

# 2 Corinthians 5:1-3 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

2 CORINTHIANS - PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT  
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## Overview of Second Corinthians

2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21
Character of Paul	Collection for the Saints	Credentials of Paul
Testimonial & Didactic	Practical	Apologetic
Past: Misunderstanding & Explanation	Present: Practical Project	Future: Anxieties
Apostle's Conciliation, Ministry & Exhortations	Apostle's Solicitation for Judean Saints	Apostle's Vindication of Himself
Forgiveness, Reconciliation	Confidence	Vindication
Gratitude		
Ephesus to Macedonia: Change of Itinerary Explained	Macedonia: Preparation for Visit to Corinth	To Corinth: Certainty and Imminence of the Visit
2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21

[2Corinthians written ~ 56-57AD - see Chronological Table of Paul's Life and Ministry](#)

Adapted & modified from [Jensen's Survey of the New Testament \(Highly Recommended Resource\)](#) & [Wilkinson's Talk Thru the Bible](#)

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** Oidamen (1PRAI) gar hoti ean e epigeios hemon oikia tou skenous kataluthe, (3SAPS) oikodomen ek theou echomen (1PPAI) oikian acheiropoieton aionion en tois ouranois.

**Amplified:** FOR WE know that if the tent which is our earthly home is destroyed (dissolved), we have from God a building, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ([Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** For we know that if this earthly house of ours, that tent which is the body is pulled down, we have a building which comes from God, a house not made with hands, eternal and in the heavens. ([Westminster Press](#))

**ESV:** For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ([ESV](#))

**HCSB:** 5 For we know that if our earthly house, a tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ([Holman Christian Standard Bible](#))

**KJV:** 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. ([New English Bible - Oxford Press](#))

**NET:** For we know that if our earthly house, the tent we live in, is dismantled, we have a building from God, a house not built by human hands, that is eternal in the heavens. ([NET Bible](#))

**MH:** For it is part of our Christian tradition that if this earthly body which we call a tent-house is destroyed by death, we have the assured hope of receiving a building that God supplies, a house that is not constructed by human hands, that is destined to last forever, and whose site is heaven. (Murray Harris' expanded paraphrase of 2Corinthians).

**NLT:** For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. (NLT - Tyndale House)

**Phillips:** We know, for instance, that if our earthly dwelling were taken down, like a tent, we have a permanent house in Heaven, made, not by man, but by God. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**WBC:** For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is dismantled, we have a house from God, one not built by human hands, eternal, in the heavens.

**Weymouth:** 1 For we know that if this poor tent, our earthly house, is taken down, we have in Heaven a building which God has provided, a house not built by human hands, but eternal.

**Wuest:** For we know that if our house of this present tent-life on earth be taken down, a building from God we have, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

**Young's Literal:** 5:1 For we have known that if our earthly house of the tabernacle may be thrown down, a building from God we have, an house not made with hands -- age-during -- in the heavens,

**FOR WE KNOW THAT IF THE EARTHLY TENT WHICH IS OUR HOUSE IS TORN DOWN: Oidamen (1PRAI) gar hoti ean e epigeios hemon oikia tou skenous kataluthe, (3SAPS):**

- **For we know that if the earthly tent** Job 19:25-26 Ps 56:9 2Ti 1:12 1Jn 3:2,14,19 1Jn 5:19,20
- **which is our house:** 2Co 5:4 4:7 Ge 3:19 Job 4:19 1Co 15:46-48 2Pe 1:13,14)
- **is torn down:** Job 30:22 2Pe 3:11
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- **See also "shorter version" of commentary** on 2 Corinthians 5:1

#### Related Passages:

Job 19:25-26 "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.  
26 "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;

Philippians 1:21 - For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

2 Peter 1:13 14+ I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly dwelling* (skenoma from skenoo = to pitch a tent = Peter's body), to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly dwelling* is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

If you have not read the entire chapter, **2 Corinthians 5**, let me suggest you stop reading these notes and take some time to leisurely, actively (not passively) read through the chapter using a more literal translation such as NAS, ESV, NKJV. As you stroll through the chapter, be careful to observe for the **key words** Paul uses, stopping long enough to question each key word with one of the **5W/H** questions and using the results of your observations to summarize Paul's major subject or subjects. Don't let yourself get bogged down on details or difficult to understand verses. Then read the chapter a second time with the goal being to give the chapter a title that uses some of the major subject words in the title. Don't try to be too cute or too alliterative, but give the chapter a title which would be distinctive enough for that chapter that when you heard it, you would know exactly where to turn in 2Corinthians. Then read chapter 5 a third time with the purpose of trying to identify the points where Paul changes subjects and use these change points to come up with an outline of the chapter. Now you are ready to read the commentary notes with a Berean-like mindset (Acts 17:11-+). Click **observation** if you are interested in more hints on how to study a chapter or book of the Bible inductively.

If you have taken time to compose your own outline of 2Corinthians 5, you might want to compare your results with those of [A.C. Gaebel's Outline](#) on **2Corinthians 5**. And remember that there is no "inspired" outline, so do not be discouraged if your outline does not match someone else's outline. And also remember that as you practice this simple exercise each time you read a chapter,

you will find that your skills of observation will begin to improve dramatically.

2Co 5:1-8 The Earthly and Heavenly House

2Co 5:9-12 The Judgment Seat of Christ

2Co 5:13-16 The Constraint of Love

2Co 5:17-21 The Ministry of Reconciliation

The following outline is modified from [Hannah's Bible Outlines](#) on of this section of 2 Corinthians...

- I) The sacrifice for the ministry (2Co 4:7-12)
- II) The prospect of the ministry (2Co 4:13-5:10)
  - A) Present distress (2Co 4:13-15)
  - B) Future reward (2Co 4:16-5:10)
    - 1) Present encouragement (2Co 4:16-18)
    - 2) Future life (2Co 5:1-8)
    - 3) Future reward (2Co 5:9-10)
- III) The program of the ministry (2Co 5:11-6:10)
  - A) The motivation (2Co 5:11-16)
    - 1) The fear of the Lord (2Co 5:11-13)
    - 2) The love of Christ (2Co 5:14-16)
  - B) The message (2Co 5:17-21)

## **PLUS ULTRA: OUR ETERNAL DESTINY**

**Kent Hughes** has an illustrative introduction to this great chapter "When Spain had extended her conquests to the ends of the then-known world and controlled both sides of the Mediterranean at the Straits of Gibraltar (the fabled Pillars of Hercules), her coins proudly pictured the Pillars framing a scroll inscribed with the Latin words ***Ne Plus Ultra***—"No More Beyond." The Pillars gated the end of the earth. But "In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue" and discovered the New World. The proud nation then admitted her ignorance and struck the negative ***Ne*** from her coinage, leaving the words ***Plus Ultra***—"More Beyond." The change from the myopic "***No More Beyond***" to the expansive "***More Beyond***" effected a revolution in world culture, global economy, and geopolitics. The change also serves as a handy example of what is needed in the spiritual geography of modern men and women, because so many live in the stifling delusion that there is no ***more beyond***. Most, including many Christians, live as if "this is it"—as in the Looney Tunes finis, "That's all, folks!" At the same time, ***Plus Ultra*** perfectly describes the Apostle Paul and the ultimate focus of the whole of Scripture and the intensive focus of this section of 2 Corinthians. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word. Crossway](#))

**Rod Mattoon** has a parallel thought on "***Ne Plus Ultra...Plus Ultra***" writing that "God's promise of a glorified body gives hope and peace to the believer. It gives the Christian hope in the sense that his home is not here, it is in Heaven. For many centuries innumerable people stood beside the dark hole that we call a grave and watched the remains of their loved ones lowered into the earth, and they wondered: Beyond the dark waters of death, is there anything beyond or is this it? Is life ***Ne Plus Ultra***... "No More Beyond?" Then one day, a young explorer went westward into the setting sun and descended into the blackness of the pit of death. People waited expectantly to see if he would keep his promise and come back. On the third day, as the sun arose in the East, the Son of God stepped forth from a grave and declared, ***Plus Ultra***, "There is something more beyond. There is a paradise beyond your greatest expectations. And there awaits a heavenly Father, waiting with outstretched arms to wipe away every tear from your cheek." This truth helps us to keep one eye on eternity. ([Treasures from 2 Corinthians, Volume 1](#)).

One source writes that "A bewildering profusion of interpretations make this passage one of the most debated in the NT." These notes will attempt as much as possible to avoid contentious issues without watering down the exposition.

**For we know** - "**For**" (gar) indicates Paul is continuing his train of thought, explaining in more detail what he has just said (2Co 4:16-18). In those great passages 2Co 4:17+, 2Co 4:18+ Paul had contrasted **temporal** and **eternal** (momentary light affliction...eternal weight of glory; seen = temporal...not seen = eternal). Now he explains how these wonderful changes are going to take place as he contrasts our **present earthly body** with our **future heavenly body**.

**S Lewis Johnson** sums up Paul's **for** this way - I think would be something like this. I've been talking to you about afflictions. I've been telling you how they lead to the eternal weight of glory. The dissolution of the body, the dismantling of this tent does not bring annihilation, it brings translation to glory. And that's why I look at the things that are not seen, not the things that are seen, for we know that if our earthly tent of our house is -- that if the earthly tent, which is our house, is torn down we have a building from God. That's why the apostle can experience those things that he's experiencing, why he can look to the things that are invisible rather than the things that are visible, and pass through all of these experiences with confidence and assurance, because even if I lose my life in the midst of them, I know I have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. So when that little word "**for**" that gives me a clue as to what Paul is really concerned about. ([Clothed, Unclothed and Clothed Upon - 2 Corinthians 5:1-5](#))

As **John MacArthur** says..."The "**eternal weight of glory**" Paul described in 2Co 4:17 includes a new body. That truth was of great comfort to the apostle, whose physical body had been so mercilessly battered by the effects of the Fall, personal sin, hardships, illness, the rigors of life, and persecution that he longed for his incorruptible, immortal resurrection body. ([2Corinthians](#))

**Paul Apple** summarizes 2 Cor 5:1-10 - THE LONGING FOR THE RESURRECTION BODY MOTIVATES US TO FOCUS ON SPIRITUAL MINISTRY EVEN AT THE EXPENSE OF PHYSICAL SUFFERING – FUTURE GLORY INSPIRES COURAGE AND COMMITMENT IN LIVING TO PLEASE OUR LORD, (adding) (5:1-5) PRESENT SUFFERING SHOULD INTENSIFY THE LONGING FOR FUTURE GLORY (THE RESURRECTION BODY). (In 2Cor 5:1 Paul explains) The Superiority of the Resurrection Body

**Michael Andrus** adds this note on 2 Cor 5:1-5 "Knowledge of God's plan for our future helps us face death without fear."

