

What about the Dead in Christ Now? (part 2)

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

1. The Bible indicates that those who die **await their final body**, 2 Corinthians 5:1-8.

1.1. Paul begins his teaching by comparing a tent to a **permanent house**, 5:1.



1.2. 5:1-- looks back to 4:7-18, where Paul introduces the idea of our current bodies as “earthen.”

1.3. Paul makes clear our current bodies are temporal, (tent) while our new bodies (building) are permanent.

1.4. 5:2--Paul introduces another word picture: He now describes the putting on of a coat.



1.5. Paul' desire is to receive his new body suited for heaven. Likely, his current body is badly damaged from abuse. (See 4:7-16).

2. The building and clothing metaphor combine in 5:4.

2.1.1. Paul does not denigrate his current body but instead wishes for his current body to “put on the coat” of immortality.

2.1.1.1. □νδύω.(Greek word translated “clothed”), means “to put on something,” “to clothe oneself with something,” “to draw on something.”¹

3. Controversy surrounds 5:3 and 5:4 in relationship to Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.

3.1. There are two primary views:

3.1.1. One, when Christians die, they remain in a disembodied state until the return of Jesus and consequently a new body.

3.1.2. Two, the Christian receives some intermediate “body” until the final body is given at the return of Jesus.

3.1.3. Reasons for the controversy:

3.1.3.1. Paul has already told the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:22-23; 51-52) the new body will come at the return of Jesus and not the intermediate state.

¹*Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (2:319). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

3.1.3.2. Paul also says that at death “**we have** a building from God,” (2 Corinthians 5:1).

3.1.3.2.1. This statement “we have” would indicate something that occurs immediately at death rather than at the second coming of Jesus.

3.1.3.3. Yet, if we have a new body at death, it seems odd that Paul is concerned about being “found naked,” (2 Corinthians 5:3).

3.1.4. What I think is the best [way to reconcile Paul’s statements](#) about the timing of our new bodies.

3.1.4.1. Paul’s principle point was not to discuss the intermediate state; instead, he is expressing his confidence that despite the deterioration of his current body, his confidence is in his new body.

3.1.4.2. Still, his language “naked” v.3, and “unclothed” v.4 has raised questions about the intermediate state.

3.1.4.3. The best that can be said is that Paul’s confidence was at death he had a new body.

3.1.4.3.1. In light of 1 Corinthians 15:22-23;51-52, the final form of this body comes at the return of Jesus. Paul’s expression “we have” is his assurance that God will provide this new body.

3.1.4.4. The grammatical construction of 5:3-4 seems to indicate that Paul is refuting the false teaching (2 Corinthians 4:1-6) that the Christian is better to die and leave the constraints of the body.

3.1.4.4.1. Paul is making clear that God’s current and final plan includes a new body.

3.1.4.4.2. Therefore, Paul’s flow of thought does not indicate that the Christian is without some form of body in the intermediate state. (See 4:16-5:1).

3.1.4.5. If my understanding of paradise is correct, a temporary state, as I discussed regarding John 14:2, God may [provide a body for the temporary awaiting](#) the return of Jesus for the final body and entrance into the new Jerusalem.

3.1.4.5.1. This allows the clear teaching of 1 Corinthians 15:22-23;51-52 to present its truth. It allows Paul’s use of the present “we have” (2 Corinthians 5:1) to make sense. It fits the flow of thought (inward man being renewed 4:16; not being found unclothed). It presents the continuity between God’s creation of an earthly body, a temporary heavenly body, and the final body prepared by God.