

TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1 – 10



~ The second Law of Thermodynamics is an empirical finding stating all matter proceeds from order to disorder — from organized to disorganized. In practical terms, the houses we build eventually need repair, our cars will break down, clothes wear out, fruit rots, and flesh dies. These are axiomatic statements that simply cannot be otherwise. Well, for a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God teaches us that there will be a day when we shall all stand before the Lord in a glorified body that never gets sick, never has sorrows, is clothed in righteousness, and never dies. That truth also necessarily reveals certain responsibilities we all have in these earthly bodies; creations that groan and may be found naked. In this report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God, we're going to learn about those responsibilities; obligations that remain with us until that great day — when we are present with the Lord and absent from the body. Let us pray that our Heavenly Father will give us all a love for His Word as we study it today.

This is our seventh report from second Corinthians; and we're still in the section that reveals the comfort of God for His saints. Specifically, God's comfort in the ministry of martyrdom for Christ. Our last report was a bitter dose of medicine regarding suffering in the ministry of Christ; and, if you haven't read that report, I suggest you go back and do so now. As we begin this report, I would have you notice Paul doesn't say we "*hope*" to have a building of God; and he doesn't say we "*expect*" to have a building of God — and he doesn't even say that we "*believe*" we will have a building of God — no, Paul *KNOWS* about that building of God that we shall inhabit. That's a pretty big thing to *KNOW* — and the only way we can ever *KNOW* about all this is from experience — and by learning the Word of God properly, correctly and completely — so we can interpret said experience in sound judgment....

¹ ***For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.***

~ Paul *KNOWS* these things because the Spirit of God has made it real to him – there’s no other way to *KNOW*. The word “*tabernacle*” in verse one actually means “*tent*” – and it is the same word used in the Septuagint for the tabernacle Moses constructed for the children of Israel during the wilderness march in the Old Testament. It denotes a flimsy, temporary sort of thing. Verse one has always been a big question mark amongst fundamental conservative scholars; and I am going to make a seemingly dogmatic statement regarding it that some may choose to disagree with – and that will be okay – unless you want to be right about this matter, that is. Because, if you want to be right, you’re going to have to agree with me.

Many people believe the “*building of God*” is a temporary thing; like when you take your car to the repair shop, and they give you a loaner vehicle to drive around while they fix your car. Well, some people think that when this fleshly body dies, we’re given a temporary body in the interim — until the flesh is raised in bodily resurrection. I have to admit that can certainly seem like it makes sense – and it could be construed that way from Scripture; but I don’t like that interpretation, because we’re also told about an eternal body in the Heavens. So, we simply *MUST* account for both doctrines here. See, taking the entire Word of God is not as simple as most people want to think it is; and, in this case, the “*building of God*” cannot be temporary.

Alright, I feel it is extremely important to get this truth fixed firmly and clearly in our minds and in our hearts. There is an outward man and an inward man regarding each of us; Paul has already talked about that in the last chapter. Paul said, “... *the outward man perishes*” but “*the inward man is renewed day by day.*” Naturally, many people misunderstand that statement and, as a result, they assume a contradiction exists; because we tend to say that so and so has gone to be with the Lord – but then we also say that person is going to be raised from the dead. Well, that certainly does sound like a contradiction. See, the body may be placed in the grave, but the real individual believing person, in his spiritual essence, has gone to be with Christ. The things that are seen are temporary, as we have

previously learned. When you see me standing in front of you, you really don't see me at all. You may see my hands and head sticking out of my clothes, but you can't see the inward man that comprises me by any means; although you will see me that way in Heaven — and I'll see you that way, too — but that's a different conversation for another time.

Likewise, God is a person, but He is not physically material; we worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. The Psalmist says God makes His angels spirits, also. Many people complain about growing older, but each passing year brings us closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. It's wonderful that we're going to see His Face someday. I'm going soon to be with the One Who loved me and gave Himself for me. I rejoice in that understanding because the more I understand it, the less the world, the flesh, and the devil have me in conflict. Actually, I think all three may have given up on me at this point. Anyways, we are sown a natural body to be raised a spiritual body. I'm looking forward to my perfected and glorified house eternal in the Heavenlies. How about you? ~

² For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

³ If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

⁴ For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

⁵ Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

⁶ Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

⁷ (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

⁸ We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.

⁹ ***Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.***

¹⁰ ***For we must all appear before the Bema – the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.***

~ So, our Spiritual Safari moved rather quickly through this report because we need to carefully consider these simple but awesome truths in meditation on Scripture. One day, God is going to call His Own out of this world to meet Jesus in the air. At that time, we will all be changed and clothed in His righteousness. We have already learned about the raising of the just and the unjust from Paul and from Jesus Himself as we examined the Book of Acts and the Gospel of John.

Acts 24:15 *And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust ~*

John 5:29 *And they shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation ~*

In the passage we just read in second Corinthians, Paul says he wants to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Do you wonder how you're going to stand in His presence someday? Are you *SURE* you are accepted in the Beloved? Well, that "*clothing*" is the only acceptable state we can ever appear before the Lord Jesus Christ in.

Everybody is going to be raised; but, unfortunately, not everyone will be clothed with His righteousness. Those who have not accepted Christ as their Savior will stand naked at the Great White Throne before God, and their judgment will be according to their works; and their resurrection will be to an everlasting damnation.

Further, there are eight judgments in Scripture. We have the cross, we have self-judgment, chastisement, the works of the believer that will be judged,

the nation Israel is to be judged, the Gentile nations are to be judged, fallen angels will be judged – and then there is the Great White Throne — where the lost are judged; although they have *ALREADY* been found guilty.

Today, believers have been given the “... *earnest of the Holy Spirit*” — but the best is yet to come. Even in these feeble and weak bodies, the Comforter of the Spirit of God is indwelling us. We are at home in this body today; at least, I am – how about you? However, when we are at home in this body, we are absent from the Lord. Can we be sure of that? – Well, I take God at His Word – do you? I’d rather take God at His Word than anyone else. Faith means to take God at His Word. One day, we’re going to be absent from this body, and we will be at Home with the Lord at that time. That’s going to be so much better. Let’s be clear: there’s no such thing as “*soul sleep*” – we’re either here or we’re with Christ! That should be a great comfort to all believers ~