**We know** ([eido](#)) that if ([see note below](#)) the earthly ([epigeios](#)) tent ([skenos](#)) which is our house ([oikia](#)) is torn down (kataluo) - Paul is not giving an opinion or making a speculation about our future bodies! **He says we know!** **We know** expresses Paul's confidence. It means to know beyond a shadow of a doubt. How do **we know**? Because God has told us and that settles it (even though obviously we cannot fully comprehend what will take place at glorification)! We know it by divine revelation! "As a sure matter of hope" (Alford) When it comes to a discussion of the issue of death, most unbelievers use words like "*I believe... I hope... I think*" but only believers in Christ can honestly use the glorious words "**We know**." The first thing Paul knows is that our present body is "passing," temporary and even "decaying" (2Co 4:16).

**THOUGHT** - Let the significance of what "**we know**" sink deep into your soul and renew your mind. Knowing these truths that speak of our future should motivate and energize our present passing life. Believers can live with a "Pauline" like anticipation even in times of affliction and trial because we know. **We know** that what is seen is temporal but what is coming and now unseen is eternal.

Paul expressed great confidence in what he knew in the last chapter of his last letter, writing to Timothy "I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Ti 4:6-8) Paul knew that death is just a departure from here to there: it's graduation day for the believer to be forever in the presence of God. Paul had run and won the race of life and we can too if we lay hold of his "**we know**" mentality! When we walk by faith founded on the Word of Truth, then we are much more likely to be pursuing the things which are eternal rather than those that are temporary! Where is your focus dear follower of Christ?

**Andrus** adds that "Paul was a tentmaker, so he speaks of our present body as an earthly tent, and it's a very apt illustration. Tents are by their very nature temporary housing. After a while the stakes begin to loosen, the poles begin to bend, the canvas sags in various spots, the cold penetrates, and it is not very comfortable."

Paul is saying **we know** assuredly or beyond a shadow of a doubt (see 2Co 4:14; cp Job's assurance in Job 19:25 where Lxx also uses **eido** = knows for certain!) Jesus set the secure standard for all believers declaring "Because I live, you will live also." (John 14:19)

**We know** that Jesus is alive and for this reason **we know** that death cannot claim us because He has promised us eternal life (Jn 17:3)! You can stake your eternal life on it beloved! As **William Romaine** succinctly stated "*Death stung itself to death when he stung Christ.*"

Death may be the king of terrors  
But Jesus is the King of kings.  
-Anonymous

**A W Pink** put it this way "Since Christ has made full atonement for the believer's sins and obtained remission for him, death can no more harm him than could a wasp whose venomous sting had been removed—though it might still buzz and hiss and attempt to

disturb him.

**S Lewis Johnson** adds that in "Paul's case, he knew it not simply by divine revelation, but he knew it also by his own experience. In the 2Co 12:1-10, he will tell us that he has been caught up to the third heaven (2Co 12:2) and there he has seen things that it is not lawful for him to even mention (2Co 12:4). So the apostle then can say, **we know** in a special sense that even you and I cannot know. But if we say **know** based upon the divine revelation as taught us by the Holy Spirit, we have the same assurance and the same certainty that the apostle had, even though he had an experience that is beyond ours. ([Clothed, Unclothed and Clothed Upon - 2 Corinthians 5:1-5](#))

As **Guzik** says "Paul is bold enough to say, **we know!** Christians can **know** what the world beyond this one is like, because **we know** what God's eternal word says! (**Hallelujah!**)

**Matthew Poole**..."The apostle had before said, that he looked at the things not seen; in this verse he opens himself, and shows what those unseen things are: "**We know**" - we have a certain persuasion, we doubt not concerning it, if our body were dissolved.

**We Know** that death does not win and this should motivate us to live for Him. As **Richard Sibbes** said "What greater encouragement can a man have to fight against his enemy than when he is sure of the victory before he fights—of final victory?

**If** (1437) (**ean**) according to **A T Robertson** is a "Third class condition, *ean* and first aorist passive subjunctive." **Broomall** adds "The if (*ean*; cf. its use in 1Jn 3:2) suggests uncertainty regarding the time but not concerning the fact." It's not a hypothetical "if"; it's a chronological "if." It means "when" the tent is destroyed it's going to be replaced with a building from God (eternal, in heaven, not made with hands). **Henry Alford** explains that the "**if**" is not "*iffy*" so to speak "The case is hypothetical, because many will be glorified without the "dissolution" (*katalusis*) taking place: see 1Co 15:51, 53) ([2 Corinthians 5 Commentary](#))

As **John MacArthur** says "For all, death comes like an utterly unsympathetic landlord waving an eviction notice. But that eviction merely releases believers from a wretched earthly neighborhood to an infinitely grand and glorious dwelling in a heavenly neighborhood."

**Spurgeon** comments that "If we could be completely delivered from the thralldom (bondage, slavery) of things seen and felt, and could feel the full influence of the invisible and the eternal, how much of heaven we might enjoy before the celestial shores are reached!...May God, the Holy Spirit, instruct us so that we may know the truth out of which solid happiness is sure to grow! (From his sermon [The Tent Dissolved and the Mansion Entered](#))

In other words **all** believers shall not sleep (die). There is a generation of believers who will experience the **rapture** (see word study on **harpazo**) and thus will not die physically (not have their tents "torn down"), but who shall be "changed" *"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet"* (1Co 15:51-53+). (**Related resource:** Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming)

**Alan Redpath** explains **if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down** this way - "**IF**"--he is not quite sure about something. In other words, it is just possible that he may never die at all because he is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; and He may come before that day. Therefore, says Paul, he really does not know whether he will go through the valley of the shadow (**Ed:** In this regard it is notable that Paul ended his first epistle to the Corinthians with the cry "**Maranatha**" which means "**Our Lord, come**" 1Co 16:22+)...(note also Paul) does not say "...if I be dissolved...." He says "if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands"--the essential man is going right through the experience without harm, unscathed. This is how Paul regards the possibility of catastrophe, the future, the thing that we call death."

Paul lived with a sense of the imminent return of Jesus Christ as indicated by his use of the pronoun "**we**" in passages that described the return of the Lord. For example in First Corinthians he wrote "**we** will not all sleep, but **we** will all be changed" (1Co 15:51+). Similarly in First Thessalonians he wrote "**we** who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep" (1Th 4:15). In other words if Christ returned during his lifetime he would not experience physical death.

While believers may or may not die (but be raptured), such is not the case with unbelievers, all of whom will die physically. Puritan writer **Richard Baxter** wrote that "Man always knows his life will shortly cease, Yet madly lives as if he knew it not." (**ED:** And this is tragically true for to many believers!) As someone else has said each one of us has been given "2 dates and 1 dash!" (1900-2001) (In a sense that is even true for those who will be raptured - life on earth has a beginning and an ending, either by death or the rapture).

In view of the finiteness and finality of our earthly existence **John Calvin** wrote "The mind of a Christian ought not to be filled with thoughts of earthly things, or find satisfaction in them, for we ought to be living as if we might have to leave this world at any moment."

Believers of all people should be living in preparation for dying which is the way Paul lived (cp Gal 2:20+)! I like the way **Spurgeon** so aptly described this style of "living" "**No man would find it difficult to die who died every day.** He would have practised it so

often, that he would only have to die but once more; like the singer who has been through his rehearsals, and is perfect in his part, and has but to pour forth the notes once for all, and have done." (Amen!)

**J I Packer** asks the question we all do well to answer..."How many Christians live their lives packed up and ready to go?"

**D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones** put it well noting that "If a philosophy of life cannot help me to die, then in a sense it cannot help me to live."

**Brian Bell** takes an interesting excursus noting that...

Man has done everything to soften the impact of death...especially by coming up with different theories to either dismiss it entirely or at least soften its blow! The 3 most popular are:

(1) **Reincarnation** – It is a new birth into another body. They believe we are recycled eternally. Reaching higher levels of happiness IF you've lived a good life, lower levels of misery if you haven't. Yet the bible says differently, "it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment," (Heb 9:27+)

(2) **Soul Sleep** – "The Last Hoorah!" This leads to despair, or you develop the attitude of "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die!"

(3) **Purgatory** – (root/purge) means "a place of spiritual purging." Basically death moves into a temporary state where others can pray to free us from punishment. The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church defines it as "an intermediate place between heaven & hell, where the unfinished business of earth is settled." This doctrine derives from 2 Maccabees 12:39-45 where it says, "thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be free from this sin." There are definitely some contextual problems, and even my Catholic bible says in its foot notes and I quote, "His belief (Judas) was similar to, but not quite the same as, the Catholic doctrine of purgatory." This is of course an apocryphal book which we do not see as part of the Canon of scripture. {These books do not claim for themselves the same kind of authority as the OT writings. They were never part of the Hebrew bible; They are never quoted in the NT, nor by Jesus. They contain teachings inconsistent w/the rest of the bible.

Many people are sincere in their beliefs but they are sincerely wrong! When it comes to theories about death you hear, "we think"; "we believe"; "we hope"; yet the bible says, "**we know**" (see 2Co 5:1)! ([2Corinthians 5 Sermon Notes](#))

**Rod Mattoon adds a Number 4** - Don't be duped by the deception that says, "When you die, that's it. There is nothing else beyond the grave." (Ed: **Annihilation** is a wishful deception!) You will be in for a rude awakening if you do, for there is a Heaven and there is a Hell where those who die without trusting Jesus Christ as their Savior will be tormented for eternity in the Lake of Fire. (Ibid)

**Spurgeon** comments that "Paul was not absolutely sure that his body would be dissolved (Ed: "his tent torn down or dismantled"). He hoped that he might be alive and remain at the coming of the Lord, and then he would be changed and be for ever with the Lord, without passing through death. Still, he was willing to leave this in the Lord's hands, and when he saw it to be possible that he should be numbered among the blessed dead who die in the Lord he did not shrink from the prospect, but bravely found a metaphor which set forth the little fear which he entertained concerning it. ([The Tent Dissolved and the Mansion Entered](#))

**Know** (1492)(**eido** only in perfect tense = oida) means in general to know by perception. Now **eido** means "intuitive knowledge." Now that's something that's different from knowledge that you have to go to a class to learn. This is something that is built in. It's a knowledge that doesn't have to be taught to those who live focused on the unseen.

Compare similar use of "know" in Ro 7:14, 1Co 8:1. Literally **eido/oida** refers to perception by sight (perceive, see) as in Mt 2:2+ "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For **wesaw (eido)** His star in the east, and have come to worship Him." **Eido/oida** is distinguished from **ginosko** (epiginosko, epignosis - the other major NT word group for knowing) because **ginosko** generally refers to knowledge obtained by experience or "experiential knowledge". On the other hand, **eido/oida** often refers more to an intuitive knowledge, although this distinction is not always clear cut. **Eido/oida** is not so much that which is known by experience as an intuitive insight that is drilled into one's heart. **Eido/oida** is a perception, a being aware of, an understanding, an intuitive knowledge which in the case of believers can only be given by the Holy Spirit. In summary, **eido/oida** suggests fullness of knowledge, absolute knowledge (that which is without a doubt), rather than a progress in knowledge that is obtained by experience (as usually signified by use of the verb **ginosko**)

**Earthly** (1919)(**epigeios** from **epí** = upon + **ge** = earth) means earthly, being upon the earth, belonging to



earth, wrought in men upon earth, characteristic of the earth or this present world. Not heavenly. Most often used in NT to contrast earthly with heavenly (things [truths] = Jn 3:12, bodies = 1Co 15:40, 2Co 5:1, mindset = Php 3:19, wisdom = Jas 3:15).

