THE STANDING DEAD

The focus of this week’s lesson is Revelation 20:12: “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books” (NKJV, emphasis supplied).

The immediately preceding and succeeding contexts of this verse indicate that it is describing the millennial judgment of the wicked in heaven. Revelation 20:5 affirms that all the wicked will be dead on earth during this judgment: “The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished” (NKJV). So the question is, How can dead people stand before God in judgment in heaven while they are dead on earth?

Some of those who believe in the immortality of the soul claim that it is the immortal souls of the wicked that will stand in judgment before God. This is reading into the text what is not there. Furthermore, the text does not say that the dead stood before God after they resurrected. The text explicitly states that the dead stood before God.

The judgment process of the wicked during and after the millennium will follow the same three-step process as the judgment of the righteous dead had done before (see Week 08). First, the heavenly court in heaven will review their life records in the books. Second, based on the evidence, the heavenly jury will pronounce the verdict and sentence. Finally, the sentence will be executed in the lake of fire after the thousand years. So let’s begin our study on the standing dead.
Write out Revelation 20:11–21:1 from the translation of your choice. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.
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Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw Arrows to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Revelation 20:11–21:1. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

Why must God execute judgment and justice at all?

What does the amount of time used for the entire process reveal about God’s character?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/dead09-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

If death doesn’t bring about change for the wicked, then when was their opportunity? How does understanding this impact your own life?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/dead09-4
Review your memorized verse from Revelation 20:11–21:1.

What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Hebrews 12:22–24
Matthew 22:11–13
Revelation 15:2–4
1 Corinthians 6:1–3
Isaiah 26:19
Philippians 2:9–11

What other verses come to mind in connection with Revelation 20:11–21:1?
Where do you see Jesus in Revelation 20:11–21:1?

What do the three steps in the judgment process reveal about God’s character?

What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/dead09-6
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study of the chapter, where are areas in your personal life that need to be opened up to God?

Where are areas in your family, school, work, and church life that need to be opened up to God?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/dead09-7
Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

What parallels do you find between Revelation 6:14–17 and Revelation 20:11? What event are these verses describing?

If God knows all, does He really need a judgment?

Revelation 20:12 tells us that during the thousand years the wicked dead will stand before God in judgment. How can dead people stand before God?

Why does God allow the righteous to participate in the judgment of Satan and the wicked during the millennium (1 Cor. 6:1–3; Rev. 20:4–6)?

Why is it necessary that Satan and the wicked will witness the record of their lives after the millennium?

How do you explain that we are saved by grace through faith, but we are judged by works?