

Are There Saved Human Beings in Heaven?

The popular teaching is that when Christians die they immediately go to heaven, where they take up residence in their permanent abode. But can we find such a teaching in the Bible? Have any human beings ever ascended to heaven?

In Revelation 19:1, relaying what he experienced in a spiritual vision, the apostle John states, "After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God!'"

Must the great multitude praising God here be throngs of saved human beings now living in heaven? Have any human beings ever ascended to heaven?

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To understand the truth on any biblical teaching, we must consider *all* the passages on a subject. When we do, the truth then usually becomes clear. We must also look at plain biblical statements and passages first, and from them understand the meaning of those that are less clear.

Notice one such clear statement in John 3:13: "*No one has ascended to heaven* but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man [Jesus Christ] who is in heaven."

John wrote these words decades after Jesus died and ascended to heaven—and well after many of Christ's followers had died—but he still affirmed that *no one other than Jesus* had gone to heaven.

Whose voices, then, could John have been hearing when he recorded in the book of Revelation what he heard and saw? He refers to voices many places in the book. Let's notice one example in particular:

"Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!'" (Revelation 5:11-12). So there are at least hundreds of millions of angels, and the voices in Revelation 19 could well be theirs.

Moreover, we should remember that John in the book of Revelation was receiving a vision of the future—with Revelation 19 concerning events at the time of Christ's return and the resurrection of His followers. Even if verse 1 were referring to saved human beings appearing briefly before God in heaven and praising Him at that time (just after their resurrection), this would not mean that they are doing so today.

Indeed, those who have died are still dead and in the grave—unconscious and unable to praise God (Psalm 6:5; 30:9; Isaiah 38:18). Scripture, as we have seen, shows that no human being

except Jesus Christ has ever entered heaven, and that remains so today. The voices referred to in Revelation 19, then, cannot be those of saved human beings now in heaven.