**Vincent** has a long note on **earthly**...- **Earthly**, not, made of earth, which would be *goikis*, as 1Co 15:47; but upon the earth, terrestrial, as 1Co 15:40; Php. 2:10. **Tabernacle** (*skenos*) tent or hut. In later writers, especially the Platonists, Pythagoreans, and medical authors, used to denote the body. Thus Hippocrates: "A great vein by which the whole body (*skenos*) is nourished." Some expositors think that Paul uses the word here simply in this sense — the house which is the body. But while Paul does mean the body, he preserves the figurative sense of the word tabernacle; for he never uses this term elsewhere as synonymous with the body. The figure of the tent suits the contrast with the building, and would naturally suggest itself to the tent-maker. The phrase earthly house of the tabernacle expresses a single conception — the dwelling which is, or consists in the tabernacle, the tent-house. The transient character of the body is thus indicated. Compare houses of clay, Job 4:19. See on the kindred words *skenoma* = tabernacle, 2Pe 1:13; and *skenoo* to dwell in or to fix a tabernacle, Jn 1:14. Tabernacle is so habitually associated with a house of worship, and is so often applied to durable structures, that the original sense of a tent is in danger of being lost. It would be better to translate here by tent. The word tabernacle is a diminutive of the Latin *taberna* a hut or shed, which appears in tavern. Its root is *ta, tan*, to stretch or spread out. ([2 Corinthians 5 Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

**Epigeios** - 7x in 6v in **NAS** - Jn 3:12; 1Co 15:40 (contrasting "heavenly bodies and earthly bodies"); 2Co 5:1; Php 2:10; Php 3:19; Jas 3:15 (contrasting telling "earthly things...heavenly things"). **NAS** = earth(1), earthly(4), earthly things(2).

John 3:12+ "If I told you **earthly** things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

1 Corinthians 15:40+ There are also heavenly bodies (glorified, resurrection bodies) and **earthly** bodies (mortal, physical bodies) , but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the **earthly** is another.

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if the **earthly** tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Philippians 2:10+ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on **earth** and under the earth,

Philippians 3:19+ whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on **earthly** things.

James 3:15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above (see Jas 3:17), but is **earthly**, natural, demonic (Jas 3:16).

**Tent** (4636) (*skenos* from *skene* = tent, booth, cloth hut, habitation, tabernacle Mt 17:4 Mk 9:5) is used **only here and 2Co 5:4** ("in this tent" [*skenos*] ~ idiom meaning to be physically alive) and refers to a temporary abode, residence (tent, tabernacle) as opposed to a permanent structure. **Skenos** is used figuratively by Paul to refer to the human body as the habitation of the soul (the "**tabernacle of the soul**") and specifically to emphasize the temporary nature of this body, just as a tent is a temporary structure.

**THOUGHT** - As an aside, beloved, recall that in the OT the "tabernacle" was where people met with God (Ex 25:22+)! Is that true of your "tabernacle"? More to the point, have you met with Him yet today? This week? Remember you are under grace not law - let that love of God [which has been poured out in your heart by the Spirit -Ro 5:5+, 1Jn 4:19+] motivate your meeting with Him.).

**House** (3614)(*oikia* from *oikos* = house) is literally one's residence, home or abode. **Oikia** is an inhabited edifice, building or dwelling. By extension, **oikia** describes that which one possesses (property, possession, goods) as in Mk 12:40. **Oikia** describes the house where Jesus was born (Mt 2:11), the place which a lamp is to light (Mt 5:15+), the place Peter's mother-in-law was ill (Mt 8:14), the believer's future home, our Father's house (Jn 14:2), and in short **oikia** described the place in which much of Jesus' ministry took place (see below and observe the uses of *oikia* in the Gospels). **Oikia** when used as a **figure of speech** (as in the present passage) describes the human body as the habitation of the soul in the present state. Jesus uses **oikia** as a figure of speech to describe where one chooses to build their "spiritual" house, the foundation on which one places their trust or faith (Mt 7:24, 25+, Mt 7:26; 27+).

Paul had just used another metaphor to describe the human body -**earthen vessels** (2Co 4:7+)

**IVP Bible Background Commentary** writes that "Greek writers described the body as a vessel, a house, a tent and often as a tomb!

**Denney** comments that "Despite the fact that he was himself a by trade a tentmaker (Acts 18:3+), this is the only place where Paul employs any of the terms correlative to skene.

**Alford** comments that the figure of an **earthly tent** "is a common one with Greek writers...*"The whole passage is expressed through the double figure of a house or tent, and a garment. The explanation of this abrupt transition from one to the other may be found in the image which, both from his occupation and his birthplace, would naturally occur to the Apostle,—the tent of Cilician hair-cloth, which might almost equally suggest the idea of a habitation and of a vesture."* (Stanley). Chrysostom observes *"Having thus implied easy taking down and transitoriness, he opposes to this the house (**building**) which is eternal"*

**Spurgeon** comments on our **bodies as tents** declaring that

The apostle Paul perceived that the body in which he lived was frail in itself. Paul was accustomed to make tents....When a tent is newly placed it is but a frail structure, very far removed from the substantiality of a house; in that respect it is exactly like this feeble corporeal frame of ours, which is crushed before the moth. Paul felt that his body would not need any great force to overthrow it; it was like the tent, which the Midianite saw in his dream, which only needed to be struck by a barley cake, and lo! it lay along. A house of solid masonry may need a crowbar and a pick to start its stones from their places, but feebler tools will soon overturn a tent and make a ruin of it. The body is liable to dissolution from causes so minute as to be imperceptible—a breath of foul air, an atom of poisonous matter, a trifle, a mere nothing, may end this mortal life. I hope that you and I duly remember the frailty of our bodies. We are not so foolish as to think that because we are in robust health today we must necessarily live to old age. We have had among ourselves lately abundant evidence that those who appear to be the healthiest are often the first to be taken away, while feeble persons linger on among us, whose lives are a continued wonder and a perpetual struggle. When we think of the brittle ware whereof our bodies are made it is not strange that they should soon be broken. Is it not a wonderful thing that we continue to live? much more wonderful than that we should die?...It is a very delicate process by which dust remains animated (**Ed**: "dust" referring to our mortal bodies); a thousand things can stay that process, and then our body is dissolved. Paul, therefore, because he saw his body to be frail as a bubble, looked forward to the time when the earthly house of his soul would be dissolved....There are signs about the aged which warn them that their earthly house was not built to stand for ever; it is a tabernacle or tent set up for a temporary purpose, and it shows signs of waxing old, and being ready to pass away. Hence, then, Paul was led to feel that both from the natural frailty of the body, and also from the injuries which it had already sustained, there was before him the evident probability that the earthly house of his tabernacle would be dissolved....

It would not long affect a man if his tent should be overthrown; he would shake himself clear of it and come forth; it would not otherwise disturb him. So death shall not affect us for the worse, but for the better; the dissolution of this hampering frame shall give us liberty. Today we are like birds in the egg; so long as the shell is whole we are not free: death breaks the shell. Does the fledgling lament the dissolution of the shell? I never heard of a bird in its nest pining over its broken shell; no, its thought runs otherwise: to wings, and flight, and sunny skies. So let it be with us.

This body will be dissolved: let it be so; it is meet it should be. We have been glad of it while we have needed it, and we thank God for the wondrous skill displayed in it; but when we no longer require it, we shall escape from it as from imprisonment, and never wish to return to its narrow bounds.

Death, as it pulls away our sackcloth canopy, will reveal to our wondering eyes the palace of the King wherein we shall dwell for ever, and, therefore, what cause have we to be alarmed at it?

I have set out the whole catastrophe before you, and surely no believer trembles in view of it. [The Tent Dissolved and the Mansion Entered](#)

**MacDonald** observes that "Paul opens the chapter with the assurance that if his earthly house should be destroyed (as a result of the sufferings mentioned in the preceding chapter) he knows he has a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (**Ed**: And again Paul's hope [absolute certainty] is not some disembodied state but his reception of the eternal glorified body). ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))



**Torn down** is "a mild word for death, in the case of believers." (Jamieson). "A gentle word...taken down, done away with" (Bengel)

**Spurgeon** comments that "Paul did not fear that he himself would be **torn down**: he had not the slightest fear about that. The catastrophe which he looked forward to is known among us by the name of "**death**"; but he calls it the dissolving of the earthly house of his tabernacle; the taking down of his tent-house body. He does not say, "*If I were to be destroyed*," or "*If I were to be annihilated*"; he knows no supposition (assumption) of that character; he feels assured that he is perfectly safe. There is latent within the text an element of deep quiet as to his real self. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God." The "**we**" is all unharmed and unmoved; if our house were dissolved **we** should not be undone; if **we** were to lose this earthly tent **we** have "a building of God, eternal in the heavens." The real man, **the essential self**, is out of harm's way; and all that he talks about is the falling to pieces of a certain tabernacle or tent in which for the present he is lodging. Many people are in a great fright about the future, yet here is Paul viewing the **worst thing that could happen to him** with such complacency that he likens it to nothing worse than the pulling down of a tent in which he was making shift to reside for a little season. He was afraid of nothing beyond that, and if that happened he had expectations which reconciled him to the event, and even helped him to anticipate it with joy. ([The Tent Dissolved and the Mansion Entered](#))

**Torn down** (2647) (**kataluo** from **kata** = down, prefix intensifying verb **luo** = loosen, dissolve, demolish, untie, undo) means literally to loosen down (unloose) and then to utterly destroy or to overthrow completely. To throw down (as the stones of the Temple Mt 24:2+). **P E Hughes** - In general, **kataluo** and **analuo** are synonymous verbs, and the latter was sometimes used of the operation of striking camp, that is, the dismantling of tents (cf. Polybius, V, xxviii, 8; 2Macc 9:1). ([Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#))

**Kataluo** is used as a figure of speech to describe death as pictured by one tearing down ("folding up") an "earthly tent" (where "tent" is a metaphor for our earthly body - see 2Co 5:1 - see slightly different verb **anulusis** with similar idea in 2Ti 4:6+). Paul uses **kataluo** to describe the belief that one is saved solely by grace through faith and not law keeping (Gal 2:18).

**Liddell Scott** adds that **kataluo** was used "of governments, to dissolve, break up, put down...to dissolve, dismiss, disband a body...to neglect the watch... to end, bring to an end...to break the peace...to unloose, unyoke, to take it down from the wall...to take up one's quarters, to lodge, (he is my *guest*)... to go and lodge with him... to take one's rest (may I take my rest in the grave)

**Marvin Vincent** on **torn down** in 2Co 5:1 - Lit., loosened down. Appropriate to taking down a tent. See on Mk 13:2; Lk 9:12; Acts 5:38; and compare 2Pe 3:11, 12+, and the figure of the parting of the silver cord on which the lamp is suspended, Eccl 12:6. Also Job 4:21, where the correct rendering is: Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them? ([2 Corinthians 5 Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

**Kataluo** is used literally of destroying, demolishing or dismantling an edifice (even brick by brick) (cp Mt 24:2, 26:61, 27:40, Mk 13:2, Acts 6:14)

**Kataluo** - 17x in 16v in **NAS** - abolish(2), destroy(5), destroyed(1), find lodging(1), guest(1), overthrow(1), overthrown(1), tear down(1), torn down(4). Mt 5:17; 24:2; 26:61; 27:40; Mk 13:2; 14:58; 15:29; Lk 9:12; 19:7; 21:6; Acts 5:38 39; 6:14; Ro 14:20; 2Co 5:1; Gal 2:18.

