No Mansions

Reflection by Timothy Blackwelder, Walla Walla, WA

It was a shocking day when I discovered there would be no mansions in heaven.

You remember the text: "In my Father’s house are many mansions." I, along with others, looked forward to the day when the poverty of this earth was over, and I would live in a palatial home with all my needs supplied, and the lawn mowed by someone else. How could that not be true if I was one of those who structured my life in such a way that I was worthy of heaven?

But, reading different versions of the Bible for new insight, one day I read the text in the New American Standard version: "In my Father’s house are many dwelling places.” What? No mansions? We might live in tents in heaven?

Then I remembered another text that says, “Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” Further study revealed that the word “dwell” is often used to talk of God’s association with the inhabitants of planet Earth. I discovered that God wants to live, communicate, interact with human beings on an intimate basis, but that we have, as a group, rejected these advances.

For example—God plants a garden in Eden, and walks and talks with Adam and Eve, but soon they are afraid of God. The Israelites asked that Moses speak to them, not God, and
so the sanctuary was established, as a place for communion with God. After the Exodus, in Canaan God established judges and prophets to communicate with the people, but they rejected this method and asked for a king. Then Jesus came to dwell among us, but we crucified Him. Since that time, the Bible says that the “Spirit of God dwells in us,” though it is evident that this is not true for most of us.

Jesus went to prepare heaven for us. But I believe that it is much more than a fancy house where we can enjoy the glories of heaven. He wants to live with us, to be part of our lives, to walk and talk with us as he did with Enoch, to be within us through His Spirit and guide us.

We can be assured that God’s way will happen in the end. I like the way the New English Bible portrays heaven in Revelation. “Now at last God has His dwelling among men.”

So, am I going to heaven because there are mansions there? NO!!! I am going there to be with Jesus.

Recalibrate

Imagine what daily life will be like in heaven. How does your new imagination fit with stereotypes?

What changes in your life could be made to truly walk and talk with Jesus in the next year?

Feel free to send any thoughts or comments to Timothy Blackwelder.