

## What are They Now Doing in Heaven?

Revelation 6:9-11

These three verses in Revelation help us understand what is happening in Heaven right now. Unless there is some reason to believe that the realities of this passage apply only to one group of people and to no one else in Heaven (and there is no such indication), we should assume that what is true of them is also true for anyone who dies “in Christ.” From these verse we can make the following assumptions:

1. They **relocated** to Heaven when they died (v. 9).

The question is “In what form?” Are they just spirits? Can they be seen and heard?

**I Thess. 5:23**— “*your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved*”

**Gen. 2:7**— “*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground (body), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (spirit); and man became a living **soul**.*”

**Luke 1:46-47**— “*And Mary said, My **soul** doth magnify the Lord, and my **spirit** hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*”

The *spirit* is the essence of life; the *soul* is the “**heart**” of the matter.”

“Lord, save my \_\_\_\_.” “I asked Jesus to come into my \_\_\_\_.”

YOU **ARE** A SPIRIT,  
YOU **HAVE** A SOUL,  
AND YOU **LIVE** IN A BODY.

Most convincing: Angels are **100%** spirits, and they don’t have souls.

Soul is the “God” part, the spiritual part—and what we do with our **soul** determines our destiny.

When a Christian dies, his body is “planted” in the ground.

His spirit **and** soul **both** go to Heaven.

**I Thess. 4:14**— “*them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him*”

Only a **body** has to sleep, and we plant that in the ground.

He’s bringing those who *sleep in Jesus* **WITH** Him.

**I Cor. 15:44**— “*There is a **natural** body, and there is a **spiritual** body.*”

Our personality is embodied in our spirit.

Our memory is embodied in our personality.

Even on Earth, angels (which we know are only spirits) can take on a human form.

III.: Abraham and Sarah entertaining three of them (Genesis 18); Lot

III.: Angel who told Mary she would give birth to Jesus.

*“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares (Heb. 13:2).*

My favorite angel verse: Jude, verse 9: “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”

2. They are **remembered** for their lives on Earth (v. 9)

These were identified as ones slain because of the testimony they had “held.”

It is important that testimonies be **maintained**. *Your testimony is following you straight to Heaven.*

There is a direct **connection** between our identity on Earth and our identity in Heaven.

These people in Heaven were the same ones killed for Christ while on Earth. Their personal history extended directly back to their lives on Earth. “Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

*To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:23).*

*“and the books were opened and another book was open, which is the book of life” (Revelation 20:12)*

Just as, in the end, everyone will be known for what they did on Earth, our loved ones are remembered even now for their testimony on Earth.

Our record in Heaven will outlast our lives on Earth. We had better straighten up and fly right. :)

3. They are able to **express** themselves audibly (vv. 9-10).

They cried out. With a loud voice. They obviously are **rational** and **emotional**—even **passionate**—beings, like people on Earth.

4. They are fully conscious and **aware** . . .

. . . of each other

. . . of God, and

. . . of the situation on Earth

They ask God to intervene on Earth and act on their behalf: “*avenge our blood.*”

There is no indication of saints in Heaven being blissfully unaware.

It doesn’t seem logical that we would be more ignorant in Heaven than we were on Earth.

After we die, we will give account of our lives, down to specific actions and words (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 12:36). With improved minds and clear thinking, we should be more cognizant, not less.

They obviously know what is happening (**in real time**) on Earth (v. 10).

The angels witness rejoicing in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth (Luke 15:10).

Who is rejoicing? Obviously the ones who have gone on.

Do they know **only** spiritual things?

The martyrs know enough to realize that those who killed them have not yet been judged.

III.: Moses and Elijah on Mt. of Transfiguration knew things (Matt. 17:1-13)

III.: Samuel being called back to converse with Saul; he knew things (I Sam. 28:16-19).

Can they see **everything**? If so, how could they not be sad?

Jesus sees everything, and it doesn't diminish Heaven for Him.

Jesus grieved on Earth. Does He no longer grieve just because He's in Heaven?

**Matthew 23:37**— *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”*

Being in the presence of Christ surely doesn't make us less compassionate.

Joy is **predominant** in Heaven, but there could be periodic sadness for evil and pain on Earth.

Keep in mind that people in Heaven are not frail beings whose joy can only be preserved by shielding them from what is really going on in the universe.

God will one day wipe away all tears, but not until *after* the end of the old Earth, *after* the Great White Throne Judgment, *after* no more death, sorrow, pain, “for the **former** things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

5. They have a deep concern for **justice** and retribution (pay back) (v. 10).

When we go to Heaven, we won't adapt a passive disinterest in what happens on Earth.

