

THE CHRISTIAN'S HEAVENLY HOPE

II Cor. 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

How would you like to move house? ... It must be one of the most stressful things, especially when you get older. ... Putting everything carefully and methodically into boxes, trying to remember where you put what you might need, storing it ... and then moving to your new house, taking everything out of the boxes, putting them somewhere new ... I don't think I want to move anywhere ever again! ... *It's a nightmare!*

There is one move we all *will* make though. It's one we suspend talking about if we hesitate to look at it from God's perspective. He has a view from all angles, and He can see it far clearer than you and I can. He knows when the great move will take place, and He knows how it will take place. He has all the arrangements made, I would not be any good preparing for this move ... I would not know *how* to prepare for it, but *He* does, and I know for sure, he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold (Job. 23:10). ... As the hymn describes, "If I walk in the pathway of duty, If I work to the close of the day, I shall see the great King in His beauty When I've gone the last mile of the way".

You find people have all kinds of ideas concerning the subject of death. Of the most common phrases you hear when someone does die is, "It's better for them. They are not suffering anymore. They are at peace". ... If only it was always true, but if you are not prepared to meet God, - if you do not know His Son the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, - the most terrifying horrors of this life are nothing in comparison to the eternal wrath of God. It is an absolute certainty, it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment (Heb. 9:27).

As Christians, we don't leave the subject of death up to human conjecture for we have a clear Biblically-defined perspective on eternity for we believe, **Heb. 4:9** There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. **10** For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. The moment our spirit exits our body, immediately and in an instant, we are present with the Lord in Heaven. ... We do not 'soul sleep', or enter a Purgatory, or pass through multiple reincarnations. No, the moment our eyes close in death, that *exact* moment when we leave our flesh behind, we enter into the presence of our Saviour in Heaven ... and we shall be with Him for evermore.

Even some Christians don't like thinking about death, but unless the Lord Jesus returns before, it is a valley through which we shall all pass. Therefore, it is a

subject we ought to consider ... and when you read through the Scriptures you will find it is a topic often mentioned by the servants of God in anticipation of Glory. Listen to how Paul writes, *I Cor. 15:52* In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised *incorruptible [immortal]*, and *we shall be changed [transformed]*. ⁵³ For this corruptible [*decaying body*] must put on incorruption [*incorruptibility*], and this mortal [*given to death*] must put on immortality [*given to eternal life*]. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

From a human perspective, death is not something we look forward to, as the song describes, “Everybody wants to go to Heaven, but nobody wants to die”. It means being parted from our loved ones, as another hymn writer says, “Here the dearest of ties we must sever, Tears of sorrow are seen every day” ... and yet, as Christians, we sorrow not, even as others which have no hope (I Thess. 4:13). ... We sorrow, but we have hope for we know we shall see again our loved ones who knew the Lord Jesus as their Saviour! ... For your loved ones who are not yet saved, be busy praying for their salvation for it is not impossible since He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Here is how Paul explains what happens when we die, *II Cor. 5:1* we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle [*our bodies*] were dissolved [*demolished*], we have a building of God [*... a building, a structure, a fabric which belongs to God*]. Presently, we are living in our earthly house of this tabernacle. In many ways, it needs renovating and overhauled. The increasing years have paid their toll and there is much restoration needed 😊 ... but there is coming a day in which God has decided we shall leave it, - our earthly house of this tabernacle. We shall vacate these present ‘premises’ and we shall move into our eternal Heavenly home.

Our present earthly residence was never made built to last ... and if you get eighty or ninety years out of it, you are doing well ... but the Heavenly home you will be moving into, you will never move out of it again because you will be moving in with the King of kings, *Jn. 14: I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

To be perfectly honest, I don’t want to leave my loved ones, or if they go before me, I don’t want them to leave ... but here is my consolation in sorrow, and it’s a consolation the Word of God gives us. ... It’s the account of King David’s

heart being broken when his baby son died, but he had the peace he would see him again, not in this life but when this life would be over, **II Sam. 12:23** can I bring him back again? I shall go to him. ... Where was David going? When his earthly life was over, he was going to dwell in the house of the LORD for ever (Ps. 23:6). ... And that is where he would be reunited with his baby son. ... That is the consolation of those who belong to the family of God ... we shall stand together as members of Heaven's redeemed family praising our God before His throne ... and the relationship we shall enjoy in Heaven with our loved ones there, will be greater and more perfect than anything we ever experienced here on earth. And there will be no sorrows there, "no more burdens to bear, no more sickness or pain, no more parting over there", and forever we shall be with the One Who died for you and me, "What a day glorious, - never-ending, perfect, eternal, - day that will be".