Paul is saying that our bodies are like tents which will be **torn down** at the time of our death. At that time the "tent" (the believer's body) goes into the grave, whereas our spirit and soul of go to be with the Lord. The temporary nature of an earthly "tent" also reminds us that we are to be but temporary residents in this short span of time called "life". The apostle **Peter** put it this way...

Beloved, I urge you as **aliens (paroikos)** and **strangers (parepidemois)** to abstain (**apechomai** although not a command it is present tense and thus requires us to [depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) from fleshly lusts (**epithumia**), which wage war against the soul (**psuche**). (1Peter 2:11+)

**Comment:** Note that "wage war" (**strateuomai**) is in the present tense which indicates that the spiritual campaign spearheaded by **fleshly lusts** against our **souls** is a continual struggle we can expect to engage in until the day we fold up our tents and go into the presence of our Commander in Chief, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle **James** offers a different picture of the temporary nature of our earthly existence...

James 4:14+ Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

An old Indian proverb is not bad theology declaring that "*Life is a bridge. Cross over it, but build no house on it.*"

Paul was prepared to die which made him ready for anything, for as someone once wisely said...

Until you are free to die,  
You are not really free to live.

**Guzik** adds that **torn down** "is the very same word used for *"striking down a tent."* One day, God will *"strike the tent"* and we will receive a new building from God, a place to live in through all eternity...This means that we are more than our bodies, and explains why Paul could consider all the pain and discomfort in his body a light affliction compared to the eternal weight of glory to come. It is a mistake to say, "my body isn't me." In truth, my body is me, but only part of me. There is much more to me than this body.

**Spurgeon** - Many people are in a great fright about the future, yet here Paul is viewing the worst thing that could happen to him (death) with such complacency that he likens it to nothing worse than the ***pulling down of tent*** in which he was making shift to reside for a little season.

In describing his recovery (Is 38:9), **Hezekiah** used the metaphor of a **tent** to describe the **brevity of his life** writing...

**Like a shepherd's tent** my dwelling (physical life) is pulled up and removed from me (speaking of the end of his life); as a weaver I rolled up my life. He cuts me off from the loom (as a finished fabric cut off from the loom); from day until night You make an end of me. (Is 38:12)

**Brian Bell** asks - If a man dies will he live again? That's what Job asked, "If a man dies, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14a) Then he answered himself, "All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes." (Job 14:14b) The writer of Pr 23:18 said, "For surely there is a hereafter, And your hope will not be cut off.". Tents are fun to camp in...but they are not a "home"! A tent is only a temporary place!. We will one day set aside this Earthly Tent in exchange for Heaven's Suit! ([2Corinthians 5 Sermon Notes](#))

**Rod Mattoon** tells the touching story of Eric Barker - Eric Barker, a missionary from Great Britain, spent over 50 years in Portugal preaching the Gospel, often under adverse conditions. During World War II, the situation became so critical that he was advised to send his wife and eight children to England for safety. His sister and her three children were also evacuated on the same ship. Although his beloved relatives were forced to leave, he remained behind to carry on the work. On the Lord's Day following their departure, Pastor Barker stood before his congregation and said, "I've just received word that all my family have arrived safely home!" He then proceeded with the service as usual. Later, the full meaning of his words became known to his people. He had been handed a wire just before the church service informing him that a submarine had torpedoed the ship, and everyone on board had drowned. He knew that because all were believers they had reached a more "desired home." Although overwhelmed with grief, he managed by the grace of God to live above his circumstances and to stay on the firing line for Jesus Christ. The knowledge that his family was enjoying the bliss of Heaven comforted his heart and helped him to keep one eye on eternity. Keeping one eye on eternity involves the promise of a new body. Secondly, it involves pining for our new body. Notice verses two through four (2Co 5:2-4). (Treasures from 2 Corinthians, Volume 1).

**WE HAVE A BUILDING FROM GOD, A HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS: oikodomen ek theou echomen (1PPAI) oikian acheiropoieton aionion en tois ouranois:**

- **we have a building from God,** : Jn 14:2,3 1 Co 3:9 Heb 11:10
- **a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens** Col 2:11 Heb 9:11,24 1Pe 1:4
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- See also "shorter version" of commentary on 2 Corinthians 5:1

## **FACING DEATH WITH A CONFIDENT HOPE**

**Wiersbe** sums up Paul's vibrant testimony in this section - "We have this ministry.... We have this treasure.... We [have] the same spirit of faith.... We have a building of God" (2Cor. 4:1, 7, 13; 5:1). What a testimony Paul gave to the reality of the Christian faith!

**We have (echo)** means to possess and the **present tense** speaks of this as our present and continual possession, an "*assured prospect of possession, as certain as if it were in our hands, laid up "in the heavens" for us.*" (Jamieson). John uses the **present tense** in a similar way writing that believers have "**eternal life**" now (Jn 3:36, Jn 6:47). Paul wants to be sure that his readers knew

this truth about the future to allow us to live in light of the truth about this present life (which ends in death).

This world is not my home, I am just a passin' through,  
My treasures are laid up, somewhere beyond the blue,  
The angels beckon me from Heaven's golden shore,  
And I can't feel at home in this world any more.

**P E Hughes** - Taking account of the passage as a whole, with its clear contrast between the present body and the resurrection body, the **present tense** of the verb "**have**" is understood, with most commentators, as referring to a **future possession** which is so real and assured in the apostle's perspective that it is appropriately spoken of in the **present tense**. For examples of the use of the **present** denoting **future** time cf. J. H. Moulton, Grammar, Vol. I, p. 120; Moule, Idiom Book, p. 7. [Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#))

**Puritan Thomas Watson** expressed this sure hope of possessing our resurrection bodies when he declared that "We are more sure to arise out of our graves than out of our beds." ("*Amen or oh my!*")

**Spurgeon** comments that...

Paul knew that if his tent dwelling was overthrown he would not be without a home; he knew that he would not have to open his eyes in a naked condition, and cry, "Woe's me, whither am I to fly? I have no dwelling place." No, he knew that if this tent-house were gone he had "a building of God." Paul was not afraid of going to purgatory: though of late some even among Protestants have in a modified form revived that grim fiction, and have told us that even believers will have much to bear before they will be fit for eternal happiness. The apostle held no such opinion; but, on the contrary, he wrote- "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God." He did not expect to be roasted alive for the next thousand years, and then to leap from purgatory to Paradise; but he did expect to go, as soon as ever his earthly house was dissolved, into his eternal house, which is in the heavens.

He had not even the thought of lying in a state of unconsciousness till the resurrection. He says, "We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have [**we have already**] a building of God." He says not "**we shall have it**," but "**we have it**"; "**we know that we have it**." ...

What did the apostle mean, however for this text is said to be a very difficult one? He meant, first the moment his soul left its body it would at once enter into that house of which Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." Do you want to know about that house?...

Paul also meant that in the fullness of time he would again be **clothed with a body**. He regarded the waiting time as so short that he almost overlooked it, as men forget a moment's pause in a grand march. Ultimately, I say he expected to be **housed in a body**: the tent-house which was blown down and dissolved would be developed into a building, so rich and rare as to be fitly called "a building of God, a house not made with hands." This also is our prospect.

**Guzik** reminds us that "Salvation isn't just for the soul or spirit, but for the body also. Resurrection is how God saves our bodies. We have a glorious new body to come! "The righteous are put into their graves all weary and worn; but as such they will not rise. They go there with the furrowed brow, the hollowed cheek, the wrinkled skin; they shall wake up in beauty and glory." (Spurgeon)

**Our building from God** is certain because "We possess the title to it now by faith. "Faith is the title-deed (hypostasis) to things hoped for" (He 11:1-+). (**A T Robertson**)

**Peter** says that believers are assured of

an inheritance (kleronomia) which is imperishable (aphthartos) and undefiled (amiantos) and will not fade away (amarantos), reserved (tereo in the perfect tense = underscores its permanence!) in heaven for you. (1Pe 1:4+)

**Marvin Vincent** - The **building from God** is an actual possession in virtue of the believer's union with Christ (see **in Christ**). It is just as we say of a minor, before he comes into possession of his property, that he has so much. Compare Mt 19:21. ([Commentary](#))

**Tent...building** - Paul changes metaphors to signify a change of meaning, the first (**tent**) temporary (this present life), the second (**building**) enduring (eternal). A T Robertson agrees noting that "*a **building** is more substantial than the **tent***" and conveys a sense of permanence.

**Building from God** - This refers primarily to the believer's heavenly body rather than their heavenly home. The future resurrection

body is **eternal** in contrast to our present temporary tent, a truth that parallels our permanent future residence in a "city which has foundations, Whose Architect and Builder is God." (Heb 11:10+, cp Jn 14:2, 3).

**MacArthur** - Since it replaced his earthly tent (his physical body), the building from God Paul referred to must be his glorified body, which he would receive after "He who raised the Lord Jesus...raise[d him] also with Jesus" (2Co 4:14).

**Building** (3619) (**oikodome** from **oikos** = dwelling, house + **doma** = building or **demo** = to build) is **literally** the building of a house and came to refer to any building process. **Oikodome** can refer to the actual process of building or construction. Another literal meaning is as a reference to a building or edifice which is the result of a construction process (Mt 24:1, Mk 13:1, 2 are the only literal uses of **oikodome** in the NT).

Most of the NT uses of **oikodome** are **metaphorical or figurative** and refer to the church as the building for God's indwelling Eph 2:21 (cp 1Co 3:9). In the present passage Paul is referring to the body not an actual building.

**Made without hands** (886) (**acheiropoiētos** from **a** = without + **cheiropoiētos** = made with hands <> **cheír** = hand + **poiéo** = to make) is used figuratively in all 3 NT occurrences and is not found in the Septuagint. Clearly this adjective emphasizes the supernatural character of our new body, one given to us by God, Giver of "every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift." (Jas 1:17)

**P E Hughes** comments that **acheiropoiētos** "must be understood as a synonym, almost a technical term, for that which is heavenly and spiritual in contradistinction to what is earthly and physical. ([Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#))

**MacArthur** writes that **acheiropoiētos** in this verse "refers to what is spiritual, transcendent, and eternal, not to what is earthly, physical, and temporal.

