

The Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Lesson 6

Groaning for Glory

In Ch. 4, Paul related how he faced death daily, yet he also faced death confidently. Death comes like an unsympathetic landlord waving an eviction notice. In Paul's case, that eviction merely released him from a wretched earthly neighborhood to an infinitely grand and glorious dwelling in the heavenly neighborhood. All believers are promised we will go from this dilapidated slum into the glorious mansion in heaven.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-9

1. Based on 2 Cor 5:1-9, what are at least four motives for facing death confidently?
2. Paul has used several metaphors to describe our physical earthly body. What are two of these images Paul uses in 2 Cor 4:7 and 5:1?
3. What trade did Paul work at to financially support himself (Acts 18:3)? Is a tent impermanent, weak, movable, and subject to destruction? Compare the "tent" to the "building from God" (2 Cor 5:1-4)?
4. What do you think he means by "the earthly tent... is torn down" in verse 1? What do believers receive after the tent is torn down? What is our natural response in anticipation of the dwelling from heaven (2 Cor 5:2, Rom 8:23)?
5. Apparently, there is a period of time between physical death and the bodily resurrection in which our soul will be "naked" (2 Cor 5:3). Where is the soul during that time (Phil 1:23, Luke 23:43)? What is the euphemism used in the Bible for that time (John 11:11-13, 1 Thes 4:13)?

6. Who is the author, power behind, and the guarantor of the resurrection (2 Cor 4:14, 2 Cor 5:5, 1 Cor 15:57, John 6:39-40, Phil 3:10-14, Rom 8:29-30, 1 Cor 15:20-25)? In 2 Cor 5:1, Paul said, "we know." How did he know (1 Cor 15:3-8, Gal 1:1, 11-12, Rom 8:16-17)?

7. Paul says he groans, longs for his heavenly resurrection body (2 Cor 5:2-5). Contrast Paul's outlook on the future with the normal perspective of a worldly person who fears death (2 Cor 4:13-14, 2 Cor 5:6-9).

8. The most explanatory passage in the Bible about the bodily resurrection of Christians is found in 1 Corinthians 15:35-58. What analogy did Paul use to describe and explain the resurrection body (1 Cor 15:36-38)? What contrast did he use in 1 Cor 15:40-41?

9. How did Paul contrast our current earthly body with the future resurrection body (1 Cor 15:42-50)? Can a natural perishable body prone to sin go to heaven and be in the presence of God? What kind of body must we have in heaven? What is the order of the resurrection (1 Cor 15:20-25)?

10. Death has always had mankind in its cruel grasp. However, the atoning work of Christ has overcome death. Because of this, what did Paul say about death in 1 Cor 15:54-57? How should we then live (1 Cor 15:58; 2 Cor 5:9)?