

Where Are the Dead?

There are many morally good people in the world, but unless our Father draws them into His fold: they will never understand God's word and His plan. We don't have to worry about anyone being tormented in flames forever. Romans 6:23 says the wages of sin is death. Everybody sins and everybody pays. This is physical death. **The dead are asleep.** Paul may have said: to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. OK, you close your eyes at night: presto—it is morning. It is the same principal. In other words in Paul's conscious mind, it is resurrection day. The day of the Lord!

Here are some references to the unconscious saints:

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6; Psalms 6:5, 30:9; 88:10-12, 115:17; Isaiah 38:18.

Nobody is in heaven yet: Read John 3:13, it says "no man hath ascended up to heaven." They are asleep.

Next, read Acts 2:29-35. David is still not ascended into the heavens. All the OT patriarchs are mentioned in Hebrews 11 and none of them have received their reward yet. Hebrews 12 is just a reference to Mount Zion which is New Jerusalem, yet future. Heb. 11:40 says that they without us should not be made perfect." New Jerusalem is being prepared and is coming to earth with the "many mansions" that the Father is preparing.

When Will the Dead be Awakened?

When will it happen? That depends whether we have been called by God. God did not offer salvation to the masses in the Old Testament. Very few has the Holy Spirit during that time. We are told of Abel, Enoch and Noah from very early. God may be sought on many different levels but having the Holy Spirit is/was a special calling. Read 2 Chronicles 15:2, 13, 14; Jeremiah 29:11-14. Were the calls to seek the Lord for salvation purposes? We don't really know, do we? I feel it depends on what level we seek God and whether God has a need for our calling.

Having said that, all people that have lived or will ever live have a promise of a future resurrection. Let us first cover when the saints [all believers] will be awakened. Read 1 Corinthians 15:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:19; 1 John 2:28. Did you get that? They all say at Christ's coming. Next, read Revelation 20:4-6. The start of the millennial reign is when those called of God in this life are raised to reign with Christ. Where? Read Revelation 5:10: On the earth.

Now, as stated in Revelation 20:5, the rest of the dead remain asleep until the thousand years are fulfilled. Is God saying He will resurrect everyone then? Yes, He will. The good, the bad and the ugly all will take part in this. What is the purpose of this resurrection? Well, tradition tells us that our God of love is going to raised them up just to turn around promptly throw them into the lake of fire. What would be the purpose in that? Did the evil they perpetrated not cause enough suffering during their time on earth?

Some will stop me at this point and say: What difference does it make? Well, it paints a completely wrong picture of God that so loved the world, He gave us His son (John 3:16). It also denies the power of God. It also makes God into some sort of sadist. It is not wrong to question what purpose God is working out with mankind. That is why God put into scripture His salvation plan. Let us not take a universalist's approach to the scriptures. Universalists say God want to save everyone, including Satan and his demonic cohorts. No, God is not going to preserve the life of anyone bent on evil. God's plan was to redeem mankind from his fallen state from even before the fall. That is the very reason He sent His son to pay for our sins. Scripture tells us why Jesus was sent: Read 1 John 3:8.

Now, when looking at the figurative language of Revelation, remember that God is not limited to our time frame. Many do not understand, so prophecy seems to contradict itself. Like when the saints are talking to God on how long He will wait to avenge them. God could be pulling the voices from the future. God can do anything. Remember when God, talking to Cain, said Abel's blood cried at Him from the ground? Read Genesis 4:9,10.

In the fifth seal we read Revelation 6:9-11 remember what I told you about voices from the future. The white robes could also be in the future.

God's Purging of Evil

What God is doing is purging evil from His universe. God is a God of love. If He allowed the evil being to continue anywhere forever, that would be most unkind to them. Would not a God of love let anyone, that couldn't quite cut with Him, be destroyed instead of tortured forever. Some people are going to turn evil despite any influence acted upon them.

Be aware that Sheol and Hades simply refers to the grave. Our doctrine of a dwelling place of the dead is inserted into Strong's Concordance as a reference. The reference in Revelation where they are tormented day and night forever, their smoke ascending forever could refer to something captured on film, therefore forever preserved. The reference in Mark 9:44: "Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" I believe is another example of that. It just does not make sense of a maggot that never dies. Anyway, hades is finally tossed into the lake of fire. You can't do that with a dwelling place.

All said, as I stated before all scripture has to fit together, in what we teach, or none of it is valid. Some things were presented in parables with figurative speech. Some things maybe we don't quite understand yet. God will not reveal some things until He is ready for us to know. I feel Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31) is a parable despite the proper names. It is dangerous to draw major doctrine on one instance of scripture. Read 2 Corinthians 13:1; John 8:17.

God's promise to resurrect "the rest of the dead" in Rev. 20 will be the first and only chance these that were not called in the first life will have. That is when they will have their chance to overcome Satan and his fallen army. This will be Satan's last act. When God is finished with purging the universe of evil: all the demons and evil people will be completely destroyed. Read Ezekiel 28:14. This establishes Satan's identity. Then read

Ezekiel 28:18, 19. This tells of the fate of Satan. Which is also the fate of those that reject the Holy Spirit anointing by the end of the judgement period.

Near Death Experiences

My second wife had a near death experience before I met her. She was giving birth to her firstborn, and he was coming in breech. She was all ripped up and actually died on the operating table. She said she saw this great blinding light and assumed it was God or Jesus. She spoke into the light and said please don't take me now, let me see this child grow up. She said God didn't speak. She suddenly looked down and she was hovering above her body on the table. The next she knew she woke up in recovery.

We studied the scriptures together and still concluded the dead are asleep. Like others have said, these experiences are visions. She believed she talked to the Lord while dead and I do too. God knew He was going to let her come back so He did not let her sleep.