**MacDonald** asks why does Paul say **made without hands** because "Our present bodies **are not made with hands**; so why should he emphasize that our future, glorified bodies will not be made with hands? The answer is that the expression not made with hands means "not of this creation." This is made clear in Hebrews 9:11, where we read, "*But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.*" What Paul is saying in 2 Corinthians 5:1 is that whereas our present bodies are suited to life on this earth, our future, glorified bodies will not be of this creation. They will be especially designed for life in heaven. ([Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

**David Garland** has an interesting thought on the phrase "**Not made with hands**" stating that it "contrasts something that is temporary, impure, and incomplete (**made with hands**) with something enduring, incorruptible, and finished—something made by God. In Scripture something "**made with hands**" is connected to idolatry and implies impurity (Lev 26:1, 30; Isa 2:18; 10:11; 16:12; 19:1; Da 5:4, 23; 6:26; Acts 7:48; 17:24; Col 2:11). ([New American Commentary - 2 Corinthians](#))

Here are the only other NT uses of **acheiropoiētos**...

Mark 14:58+ "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands (the physical building in Jerusalem), and in three days I will build another (another of a different kind) **made without hands** (figurative description of the "temple" of His resurrection body - cp Jn 2:19, 20, 21+).'"

Colossians 2:11+ and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision **made without hands** (i.e., a spiritual circumcision - see Excursus on Circumcision Of the Heart), in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ

**Eternal in the heavens** - This description of our future glorious body presents a strong contrast with our present temporary tent on earth. **Does this striking contrast not make you yearn for your heavenly clothing?**

**Brian Bell** asks - Is it natural to long for heaven? Do you get upset when the waitress takes away the 1st dish of a "many course" meal?". No, because you know she is going to replace it with something better. ([2Corinthians 5 Sermon Notes](#))

**Eternal** (166) (**aionios** from **aion**) means existing at all times, perpetual, pertaining to an unlimited duration of time (Ro 1:20 - God's power, Mt 18:8 - God's place of judgment, Ro 16:26 - God's attribute). **Aionios** is the antithesis of **proskairos** (temporal) and in the present context indicates that our new bodies will no longer be subject to disease, decay, and death, but will endure forever in our heavenly home.

Paul's only other uses of **aionios** in Corinthians are in the preceding **context**...- For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an **eternal** weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things

which are not seen are **eternal**. (2Co 4:17-18+)

**Mounce** - This adjective typically functions in three settings: the eternity of God and the divine realm; the blessings of salvation; and everlasting conditions that have neither beginning nor end.

**Illustration** - Over the triple doorways of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath is the legend, "All that which pleases is but for a moment." Over the other is sculptured a cross, and there are the words, "All that which troubles us is but for a moment." But underneath the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, "That only is important which is eternal." If we realize these three truths, we will not let trifles trouble us, nor be interested so much in the passing pageants of the hour. We would live, as we do not now, for the permanent and eternal (See 2Corinthians 4:17 18+).

**Heaven** (3772) (**ouranos** from **oros** = a relatively high elevation of land) refers in the physical sense to over-arching, all-embracing heaven beneath which is the earth and all that is therein. In context heaven refers to the transcendent abode or dwelling place of God, the angels and all the righteous (saved, regenerate, born again) dead.

**How beautiful must be our future home** - A little girl was taking an evening walk with her father. Wonderingly, she looked up at the stars and exclaimed: "Oh, Daddy, if the wrong side of heaven is so beautiful, what must the right side be!"

#### Bradford Mullen

Heaven" designates two interrelated and broad concepts—the physical reality beyond the earth and the spiritual reality in which God dwells...Heaven most commonly refers to the dwelling-place of God. Heaven is where the glory of God is expressed in pristine clarity. The term "glory," therefore, has popularly been used as a synonym for heaven (Rom 8:18). Actually, God's glory is above the heavens (Psalm 113:4; 148:13) because it is the sum total of his attributes that are expressed wherever he is present (Exod 13:21-22; Psalm 108:5; 2 Col 3:7-18). In heaven there is a continual acknowledgment of God's glory (Psalm 29:9). Various figurative expressions identify God's heavenly abode such as "the highest heaven" (1 Kings 8:27), "the heavens" (Amos 9:6), and "his lofty palace in the heavens" (Amos 9:6). Paul speaks of being taken up into "the third heaven" (2 Cor 12:2). Although he does not identify the first two, possible references to the atmospheric and celestial heavens are suggestive...

Believers and Heaven. Believers have a present and future heavenly status. Presently believers are citizens of heaven (Php 3:20-21) with a heavenly calling (Heb 3:1); their names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20). They groan to be clothed with a resurrection body, "a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands" (2 Cor 5:1). It will be a body like Christ's. The restoration of the image of God in human beings—from earthly to heavenly—will be complete (1 Cor 15:45-49). The eternal inheritance of future blessings promised by God is secure because it is "kept in heaven" (1 Peter 1:4), and because believers are joint-heirs with Christ who has already been glorified (Rom 8:17).

The heavenly future all believers anticipate is the fulfillment of God's purpose in creating the universe. It will include worship of the type revealed in the Book of Revelation (7:10; 11:16-18; 15:2-4). Worship will involve rehearsing God's glorious Acts (19:1-2). In addition to ascription of worth, worship will involve service—unspecified works done in obedience to God and for God (22:6). Believers are to offer this kind of service to God now (Rom 12:1). In contrast to present suffering, God promises believers that they will reign with Christ in heavenly glory (2 Tim 2:12; see Matt 19:28; Rev 20:4, 6). In heaven believers will have fellowship with God and with each other in a perfect environment (Heb 12:22-23). ([Heaven, Heavens, Heavenlies - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

**2 Corinthians 5:2** For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [kai gar en touto stenazomen](#), (1PPAI) [to oiketerion hemon to](#) ex [ouranou](#) [ependusasthai](#) (AMN) [epipothountes](#), (PAPMPN)

**Amplified:** Here indeed, in this [present abode, body], we sigh and groan inwardly, because we yearn to be clothed over [we yearn to put on our celestial body like a garment, to be fitted out] with our heavenly dwelling, ([Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** For indeed so long as we are as we are we earnestly long to put on our abode which is from heaven,

and if indeed we have put it on we shall not be found naked. ([Westminster Press](#))

**ESV:** For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ([ESV](#))

**HCSB:** And, in fact, we groan in this one, longing to put on our house from heaven, ([Holman Christian Standard Bible](#))

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

**NEB:** In this present body we do indeed groan; we yearn to have our heavenly habitation put on over this one ([New English Bible](#))

**NET:** For in this earthly house we groan, because we desire to put on our heavenly dwelling, ([NET Bible](#))

**MH:** What is more, being housed in this tent we constantly sigh with longing because we yearn to put on over it, as someone would don an overgarment, our dwelling that is supplied from heaven. (Murray Harris' expanded paraphrase).

**NLT:** We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. (NLT - Tyndale House)

**Phillips:** In this present frame we sigh with deep longing for the heavenly house, ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Weymouth:** For in this one we sigh, because we long to put on over it our dwelling which comes from Heaven —

**Wuest:** For indeed, in this [tent] we are groaning, longing to be clothed in addition with our house which is from heaven, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

**Young's Literal:** for also in this we groan, with our dwelling that is from heaven earnestly desiring to clothe ourselves,

**FOR INDEED IN THIS HOUSE WE GROAN, LONGING TO BE CLOTHED WITH OUR DWELLING FROM HEAVEN: kai gar en touto stenazomen, (1PPAI) to oiketerion hemon to ex ouranou endusasthai (AMN) epipothountes, (PAPMPN):**

- **For indeed in this house we groan:** 2Co 5:4 Ro 7:24 8:23 1Pe 1:6,7
- **longing :** Php 1:23
- **to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven :** 2Co 5:3,4 1Co 15:53,54
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- **See also "shorter version" of commentary on 2 Corinthians 5:2**

## GROANING AND LONGING FOR FUTURE GLORY

Here Paul mixes metaphors of a **house** by picturing putting it on like **clothing**.

**For** (1063) (**gar**) expresses the reason for his groaning now is his anticipation of the glory to follow, not so much a reflection of present afflictions or trials. This groaning is for our future grace (1Pe 1:13+) and glory (Ro 8:23+ where *redemption of our body* = glorification)

**Alford** explains **for indeed** (kai gar) this way...

Our knowledge, that we possess such a building of God, even in case of our body being dissolved, is testified by the earnest desire which we have, to put on that new body without such dissolution taking place.

**This** (5129) (**toutoi**) means this one, denoting that which is present or near in time or place or something just mentioned, in this case the "house" just mentioned. Note "house" is not present in the Greek text..

**In this house** - It is as if Paul in a sense is pointing to his own body as he begins writing this verse.

**Spurgeon** comments....

At this present in this mortal body we **groan** being burdened, for our spirit is liberated from bondage, but our body is not yet emancipated, although it has been bought with a price. We are "waiting for the adoption, to wit,



the redemption of our body," and so "the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Our soul has been regenerated, but the body waits for the process, which in its case is analogous to regeneration, namely, the resurrection from the dead. Disembodied saints (see Constable's note below) may have to wait a few thousand years, more or less, dwelling in the Father's house above; but there shall come eventually the sounding of the trumpet and the raising of the dead, and then the perfected spirit shall dwell in a body adapted to its glory.

The certainty of the resurrection raises us above the dread which would otherwise surround the dissolution of our body....Yet, again, dear brothers and sisters, you and I know that when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved there will be a new body for us, because our Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. In my mind the ultimate answer to my deepest unbelief is the fact of the rising of Jesus from the dead. No matter of history is anything like so well attested as the fact that our Lord was crucified, dead and buried, and that he did upon the third day rise again from the dead. This I unhesitatingly accept as a fact, and this becomes my anchorage.

**Thomas Constable** in contrast to Spurgeon and a number of other commentators (see+ by John MacArthur below) does not believe we will be "disembodied spirits" if we die **before** the rapture when we will receive our eternal, incorruptible glorified bodies. Scripture does not directly speak to this so called "intermediate state", so Constable uses indirect evidence to support his view...

Even though there is no specific instruction concerning an intermediate body and its characteristics in Scripture, its existence seems beyond doubt. References to believers after death and before resurrection suggest that they have bodies (cf. Lazarus, Luke 16:19–25; Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration, Matt. 17:1–3, et al; the martyred dead in heaven, Rev. 6:9 10 11 and Re 7:13 14 15 16 17). These bodies evidently will not be suitable for eternal existence since God will replace them with resurrection bodies (John F. Walvoord, ed., Lewis Sperry Chafer's Systematic Theology, abridged ed., 2:506–7. See also Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, 4:414–15). ([2 Corinthians Expository Notes](#))

**Pratt** takes somewhat of a "middle ground" regarding the doctrine of the intermediate state...

Paul referred to the future resurrected bodies of believers, focusing on the eternal state without differentiating it from the **intermediate state** (The state believers [who have passed on and now] are in His presence awaiting the dispensation of the permanent resurrection body when the Lord returns). According to this view, Paul did not address our heavenly experience before Christ's return. Because the **intermediate state** is not the goal that believers are to keep in mind, it is overshadowed by the permanent state after Christ's return. ([I & II Corinthians. Holman New Testament Commentary: Holman Reference](#))

My personal opinion is that the Scriptures do not clearly describe the "**intermediate**" state or the time between the death of a believer and the coming of Jesus at which time all believers receive their glorified bodies (at least all believers who have died during the church age). One thing we can all agree on that is that when we are absent from this body we are in His very presence and that doctrinal truth should put an end to any contentious disagreements regarding the intermediate state.