On the contrary, our concerns will be more passionate and our thirst for justice greater.

Because these martyrs clearly remember their lives on Earth, there's no reason to believe that everyone else does not. Whatever has happened to us, we know—but God's got this!

*“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:19).*

Rev. 19:1-7 shows clearly that the inhabitants of Heaven are looking forward to justice being delivered. They know and they shout:

*“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:*

The fact that these in Heaven clearly remember their lives on Earth suggests that saints in Heaven are **seeing** and **praying for** saints on Earth even now. They're **invested** with what is happening here. We know Jesus is praying (interceding) for us, and we know the martyrs are praying for God to take action on earth.

We are further admonished not to sorrow as others who have no hope (I Thess. 4:13). In Heaven, those who endured bad things on Earth are **comforted** there. This gives a whole new meaning to the Beatitudes in Matthew 5; notice vv. 10-12.

Refer to Luke 16:22ff—story of the rich man and Lazarus). Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom VS. the rich man "died and was buried" In Hell, the rich man saw "Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom"

The things they are enjoying in Heaven right now:

- Living with Jesus and being in His presence
- Joy in worshiping God
- Watching God continuously at work on Earth
- Seeing Him draw people to Himself (Lk. 15:7, 10)
- Living as righteous beings in a sinless environment

We sometimes forget that when we sin, it's a sin against God! It's personal. How many bad things must Jesus be mindful of at all times!

**Acts 9:4-6**—*And [Saul] fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? . . .*

6. They are **distinct** individuals (v. 11). "*every one of them*"  
Our loved ones are still uniquely who they were.  
It's the "new and improved" version of them.  
They likely have some kind of **physical** form even now.  
Spirits don't need robes. John could SEE these martyrs.

When Moses and Elijah appeared on the Mt. of Transfiguration, according to Luke 9:31, "*appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*" They appeared "in all their glory," but they also conversed. They came straight from Heaven, and they were recognizable.

II Cor. 3:18—"*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed into the same image from glory to glory**, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*"  
Phil. 3:20, 21—We are citizens of Heaven, aliens on Earth.

7. They are **learning** while they are in Heaven (v. 11).  
They have questions. They are given answers.  
This demonstrates that we won't know everything in Heaven—if we did, we would have no questions. The martyrs knew more after God answered their question than before they asked it.

We want to know things ourselves, don't we? For example, people often ask, "Will we live in a **MANSION** alone?"

The great thing is that God knows us and has a special place prepared for each of us. It would be like traveling out of the country and then returning, maybe landing in New York, but you're not home yet, fly to Georgia (still not home yet; you're at the airport); drive to McDonough, south of Atlanta; drive further to arrive at your house; but you never breathe a sigh of relief until you drop your suitcase in your own room. Ah, it feels so good to finally be home. That's probably how it will be when we arrive in Heaven.

8. They are living in **anticipation** of the future fulfillment of God's promises.  
In the eternal Heaven, there will be no more sin, no curse, no suffering (Revelation 21:4).  
The present Heaven coexists with and **watches over** an Earth under sin, the curse, and suffering. If you're wondering where your loved one is looking, his eyes are on Earth, just waiting.

They are experiencing something so wonderful that Jesus told the thief on the cross: "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise." We are told to comfort one another with what we know is coming (I Thess. 4:13).

Rev. 14:13—In Heaven now, our loved ones are **resting** from their labors; their works have followed them.

9. They are experiencing **time** in the present Heaven (vv. 10-11).  
The martyrs ask God a time-dependent question: "*How long, O Lord, holy and true . . .*"  
God tells them they should rest a little season (meaning wait) until other things transpired on Earth. Waiting requires the passing of time. Time eventually ends (Rev. 10:6, 7).

## Waiting on God

While we are praying for something and waiting, what are we prone to do? Fret, fume, despair. Here God tells the martyrs that what they desire is coming, but they are to rest for a little season. Note that things in others' lives must come to pass before God can answer their prayers.

10. The people of God in Heaven have a strong **family** connection with those on Earth (v. 11).  
*“fellowservants also and their brethren”*

*“Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Eph. 3:15)*

If we have a family connection with other Christians, how much more so with our own family who are Christians! These verses demonstrate a vital connection between the events and people in Heaven and the events and people on Earth.

Our sovereign God knows down to the last detail all that is happening and will happen on Earth (v. 11). Because His eyes are on Earth, we can assume that our loved ones' eyes are also on Earth.

I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God!"