

Good morning! I recently heard Islamic scholar Irshad Manji say on the radio that the word “hor” has been mistranslated by readers and translators of the Quran. The word was thought to mean “virgins” and, according to this scholar, is more accurately translated “grapes” or “raisins”. This is meaningful because of the supposed promise of 72 *hor* to those who are martyred for their faith. Imagine the disappointment, for example, of a suicide bomber who blew himself up, thinking he would receive 72 virgins. Upon arrival at the hereafter, he discovers that he is receiving a box of raisins. Translations matter! This supposed mix-up caused me to think about another often mistranslated phrase in scripture, one which is very familiar to most Christians. Let’s read it together this morning:

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.

John 14:2 KJV

You’ve read this passage before, right? Do you think you have a mansion waiting for you in heaven and you’ll be moving into it after you die? Do you think that everyone else is getting one, too? That would certainly require a lot of heavenly real estate! Not only that, I think I’d like to have some other folks live with me (although since it is for eternity I would like to be a little selective). I don’t really need my *own* mansion. The King James Version translation is a little unfortunate. Nearly every translation says it this way: “My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?” What? Hold on---I thought I was getting a mansion; now it turns out I’m only getting a room? I hope it will at least be a furnished room, since I can’t take any of my stuff! All my feeble attempts at humor aside, what is Jesus trying to tell us in this passage? He’s not saying we’ll get a really big house after we die---He’s telling us that we will be with Him forever. You couldn’t ask for better company! I don’t know what we’ll be doing---Jesus doesn’t tell us—but I do know that we will be with Him forever...and that’s really Good News!