

2 Corinthians 5:1

Authorized King James Version (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.

Analysis

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God—Paul uses oikia (οἰκία, "house/dwelling") and skēnos (σκῆνος, "tent/tabernacle") to contrast our temporary mortal bodies with the permanent resurrection body. The tent imagery echoes Israel's wilderness wanderings and the fragility of earthly existence. **An house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens** (acheiropoiētos, ἀχειροποίητος, "not made by human hands") parallels Christ's resurrection body and the eschatological temple (Mark 14:58).

The verb katalyō (καταλύω, "dissolved/destroyed") suggests violent dismantling, yet Paul expresses confident knowledge (oidamen, οἴδαμεν, perfect tense—"we have come to know and continue knowing"). This assurance emerges from Christ's resurrection, which guarantees believers a glorified body awaiting them. The present tense "we have" (echomen, ἔχομεν) indicates this heavenly dwelling already exists, prepared by God's initiative.

Historical Context

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians around AD 55-56 from Macedonia, addressing ongoing challenges to his apostolic authority. Having recently faced near-death experiences (1:8-10, 4:7-12), Paul reflects deeply on mortality and resurrection hope. This

section counters both Greek dualism (which despised the body) and Jewish materialism (which struggled with resurrection concepts).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does viewing your body as a temporary tent rather than a permanent home change your perspective on suffering and aging?
2. What specific evidence from Christ's resurrection gives you confidence about your own future glorified body?
3. How should the reality of a prepared heavenly dwelling affect your attachment to earthly possessions and status?

Interlinear Text

Οἴδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ἐὰν ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκίαν τοῦ
we know For that if G3588 earthly our an house G3588
G1492 G1063 G3754 G1437 G1919 G2257 G3614

σκήνους καταλυθῆ οἰκοδομὴν ἐκ θεοῦ ἔχομεν
of this tabernacle were dissolved a building of God we have
G4636 G2647 G3619 G1537 G2316 G2192

οἰκίαν ἀχειροποίητον αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens
G3614 G886 G166 G1722 G3588 G3772

Additional Cross-References

1 John 3:2 (References God): Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (References God): But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Hebrews 9:24 (Creation): For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Hebrews 9:11 (Creation): But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

Job 4:19 (Parallel theme): How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?

2 Corinthians 5:4 (Temple): For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

1 Peter 1:4 (Parallel theme): To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

Genesis 3:19 (Parallel theme): In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Colossians 2:11 (Creation): In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

2 Peter 3:11 (References God): Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,