with him, or We will take up residence in him*. Is this not what transpires when we are given the faith to believe on Jesus? *Christ in us, the hope of glory!*

The heart of the matter is us abiding in Him and He abiding in us. It is not about physical structures but a living relationship with Jesus and His many-membered body. All who are in Christ are in His body, which has many parts, each with different functions. Consequently, Jesus was referring to His body that would come forth following His resurrection and ascension back to the throne of God. His body is His Father's house, the dwelling of God *in spirit* (Ephesians 2:22) that is being built up to become *New Jerusalem*.

But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. (Hebrews 3:5b-6 NASB)

The Son is not faithful over a physical mansion but over a house, which refers to a corporate body of believers who have an expectation that they will be transfigured into the image of Christ.

When Jesus came to this earth 2,000 years ago, a body was prepared for Him (Hebrews 10:5) that endured the shame and suffering of the cross. Gloriously, this body was destined to rise up from among the dead, being transformed into a new spirit-animated, immortal body of glory. The good news for us is that when He ascended into the presence of His Father, another body was prepared for Him, a corporate, spiritual body on earth called *the body of Christ*. This is us who believe. We are the heavenly mansions, if you will. While residing in bodies of flesh and blood, we have an earnest of the spirit that will fill Jesus' corporate body in the next age when we will be fully conformed to His image, as His full complement.

Today, we are the earthly abiding place of God's Son. We are many members with various functions—collectively being built as the dwelling of God *in spirit*. To function properly in His spiritual body, which is the ecclesia, we need to abide in Christ and Christ in us. In this way, we have a foretaste of what is to come in that day when our beloved Lord comes to meet His body face to face. What a glorious day that will be!

Let us not look for mansions in the sky. Heaven is coming to earth! This is why we eagerly wait for our Savior, our Rescuer to come to earth. Until then, let us continually abide in King Jesus! And, let us glory in the expectation that He is returning to receive and transform His body into His image.