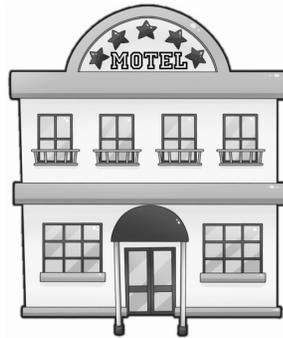


A Temporary Stay in the Motel

1 Thessalonians 4:7-18



For believers, death has lost its sting (*1 Cor. 15:55-57*). The word most often used metaphorically for the death of a believer is the word “sleep” (Greek—*koimaomai*). It is used of Lazarus (*John 11:11*), Stephen (*Acts 7:60*), David (*Acts 13:36*), eyewitnesses of the resurrection (*1 Cor. 15:6*), and all who are “dead in Christ” (*1 Thess. 4:13,15*). It is used with reference to the body, not the soul. The word literally means “to recline” (the opposite of to “stand up”). A soul can neither recline nor stand up, but a body can. A dead body appears to be sleeping, but the word also denotes cheerful expectancy because a sleeping person will awake (*1 Thess. 4:16*)!

Believers have the blessed expectancy of being part of the first resurrection (*Rev. 20:6*). Christ died and rose again. Those “in Christ,” though they should die, yet shall they rise again (*John 11:25-26*).

The early Christians had a wonderful word for the place where they buried their loved ones: *koimeterion*—“A rest for strangers, a sleeping place.” From this Greek term we get our word *cemetery*. The Greeks also used this word for any kind of a motel or inn, a place where a person goes to sleep for one night.

The body of the believer has been put into a motel until the resurrection! One day the Lord is coming and the body will be raised up out of the *koimeterion*. Christ Himself will reunite our body with our soul and spirit (*1 Thess. 4:16*). He will come to the motel where we are all staying to awaken us and bring us to the Father’s house (*John 14:1-3*), which is infinitely better than any earthly dwelling place. Some believers will not even need to stay in the motel, because the Lord will come before they experience death’s sleeping experience (*1 Thess. 4:18; 1 Cor. 15:51*).

~George Zeller: www.middletonbiblechurch.org

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