

Where are the Dead?

By C. Warren Andreasen – rev 6/29.24

It has long been a tradition in the Christian Church that when a person dies he or she immediately goes to be with Jesus, or in the case of a child, is safely in the arms of Jesus.

This idea has given comfort to many survivors through the years, but what does the Bible say about this?

First of all we must consider the question of “Where is Jesus?” In John 13:36 Jesus, referring to his pending death, says to his disciples, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.” In John 14:2 Jesus says; “In my Father’s house are many rooms... ; I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am”. This of course refers to the return of Christ, which is also saying that the disciples will remain here until He returns to get them.

We drop back to the Old Testament to Daniel 12:2 where it says: “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.” The verse is talking about everyone and it states that “everyone whose name is found written in the book of life — will be delivered.”

Jesus went to be with the Father when he died on the Cross. In John 20:17 Jesus has risen from the dead but had not yet ascended and he was talking to Mary; Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

This passage makes it clear that Jesus returned to the Father who is in Heaven (recall John 3:16; our Father who art in Heaven...). In Matt 9:24 Jesus is talking to the family of a dead girl and he says “The girl is not dead but asleep” which seems kind of strange, but interestingly enough, a search of the entire new Testament reveals that Jesus always referred to the dead as sleeping.

Referring to the time of tribulation, in Matt. 24:31 Jesus says; : “And he will send his angels with a trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.” For this to have meaning we must understand that the ‘elect’ are not already with Jesus. 1Co 15:52 “in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at

the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” Changed means we will get new bodies.

1Th 4:13

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

1Th 4:14

We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

1Th 4:15

According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

1Th 4:16

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 1Th 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Jesus also said in John 6:46 “No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.” Since Jesus is with the Father this means that our dead are not with Him.

There are many more references however I believe that what I have shown is enough to make the case as to where the dead are. Remember that the rapture would make no sense at all if we were already with Jesus. We get new heavenly bodies, we do not need the old one that has rotted and decayed, or been destroyed in so many possible ways. The fact is that our Spirit is what remains, not the actual physical body. We are spirit and reside in our earthly bodies; the real us is not the body but the spirit and soul that dwells temporarily in the body. We continue to exist after the body is dead and gone. We are told in God’s Word that we will rise up to meet the returning Jesus [in the clouds] then we will reign with Him for the thousand years before the Heavens and Earth are destroyed [by fire] and recreated. At that time the New Jerusalem comes down onto the new Earth and God comes and dwells with men. This all points to another subject, that we actually never do go to what we now call Heaven, but this is beyond the scope of this short paper.

Rev 20:1

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.

Rev 20:2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

Rev 20:3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

Rev 20:4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Rev 20:5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.

Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Rev 20:7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison

Rev 20:8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.

Rev 20:9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

Rev 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

Rev 20:13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

Rev 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

Rev 20:15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first

earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

Rev 21:2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

So you see that we (mankind) never do go to the place we now call Heaven, where the Father and the Son now are. It may be that our 'Heaven' (where we are sleeping), as we call it, is a spirit world and not physical in any sense we know, however after the new earth is created and God dwells with men, there is no longer any purpose for the other Heaven (it gets destroyed too) as God the Father, the Son, and all of his children will live in the new physical world that has been created for that purpose.

LATE ADDITION

Judgment – Judgment does not wait for the great throne, which is a time to review the life of the person. If your name is in the Book of Life, you have already been judged worthy, if you are caught up in the rapture, you clearly have already been judged, otherwise how would the angels know who to take?

Time – I went in for surgery and the doctor “gave me a little sedative to help me relax”, then I was rolled down the hall towards the operating room. We came to a turn in the hallway and turned right, and immediately I woke up in the recovery room. I had exactly zero sense of passed time. I was just suddenly in the recovery room. My only point here is I have no idea how long I was “asleep”. To me, the movement from the gurney in the hallway, to the recovery room, was instantaneous and there was no sense of lapsed time or what happened during that time period. This is something to think about.