This body in which we are living is amazing how the work of God began it at conception, and how the precious little life in the womb developed from the tiny embryo in the eighth week of pregnancy into a fetus, and thirty-two weeks or so later the baby is born. Indeed, we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14), male and female (Gen. 1:27) in the image of God, after *His* own likeness.

We did not evolve from other forms of life, but each of us were created directly by God, and for His pleasure. He made us with a body and a soul which makes mankind unique among all of His creation, having both a material body and an immaterial soul/spirit. And mentally and emotionally, we were created with the ability to act rationally and to be responsible before God ... and this reflects the image of God and how He works rationally and responsibly according to His principles and standards.

Also morally, humanity was created at the beginning in righteousness and perfect innocence, which was the reflection of the image of God's holiness. Our conscience is the God-given moral compass for us to recognise the difference between right and wrong.

Another example of how we have been created in God's image is that we were created for fellowship with each other and this reflects the image of God's unique nature in the *fellowship* of the Godhead, as the three Persons in One, -, In human behaviour, we see this reflection most prominently in the marriage between a man and a woman, **Gen. 2:18** And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. ... ²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and *they shall be*

one flesh Ibasar, body, person. This is how Christians are the Bride of Christ, with the Lord Jesus as our Bridegroom, and we are united in Him.

And when a person becomes a Christian, God gives them the new life which restores the original image He created in the Garden. And this is what Paul was referring to when he wrote, *Eph. 4:24* that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. ... It is being restored to how God intended us to be. It is being a new creation in Christ when old things are passed away and all things are become new (*II Cor. 5:17*). ... The former ‘decorations’ from the ‘early dwelling’ belonging to the old days have been taken removed and demolished, and a ‘new building’ is now standing in its place. The stench which used to be, has been replaced with ‘a sweet-smelling savour’. And the Lord Jesus is the Head of the new home. ... It’s a new dwelling preparing us for our Heavenly home, an house not made with hands.

Moses was given the instructions for how the tabernacle was to be built, and he had to keep strictly and rigidly to what God was telling him. It was to be constructed by gifted human hands. Similarly, Solomon’s temple was made by gifted builders and craftsmen. In both the tabernacle and the temple God dwelt among His people in beautiful structures assembled and completed according to His design, but by human hands. ... However, our Heavenly home is not built by human hands, for as Paul explains, *II Cor. 5:1* we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, *an house not made with hands* ... Its foundations are embedded in Heaven’s glory by God Himself. It’s structure, its décor, everything about its beautiful splendour, is all due to our God Who in the beginning made the heavens and the earth! Again, Paul heralds this great truth, *Eph. 1:3* Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings *in heavenly places* in Christ ... ¹⁰ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: ¹¹ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: ¹² That we should be to the praise of his glory.

We have a building of God waiting for us ... *It is ours!* It’s our eternal legacy, and our names are written on the deeds with God’s pen which no one can erase. ... And because *He* built it, an house not made with hands, and because we belong to His family, we happily share it. ... Over two thousand years ago, the Lord Jesus announced, *Jn. 14:3* I go and prepare a place for you ... He Who created the heavens and the earth, and keeps the sun, the moon, the stars, the galaxies in their place ... He has prepared an even grander place for you and me.

And here is something else we are promised, ... living with Him will never end because our home in Glory is eternal in the heavens. As long as God continues, we shall be with Him and we shall never be parted. ... We shall never be parted from Him, and we shall never be parted from our loved ones in Christ. ... And we shall never forget He loved us, and how much He loved us, and sent His Son to die for us, to redeem us and adopt us into His family. We were totally unworthy, but by His wonderful grace He saved us. When we shall enter Glory and be with Him, “It *will* be worth it all when we see Jesus”.

You know the chorus ...

“Constantly abiding, Jesus is mine,
Constantly abiding, rapture divine;
He never leaves me lonely, whispers, O so kind;
“I will never leave thee”, Jesus is mine”.

The final verse of the hymn says,

“This treasure I have in a temple of clay,
While here on His footstool I roam;
But He’s coming to take me some glorious day,
Over there to my Heavenly home”.

As children of God this is our confidence in Him. We don’t have to wait to learn where we are going because already His Word is His promise ... **II Cor. 5:1** For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.