

**Parson to Person**  
**2 Corinthians 5 – Part 3**  
**(More on Life after Death)**

*“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

*For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 4:16–5:8).*

Having addressed much of the passage above, I felt the need to spend a little more time with the text to focus on the errors taught about the “afterlife.”

Paul wrote, *“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life”* (vss.

2–4), and *“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord”* (vss. 6–8).

Herein we have at least (3) items I would like to develop:

### **No Spiritual Collective—“We Shall Not Be Found Naked”**

Some occult religious groups believe that when one dies the soul/spirit may become a non-individualized part of a universal spiritual collective—sometimes called “Universal Consciousness.” The idea is that we all originate from a central invisible spirit and all is god and god is in all. This is sometimes seen in pantheism (God is all and all is God) and otherwise in panentheism (God is in all and all is God, but God transcends all—is both in and outside of all). Animists, Hindus, Buddhists, some Muslim sects, New Agers, etc., embrace such error. However, the Bible makes it very clear that we are individual persons from inception and will continue as such throughout eternity.

Take for example what occurred on the mount of transfiguration when Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus—in full view of the three present disciples (see Matthew 17:1–9), and/or where we read of the rich man, Abraham, and Lazarus in the “afterlife” (see Luke 16:19–31), and/or where we read of the antichrist and false prophet who both retain their identities in the lake of fire (see Revelation 20:10).

When we die we are going to be either clothed in a body fitted for eternal life or eternal destruction/hell—not “unclothed.” Paul makes this very clear.

### **No Soul Sleep**

When we the believer dies (graduates to heaven), we are not trapped in our earthly tent/body, nor buried in the ground sleeping in the dust, or separated from the Lord. We are immediately in the presence of the Lord.

Consider the three passages that help with this concern:

- 1) James wrote, *“For as the body without the spirit is dead...”* (James 2:26a).
- 2) Paul wrote, *“...Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you”* (Philippians 1:21b–24).
- 3) Here in our text we read, *“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord”* (2 Corinthians 5:6–8).

Therefore, we know that death is the departure of the spirit (the true you) from the body, and when we depart from the body we are immediately with Christ.

### **No Purgatory—Post-Death Purification and/or Separation from the Lord**

The Roman Catholic church, Eastern Orthodox churches, Oriental Orthodox churches, and a few others religious groups teach that when one dies he or she will first go into an intermediate state known as purgatory (not a place) to satisfactorily expiate their existing sins in order to prepare them for entrance into heaven.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reads:

*“All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.*

*The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire: As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.*

*This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: ‘Therefore Judas Maccabeus made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.’*

*From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:*

*Let us help and commemorate them.*

*If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Article III. “The Final Purification, or Purgatory” Items 1030,1031, 1032.)*

The teaching is clearly erroneous, *“For as the body without the spirit is dead...”* (James 2:26a) and *“we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord... We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord”* (2 Corinthians 5:6–8b).

### **The Resurrection of Our Mortal Bodies**

The body (the flesh—*“this tent”*) is generally buried, or otherwise remains earthly until the time of the physical resurrection. However, as we have learned in other passages of Scripture, a promise remains of physical resurrection for the believer: *“For if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you”* (Romans 8:11). (See also 1 Corinthians 15.)

I love you all,  
Pastor Paul