

When Do The Saved Go To Heaven?

by Bill Crews

I just now read a hypothetical article (it is called a dream at the end) in which one finds himself in heaven. There he meets a saint who had been there more than 1900 years and another who had been there a few hundred years. Where do people get the idea that the saved or the righteous go directly to heaven when their bodies die?

Yes I know that many of our hymns teach it, and we sing them over and over. "Saved ones gone to be with Jesus, in their robes of white arrayed, now are waiting for my coming where the roses never fade." "Out on the hills of that wonderful country, happy, contented and free, loved/saved ones are waiting and watching my coming; heaven holds all to me." (And the next stanza speaks of "millions" there.) "Sing to me of heaven, as I walk alone, dreaming of the comrades that so long have gone; in a fairer region 'mong the angel throng, they are happy as they sing that old sweet song." "O think of the friends/saints over there, who before us the journey have trod, of the songs that they breathe on the air, in their home in the palace of God." And there are many others that we sing and have sung for years.

Most denominational people hold to this concept, and their preachers teach it at funerals -- nearly all of their funerals are for saved people; at least that's what they say about nearly all of the dead ones for whom they conduct funeral services. They assure the grieving, surviving loved ones that the deceased ones are already in heaven. But, again we ask, where do people get the idea that the righteous or the saved go directly to heaven when the body dies?

The Scriptures certainly do not teach it. The story of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31) does not teach it. John 5:28-29 does not teach it. Matthew 25:31-46 does not teach it. Revelation 20:11-15 does not teach it. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 does not teach it. Hebrews 9:27 does not teach it. No one is going to skip the resurrection and the judgment, and no one is going to be summoned out of heaven for the resurrection and the judgment, only to be sent back to heaven. When Paul in Philippians 1 and in 2 Corinthians 5 spoke of being with Christ after death, he was not speaking of the righteous dead going directly to heaven after death. If I read my Bible correctly, the righteous will all enter heaven after the judgment of all men.

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