

2 Corinthians 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

Analysis

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked—This cryptic verse addresses the intermediate state between death and resurrection. Gymnoi (γυμνοί, "naked") suggests the vulnerable condition of a disembodied soul awaiting resurrection. The conditional "if so be" (ei ge, εἴ γε) expresses Paul's hope that believers will not experience extended nakedness but will be "clothed upon" at Christ's return.

Scholars debate whether Paul anticipates dying before the Parousia or expects to be among those alive at Christ's coming (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). The emphasis on clothing imagery throughout this passage suggests Paul values embodied existence—even the glorified intermediate state involves some form of clothed presence, not naked souls. This coheres with Paul's Pharisaic background, which affirmed bodily resurrection against Sadducean denial.

Historical Context

The Corinthian church struggled with resurrection theology, as evidenced by 1 Corinthians 15. Greek culture viewed immortality of the soul positively but considered bodily resurrection repugnant. Paul carefully navigates these cultural tensions while maintaining biblical anthropology that values embodied existence as God's creational design.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does Paul's concern about not being "found naked" reveal about the importance of bodily resurrection versus mere spiritual immortality?
2. How should Christians think about the intermediate state between death and resurrection—are we incomplete without our resurrection bodies?
3. Why might Paul prefer being alive at Christ's return over dying and awaiting resurrection (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)?

Interlinear Text

εἴγε	καὶ	ἐνδυσάμενοι	οὐ	γυμνοὶ	εὕρεθησόμεθα
If	so	be that being clothed	not	naked	be found
G1489	G2532	G1746	G3756	G1131	G2147

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