I like **Matthew Henry's** comment that...

Gracious souls are not found naked in the other world; no, they are clothed with garments of praise (Isa 61:3KJV), with robes of righteousness and glory (Isa 61:10). They shall be delivered out of all their troubles, and shall have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, Revelation 7:14-+.

## **"GOOD" GROANING**

**We groan** - This is no unhappy groaning but good groaning like a child does as they wait for Christmas and the time to open their presents. Paul was groaning positively" because he was longing to receive the "present" of his resurrection body as a replacement his present earthly tent.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Paul was not **groaning** because he was in a human body, but because he longed to see Jesus Christ and receive a glorified body. He was groaning for glory! This explains why death holds no terrors for the Christian. Paul called his death a "departure" (2Ti 4:6-+). One meaning of this Greek word is "to take down one's tent and move on." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Groan** ([4727](#)) (**stenazo** from **stenós** = narrow, contracted as when one is squeezed or pressed by circumstances, the gate leading to eternal life - Mt 7:13, 14) describes an inward, unexpressed feeling of sorrow. To sigh or groan is the sense here. Other contexts convey the meaning of to complain strongly or to grumble (Jas 5:9). The Septuagint of Ex 2:23 uses a derivative verb - "Israelites groaned (katastenazo - also in Ezek 9:4, 21:6) because of the slave labor.")

The **present tense** pictures the believer's groaning as ongoing in this present life. This is our "habitual practice" because we know that these frail, decaying earthly bodies pale in comparison to our inestimably superior future bodies.

**Trapp** - As that *avis Paradisi*, which being once caught and engaged, never leaves sighing, they say, till set at liberty.

**Webster** says that to **groan** means to breathe with a deep murmuring sound; to utter a mournful voice, as in pain or sorrow. To sigh; to be oppressed or afflicted; or to complain of oppression. To utter a deep moan indicative of pain, grief, or annoyance. To make a prolonged stressed dull cry expressive of agony, pain, or disapproval. To make a loud harsh creaking sound, as of a tree bending in the wind.

**Stenazo** - 6x in 6v in the **NAS** - complain(1), deep sigh(1), grief(1), groan(3).

Mark 7:34; Ro 8:23; 2Co 5:2, 4; Heb 13:17; Jas 5:9

**Paul** expresses a similar thought on "future groaning" in Romans 8 where not only do **believers** groan but so does **all of creation**...

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God (when we are glorified at Christ's return). For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. (Phillips paraphrases it "*The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own.*") And not only this ("the whole creation **groans** and suffers the pains of childbirth"), but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even **we ourselves groan** within ourselves, **waiting eagerly** ("on tiptoe" so to speak just like creation) for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body (= glorification = when we receive our resurrection bodies). 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we **wait eagerly** for it. (Ro 8:19+, Ro 8:20, 21+ Ro 8:22+ Ro 8:23+ Ro 8:24 25+).

**As P E Hughes says:** He who has the firstfruits of the Spirit (cp 2Co 1:22) yearns for the full harvest, which involves the redemption of his body (Ro 8:23).

In his letter to the Philippians he expressed his **desire** to be out of this present world...

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. 23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; 24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. (Php 1:21+ Php 1:22 23 24+).

**Harry Ironside** writes that "**we groan**" "is a Scripture I do not have to expound to you. You live it out; you know what it is to groan. There are many things to make us do so. Some of us used to **groan** in the bondage of sin, but though delivered from that, we are still **groaning** as we wait for a resurrection body. There are so many aches and pains and sorrows and sufferings. "In this **wegroan**, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." That is, we are yearning for the time when we shall have our new body, we are looking forward to resurrection or change at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him.

**David Guzik** - Many of us are not earnestly desiring (**longing for**) heaven. Perhaps it is because we are so comfortable on earth? It isn't that we should seek out affliction, but neither should we dedicate our lives to the pursuit of comfort. There is nothing wrong with earnestly desiring heaven! There is something right about being able to agree with Paul, and saying we groan! (for our "heavenly wardrobe")

**Longing** (1971) (epipothéo from epi = intensification or direction + potheo = to yearn) means to have a strong desire for something, with implication of need. To long for, have great affection for, yearn for someone or something. Compare use in 1 Pe 2:2+ = "like newborn babies, **long** (aorist imperative) for the pure milk of the word."

**To long** (English dictionary) - To have or feel a strong desire for something. To desire earnestly or eagerly. To have an eager appetite.

The present tense describes our continual yearning for better body in a better place on that glorious day when faith will become sight! **Beloved are you longing for your resurrection body?** If not it might reflect that you have become too comfortable in this present world which is passing away! How much more bearable are present afflictions when we truly cultivate a future focused mindset. Remember that what we are **longing** for will determine what we are **living** for because our heart always follows after what

we treasure.

**MacArthur** explains that Paul was **longing for** "his glorified body not primarily because it would be free of physical weakness, blemishes, and defects, but because it would be free of sin. The tent of the body is sin's home, causing Paul to lament, "I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin" (Ro 7:14); "sin ... dwells in me" (Ro 7:17, Ro 7:20); "evil is present in me" (Ro 7:21); and "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" (Ro 7:24). The apostle longed to serve, worship, and praise God in absolute purity, freed from the restrictions of his fallen, sinful flesh. That is the best feature of resurrection reality."

**Epipotheo** - 9x in **NAS** - desires(1), long for(2), long to(1), longing for(1), longing to(3), yearn for(1). Ro 1:11; 2Co 5:2; 9:14; Php 1:8; 2:26; 1Th 3:6; 2Ti 1:4; Jas 4:5; 1Pe 2:2

**Vincent** comments that **epipotheo** as a "participle has an explanatory force, as Acts 27:7, "*because* the wind did not suffer us." "We groan *because* we long." Revised = longing. The compounded preposition *epi* does not mark the intensity of the desire, but its direction. ([2 Corinthians 5 Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

**Epipotheo** was a favorite word with Paul describes a strong desire, an intense craving of possession, a great affection for, a deep desire, an earnest yearning for something with implication of need. Here it describes the natural yearning of personal affection. Paul loved Timothy as a man loves his own son and he longed for the joy of renewed fellowship with him face to face. The force of the original Greek sentence emphasizes that the direction of Paul's desire is for Timothy. This yearning is further nourished by his constant remembrance of Timothy's tears.

Peter exhorts his readers to lay aside list of several sins (1Peter 2:1-+ - **If you lose your appetite for the Word, the loss of which will "stunt" your spiritual growth, then you need to do a little personal inventory check to see if any of the sins listed in verse 1 are dulling your "appetite" for "pure milk")...**

like newborn babes, **long for** (epipotheo - intensely yearn, thirst for; **aorist imperative** = This in **NOT** optional! Do this, do it now and do it effectively! It's urgent because the vitality of your daily walk and growth in Christ-likeness depends on the intake of "quality" nutrients, sound [healthy] doctrine! The idea is believers should now crave for and delight in) the **pure** (unadulterated, no additive) milk of the word, that by it you may **grow** (be nourished and nurtured so that you make progress in holiness) in respect to salvation (the ultimate goal toward which all spiritual growth in this life is moving is conformity to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ)." (1Pe 2:2-+)

**Epipotheo** is used in the not-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)** in the 9 verses Deut 13:8; 32:11; Ps 42:1; 62:10; 84:2; Ps 119:20, 131, 174; Jer 13:14)

The use of **epipotheo** in several psalms helps paint a beautiful picture...

**Psalms 42:1** As the deer **pants** (epipotheo = present tense = continually) for the water brooks, so my soul **pants** (epipotheo = present tense = continually) for Thee, O God.

**Spurgeon comments:** As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after the, O God. As after a long drought the poor fainting hind longs for the streams, or rather as the hunted hart instinctively seeks after the river to lave its smoking flanks and to escape the dogs, even so my weary, persecuted soul pants after the Lord my God. Debarred from public worship, David was heartsick. Ease he did not seek, honour he did not covet, but the enjoyment of communion with God was an urgent need of his soul; he viewed it not merely as the sweetest of all luxuries, but as an absolute necessity, like water to a stag. Like the parched traveller in the wilderness, whose skin bottle is empty, and who finds the wells dry, he must drink or die -- he must have his God or faint. His soul, his very self, his deepest life, was insatiable for a sense of the divine presence.

**As the hart brays  
so his soul prays.**

Give him his God and he is as content as the poor deer which at length slakes its thirst and is perfectly happy; but deny him his Lord, and his heart heaves, his bosom palpitates, his whole frame is convulsed, like one who gasps for breath, or pants with long running. Dear reader, dost thou know what this is, by personally having felt the same? It is a sweet bitterness. The next best thing to living in the light of the Lord's love is to be unhappy till we have it, and to pant hourly after it -- hourly, did I say? thirst is a perpetual appetite, and not to be forgotten, and even thus continual is the heart's longing after God. When it is as natural for us to long for God as for an animal to thirst, it is well with our souls, however painful our feelings. We may learn from this verse that the eagerness of our desires may be pleaded with God, and the more so, because there are special promises for the importunate and fervent.

**Clothed with** - Literally "put on over". KJV = "clothed upon". **Wuest** renders it "clothed in addition" ([Eerdmans Publishing](#)). New English Bible = "put on over". (see [explanation below](#))

**Illustration** - A pastor once received a letter from a nine-year-old girl that said, "Dear Pastor, I hope to go to heaven someday, but later than sooner. Love, Ellen." Out of the mouths of babes! Ellen speaks for almost everyone. We all want to go to Heaven, but later as opposed to sooner. However, as we have come to expect, this isn't the way Paul thought. Paul hoped to get there sooner rather than later. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word](#))

**Clothed** (1902) (**ependuomai** from **epí** = upon or intensifier of + **enduo** = to clothe, English - endue, literally to enter into, as clothes) is a stronger form of **enduo** and means to put on in addition, to put on one's self as putting on a garment over existing clothing or to put one piece of clothing over another which is presently being worn. Here Paul is using the verb figuratively in reference to being clothed with our future resurrection body.

**Barnett** - "The 'clothed upon' and 'swallowed up by life' imagery (2Co 5:2-4), when read alongside 1Co 15:53-54+, leaves little doubt that this 'house' is the individual's resurrection body."

**Vincent** notes that **ependuomai** is used "Only here and 2Co 5:4. Compare *ependutes* fisher's coat, John 21:7. Literally = to put on over. The metaphor changes from **building** to **clothing**, a natural transformation in the mind of Paul, to whom the hair-cloth woven for tents would suggest a vesture. ([2 Corinthians 5 Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

**S Lewis Johnson** expounds on this section giving attention to this verb...

Now, Paul changes his metaphor here, of course. He has talked about a tent and then an edifice, and now he talks about putting on clothes and putting on clothes over clothes, clothed upon. So this is a change of metaphor, and the apostle changes his metaphors every now and then. What he's thinking about is an outer cloak to absorb and transfigure the inner cloak. He says, we long to be clothed upon with our dwelling from heaven.

