

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, οἶδαμεν*, 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

Οἶδαμεν	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	καταλυθῇ	οἰκοδομῇ	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	G3588	the heavens			
G3614	G886	G166	G1722		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,