Now, this particular word is related to another word that was used to describe an outer garment. Do you remember when Peter in John chapter 21 (Jn 21:7 "outer garment" = *ependutes*) went fishing in the disappointment of failure to understand the resurrection, and they were out on the boat and the Lord Jesus called from the shore in the mists of the early morning. And John, who seemed to sense the Lord's presence a bit more than Peter said, It's the Lord, and Peter -- impulsive Peter -- the text says he was naked ("he was stripped" Jn 21:7); that is, he had the inner garment but what he did was to pick up his outer garment, which he had taken off, throw it over that inner garment, dive into the water, and he swam to shore.

Now, that outer garment (*ependutes*) is from the same root as this verb (*ependuomai*), "**to clothe upon**." So what he did was to put something over his garment, like you go out in January in Dallas and you put on an overcoat over your suit coat. Paul is talking about an outer cloak to absorb and transfigure the inner. He wants the resurrection body, the body that is like unto our Lord's own glorious body, and he would put that on over his other garment. ([Clothed, Unclothed and Clothed Upon - 2 Corinthians 5:1-5](#))

**Dwelling** (3613) (**oiketerion** from **oikeo** = to dwell) is used only here and in Jude 1:6 and means a dwelling place, above, habitation (3Macc 2:15 of the dwelling of God). BDAG says *oiketerion* was used in secular Greek as an "astrological term 'house of Kronos = Saturn'". **Plummer** says that *oiketerion* "denotes a permanent abode or home", and "the difference between *oikia* and *oiketerion* is that the latter implies an *oiketer*, an inhabitant, while the former does not

Jude 1:6+ And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper **abode** (*oiketerion*), He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

**Our dwelling from heaven** - This phrase refers to our *resurrection bodies*, although a few commentators favor our *resurrection residences* ("mansions" Jn 14:2KJV). The context favors the former interpretation but does not exclude the latter.

Just as believers in this life have physical bodies like the first Adam, in the life to come we will have spiritual glorified bodies like Christ, the "Last Adam" (1Co 15:45+).

John uses our glorious **future hope** as a motivator for present **pure living**...

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, **when He appears, we shall be like Him**, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1Jn 3:2+, 1Jn 3:3+)

Paul writes that believers should be motivated not to set our minds on earthly things (Php 3:19+)...

For (TERM OF EXPLANATION - WHY WE SHOULD NOT SET OUR MIND ON EARTHLY THINGS) our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait (**apekdechomai** from in the **present tense** = our lifestyle, our habitual attitude is waiting with great anticipation) for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform (**metaschematizo**) the body of our humble (**tapeinosis**) state into conformity with (**summorphos**) the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power (**energeia**) that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Php 3:20 21+)

**From heaven (ex ouranou)** - Literally "out of heaven" and thus from God as in 2Co 5:1. Heaven - our real home!

**Heaven (3772)** (**ouranos** from **oros** = a relatively high elevation of land) here refers to the dwelling place of God, the place all believers will one day dwell and the place which we long to inhabit.

## **THE PROSPECT OF OUR ETERNAL FUTURE: THE BEST HELP FOR PRESENT LIVING**

**Spurgeon** speaks to the practical import of the knowledge of our future dwelling...

To be sure that when this body dies all is well, is not that worth knowing? Secularists twit us (subject us to light ridicule and reproach) with the fact that we are taking men's minds away from the *practical* present so that they may dream about a *fancied* future. We answer that

the best help to live for the present  
is to live in prospect of the eternal future.

Paul's confident belief that if his body should be dissolved he would be no loser, kept him from fainting. He knew what the worst would be, and he was prepared for it. Great storms were out, but the apostle knew the limit of his possible loss, and so was ready. All we can lose is the frail tent of this poor body. By no possibility can we lose more.

**When a man knows the limit of his risk  
it greatly tends to calm his mind.**

The *undiscoverable* and the *unmeasured* are the worst ingredients of *dread* and *terror*.

**When you can gauge your fears,  
You have removed them.**

Brethren, an hour with our God will make up for all the trials of the way. Wherefore, be of good courage, and press on. This changed for Paul the very idea of death; death was transformed from a demon into an angel: it was but the removal of a tottering tent that he might enter into a permanent palace. Some of God's own children are much troubled through fear of death, because they do not know what it is. If they were better taught they would soon discover in their present source of sorrow a subject for song.

I would like here to say that I have known some of my Master's doubting and fearing servants die splendidly. Do you remember how Mr. Feeble-mind, when he crossed the river, went over dry-shod. Poor soul, he thought he should surely be drowned, and yet he scarcely wet the soles of his feet. I have known men of God go like Jacob all day long weary and faint, feeling banished from their Father's house; and yet when they have laid their head down for their final sleep they have had visions of angels and of God. The end of their journey has made amends for the rough places of the way. It shall be so with you, brother believer. There is usually a dark place in every Christian's experience: I have seen some travel in sunlight almost the whole of the way, and then depart in gloom, and I have thought none the worse of them for it; and I have seen others struggle forward through a fog for the first part of their pilgrimage, and then come out into cloudless day. At one period or another beneath these lowering skies the shadow falls across our way, but surely "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

As I have thought of some of my dear brothers and sisters that I have seen die very sweetly, and I have remembered that they were, in life, lowly and self-distrustful, I have compared them to persons who, when they drink their tea, forget to stir the sugar at the bottom of the cup. How doubly sweet the drink becomes as they near the bottom: they have more sweetness than they can well bear. Would it not be wise to stir the tea at once and enjoy the sweetness from the brim to the bottom? This is the benefit of faith as to the future, for it flavors the present with delight. But what if saints should miss immediate comfort for awhile, how richly will they be compensated! What will it be to open your eyes in heaven! What a joy to fall asleep on the bed of

languishing and to wake and the celestial "am up Hallelujahs! Where am I? Ah, my God! my Christ! my heaven! my all! I am at home." Sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Does not this view of things give a transfiguration to death? O you poor unbelievers, how I pity you, since you have no such glorious hopes. O that you would believe in the Lord Jesus and enter into life eternal.

There is no way to live like learning to die, and  
he who can afford to be without care whether he lives or dies  
is the man who will so live as to die triumphantly.

(From Spurgeon's Sermon - [The Tent Dissolved and the Mansion Entered](#))

**2 Corinthians 5:3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.**([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [ei ge kai ekdusamenoi](#) ([AMPMPN](#)) [ou gumnoi eurethesometha](#). ([1PFPI](#))

**Amplified:** So that by putting it on we may not be found naked (without a body). ([Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** For, while we are in this tent of the body, we groan, for life weighs us down, for it is not so much that we desire to be stripped of this house, ([Westminster Press](#))

**ESV:** if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ([ESV](#))

**HCSB:** since, when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ([Holman Christian Standard Bible](#))

**KJV:** If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

**NEB:** in the hope that, being thus clothed, we shall not find ourselves naked. ([New English Bible - Oxford Press](#))

**NET:** if indeed, after we have put on our heavenly house, we will not be found naked. ([NET Bible](#))

**MH:** This presupposes, to be sure, that once we have put on this new dwelling, our spiritual body, we shall never experience disembodied nakedness. (Murray Harris' expanded paraphrase of 2Corinthians).

**NLT:** For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. (NLT - Tyndale House)

**Phillips:** for we do not want to face utter nakedness when death destroys our present dwelling - these bodies of ours. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Weymouth:** if indeed having really put on a robe we shall not be found to be unclothed.

**Wuest:** seeing that also, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked [a disembodied spirit]. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

**Young's Literal:** if so be that, having clothed ourselves, we shall not be found naked,

**INASMUCH AS WE, HAVING PUT IT ON, WILL NOT BE FOUND NAKED:** ei ge kai ekdusamenoi (AMPMPN) ou gumnoi eurethesometha. (1PFPI):

- **having put it on:** Ge 3:7-11 Ex 32:25 Rev 3:18 16:15
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- **See also "shorter version" of commentary** on 2 Corinthians 5:3

2 Corinthians 5:1-4 Simple Summary of Three Interpretations of What it Means to be "Naked"		
Present Earthly, Mortal, Corruptible	(1) Intermediate State: No Body	Future Spiritual, Immortal, Incorruptible
	(2) Intermediate State: Temporary Body	



Body	(3) Intermediate State: Unknown Scripture Unclear	Body
<p><b>Comment:</b> The "Intermediate State" is what some theologians have termed the time between a believer's death (at which time they go to be present with the Lord) and the time the Lord returns, resurrects the dead and gives believers their glorified, immortal, incorruptible bodies which will last throughout eternity. The table summarizes the possibilities of this "intermediate state" - no body, a temporary body and status of the current state of believers in heaven as unknown. I personally favor the last "interpretation", because Scripture makes no definitive statement regarding the "intermediate state", which suggests that speculation should be avoided. Admittedly, the fact that Moses and Elijah were recognized at the Transfiguration suggest some type of recognizable form.</p>		

**David Lowery** summarizes these interpretative approaches...

A number of commentators and theologians have seen in these verses reference to an **'intermediate state,'** a period between death and resurrection. This view takes one of two forms:

- (a) Dead (though conscious) believers are without a body while awaiting their resurrection bodies, or
- (b) dead (though conscious) believers receive an "intermediate body" that somehow differs from their forthcoming resurrected bodies. (According to either of these intermediate-state views, Paul was suggesting that he hoped to live till the return of Christ so that he would not experience an "intermediate state.")

These views, however, seem unwarranted. Paul had only two conditions in view since 2Cor 4:16, the **temporal** and the **eternal**. The introduction of a third is therefore unlikely. It seems clear from 2Co 5:4 that being in this tent (cf. 2Pe 1:13), and unclothed describe **mortality** while being clothed and possessing a heavenly dwelling depict **immortality**, without specifying any intervening stages. ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** also alludes to the interval between the time of a believer's death and the time of their reception of their glorified bodies - Paul reminded the Corinthians that when his earthly tent was dismantled by death he would not exist forever as a naked disembodied spirit. He was not looking for release from his body but for the perfections of his resurrection body. So passionate was his longing that Paul's desire was to experience the Rapture, when living believers' physical bodies will be instantly transformed into their glorified bodies (1Co 15:51-52). He knew that if he died before the Rapture, he would have to wait until then for his glorified body (1Th 4:16). The saints in heaven are awaiting their resurrection bodies, which is why the writer of Hebrews refers to them as "the spirits of the righteous made perfect" (He 12:23).

**Comment:** Notice that **Dr MacArthur** refrains from speculating on the state of the "saints in heaven" who "are awaiting their resurrection bodies" and I think this is an excellent approach!

**Robert Gromacki** asserts that "If a believer dies before Christ's advent, the body will disintegrate and the immaterial self will go into the presence of Christ within the third heaven. He then will have to wait for the day of resurrection before he gets his new body, his eternal clothing. This period between the physical death of a believer and his resurrection is designated as the time of nakedness. It is when the self has neither its old body or its new body. Theologians have called it the intermediate state of the soul. (Gromacki: Stand Firm in the Faith: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians)

**Comment:** Gromacki comment raises the question of what does he mean by the "immaterial self"? Does he mean a spirit without a body or a spirit with a temporary body.

**Thomas Constable** offers some indirect evidence but he prefaces his comments with a caveat noting that **'Even though there is no specific instruction concerning an intermediate body and its characteristics in Scripture,** its existence seems beyond doubt. References to believers after death and before resurrection suggest that they have bodies (cf. Lazarus, Lk 16:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25; Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration, Mt 17:1-3, et al; the martyred dead in heaven, Rev 6:9, 10, 11 and Rev 7:13, 14, 15, 16, 17). These bodies evidently will not be suitable for eternal existence since God will replace them with resurrection bodies. (Bolding added for emphasis)

**Comment:** While Constable may be correct, it is best to avoid dogmatism in regard to the state of the intermediate state!

**Augustine** wrote that "We are then burdened with this corruptible body; but knowing that the cause of this burdensomeness is not the nature and substance of the body, but its corruption, we do not desire to be deprived of the body (**Ed: "naked"**), but to be clothed with its immortality. For then, also, there will be a body, but it shall no longer be a burden, being no longer corruptible. ([Augustine's](#)

## [City of God and Christian Doctrine](#))

If Adam had not sinned, he would not have been divested of his body, but would have been clothed upon (super-invested) with immortality and incorruption, that his mortal (body) might have been absorbed by life; that is, that he might have passed from his natural body to the spiritual body. ([Augustine Anti-Pelagian Writings](#))

**S Lewis Johnson** writes that **naked** is a figure of speech and does not literally "mean without any clothes on. This means **naked** in the sense...(that) He wants to avoid the disembodied state. He doesn't want to be a spirit or soul without a body. The intermediate state is just such a state. Those who have died as Christians and have gone on from our presence now are with the Lord but they don't have their bodies yet. (**Ed comment:** ) ([Clothed, Unclothed and Clothed Upon - 2 Corinthians 5:1-5](#))

**Comment:** Dr Johnson (who is highly respected expositor) favors interpretation #1 in the preceding table. Scripture in fact is silent on what some like Dr Johnson refer to as "the intermediate state"

**Philip E Hughes** has this note on the "disembodied state" "To be without a body is to be '**naked**'—a manner of speech well established in Paul's day. The same figure is found in Plato, who speaks of "*the soul naked of the body*", but for whom soul-nakedness was welcomed as a desirable state. The Pythagorean doctrine, that the body is the prison-house of the soul from which the soul of the wise longs to be liberated so that without restraint it may soar upwards and be reunited to the supreme soul of the world was characteristic not only of Platonism and of the contemporary Philonism but also of Gnosticism which, in its various forms, presented such a serious threat to the early Church. The Apostle's teaching, however, is anything but Pythagorean. ([Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#))

**Guzik** - The Greek philosophers thought that to be a bodiless spirit was the highest level of existence. They thought of the body as a prison for the soul, and saw no advantage in being resurrected in another body. ii. But to God, the body itself is not a negative. The problem isn't in the body itself, but in these sin corrupted, fallen bodies that we live in. Jesus approved the essential goodness of the body by becoming a man. If there was something inherently evil in the body, Jesus could never have added humanity to His deity.

**Holman Christian Standard Study Bible** adds that "The word **naked** is a reference to being disembodied. A human soul or spirit apart from bodily existence—thought of as a desired state in some religious systems—was never considered desirable in the Scriptures. Paul shared this view."

**A T Robertson** describes **naked** as "disembodied spirits, "like the souls in Sheol, without form, and void of all power of activity" (Plummer)."

**Pratt** - Nakedness is a metaphor for being without a body. Literal nakedness brought shame to sinful Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:7, 8, 9, 10). God remedied their nakedness with clothing (Ge 3:21), covering their shame. Clothing remained a consistent requirement throughout the Scriptures. For this reason, Paul likened being without a body after death to the condition of nakedness. Ultimate salvation is not that disembodied souls enjoy eternal bliss in the heavenly realms, but that they are bodily resurrected (Ro 8:23; Heb 6:2) and inherit the new creation (Rev 21:1-7). ([I & II Corinthians. Holman New Testament Commentary: Holman Reference](#))

**Radmacher** (et al) - Paul looks forward not only to his resurrected body but also to the reward he would receive in the future. What the believer does with the salvation he has been given will determine what will be worn in the kingdom reign with Christ (cp 2Co 5:10+) ([Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary](#))

**Inasmuch as** - in view of the fact that, seeing that, since, considering that, to the extent that; in so far as. "Assuming that" we will be clothed in eternity future, we will not be naked as if we were some bodiless spirit. The reader should be aware that some evangelical interpreters actually see this as a reference to a disembodied state that they feel exists between death and the coming of the Lord (when we will receive our permanent glorified bodies).

**Put on** (1746) (**enduo** from **en** = in + **dúo** = to sink, go in or under, to put on) means literally to clothe or dress someone and to put on as a garment, to cause to get into a garment (eg, Lk 15:22 where the father says "quickly bring out the best robe and **put it on** him...").

In the **middle voice** it means to clothe oneself with something. **Aorist tense** indicates this **putting on** is a past completed action and includes the idea that this action was decisive.

See long technical note from [NETBible on 2Corinthians 5:3](#) - "**put on** has the mark of authenticity and should be considered original."

**Found** (2147) (**heurisko** - English = *eureka* from exclamation attributed to Archimedes on discovering a method for determining the purity of gold) learn location of something, either by intentional searching or by unexpected discovery learn whereabouts of something, find, discover, come upon, happen to find Mt13:44

**Naked** (1131) (**gumnos**) means literally without the usual covering or protection (Mk 14:51 52 Acts 19:16). A "bare (naked) grain" (1Co 15:37).

**Vine** summarizes the uses of **gumnos** - Gumnos signifies (a) "unclothed," Mark 14:52; in Mk 14:51 it is used as a noun ("his" and "body" being italicized); (b) "scantily or poorly clad," Mt. 25:36, 38, 43, 44; Ac 19:16 (with torn garments); Jas. 2:15; (c) "clad in the undergarment only" (the outer being laid aside), John 21:7 (see clothing); (d) metaphorically, (1) of "a bare seed," 1Co 15:37; (2) of "the soul without the body," 2Co 5:3; (3) of "things exposed to the all-seeing eye of God," He 4:13; (4) of "the carnal condition of a local church," Re 3:17; (5) of "the similar state of an individual," 16:15; (6) of "the desolation of religious Babylon," Re 17:16. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words](#))

**TDNT...**

1. "Naked" in the literal sense of a. "unclothed," b. "badly clothed," c. "stripped by force," or d. "without an upper garment," "partly clothed."
2. "Naked" in the figurative sense of a. "unconcealed," "manifest" (Heb. 4:13), b. "without bodily form." In 1 Cor. 15:37ff. Paul contrasts the bare seed with the future plant or flower in illustration of the transition from the present body to the resurrection body. It should be noted that what is planted is not the naked soul but the present body (which also bears our individuality), so that the bare seed does not simply represent a non-bodily "soul" but that which has not yet received its future form. In 2Co 5:3 a question arises whether Paul is referring to a non-bodily state prior to the parousia of Christ or to the final destiny of the reprobate who will not be clothed with the glorious resurrection body. The latter seems more likely. c. A final figurative sense is "inwardly unprepared," as in Rev. 3:17; 16:15. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**Gumnos** - 15x in 15v in **NAS** - Mt 25:36, 38, 43 44; Mk 14:51 52; Jn 21:7; Acts 19:16; 1Cor 15:37; 2Cor 5:3; He 4:13; Jas 2:15; Rev 3:17; 16:15; 17:16. **NAS** = bare(1), naked(11), open(1), stripped(1), without clothing(1). Here are some of the uses (or see links above)

Matthew 25:36 (When the King returns to separate the sheep from the goats at the end of the Great Tribulation and beginning of His Millennial reign. He will reward the sheep) (cp Mt 25:38 43 44) **naked**, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

Hebrews 4:13+ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

James 2:15+ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, (Jas 2:16)

Revelation 3:17± 'Because you (church at Laodicea) say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and **naked** (gumnos), 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your **nakedness** (gumnotes) will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

**Marvin Vincent** writes that **gumnos** means "Without a body. The word was used by Greek writers of disembodied spirits. See the quotation from Plato's "Gorgias" in note on Luke 12:20; also "Cratylus," 403, where, speaking of Pluto, Socrates says: "The foolish fears which people have of him, such as the fear of being always with him after death, and of the soul denuded (gummon) of the body going to him." Stanley cites Herodotus' story of Melissa, the Corinthian queen, who appeared to her husband after death, entreating him to burn dresses for her as a covering for her disembodied spirit (5:92). The whole expression, being clothed — naked is equivalent to we shall not be found naked because we shall be clothed. ([2 Corinthians 5 Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

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**James Smith** (from his work [The Better Land](#)) **THE PROSPECT**

"But I will see Your face in righteousness; when I awake, I will be satisfied with Your presence!" Psalm 17:15

Present circumstances may be trying. The Lord may hide his face, or withhold sensible comforts. Providence may appear to frown, and temporal things may run counter to our wishes. Corruption may work powerfully within, and innumerable sins may stare us in the face. Comparing ourselves with what God requires—we may be depressed; and comparing ourselves with what Jesus was—we may not be able to discover more than a very faint resemblance.

But let us look forward! It will not be always as it is now. There will be a change, and a glorious change, soon! Others may have easier circumstances, they may be strangers to the conflicts we endure—and we may wonder at their prosperity. But what pleases

them—would not satisfy us. Nor must we expect full satisfaction in this present world.

If we are hungering and thirsting after righteousness;

if we are longing to be like Jesus;

if we are pining and praying for the presence of God;

there is a glorious prospect before us!

We shall soon see our God! We may now be vexed, wearied, and disappointed; but we shall awake in the likeness of Jesus! Our present privileges are great—but our future prospects are unspeakably glorious! "Yes, dear friends, we are already God's children, and we can't even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when he comes—we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is!" 1 John 3:2

We shall be like him! O glorious privilege! We shall wake up in his likeness! O delightful prospect! My poor, afflicted, tried, tempted, and aged friend—lift up your downcast head! Look beyond your present circumstances, for your redemption draws near. "For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down—when we die and leave these bodies—we will have a home in Heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands!" 2 Corinthians 5:1.

"You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand!" Psalm 16:11.

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**J C Philpot** - We have no abiding city here

"For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down—when we die and leave these bodies—we will have a home in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God Himself and not by human hands." 2 Corinthians 5:1

As then we see and feel that all is passing away, what a mercy it is if we can look beyond this vain scene to that which abides forever and ever! "We have no abiding city here," is a lesson which the Lord writes upon the heart of all His pilgrims. And as it is more deeply engraved upon their bosom, and cut into more legible characters, they look up and out of themselves, to that City which has foundations—of which the maker and builder is God.

It is very blessed when we can use the favors of God in providence without abusing them—when we can see His kind hand in the gift, and not make an idol of it—when we can bless Him for His providential mercies, and yet feel that without Himself they are not only worthless but miserable. How many have lived all their lives in beautiful houses—have never known a day's hunger—have eaten of the fat and drunk of the sweet all the days of their life—have lain down at night in a luxurious bed, where they have felt neither cold nor frost—and yet at last when their mortal existence has come to a close, have made their bed in hell!