

Restoration of the Kingdom of God – 8

We noted last time how Vine asserts that heaven “is to be the eternal dwelling-place of the saints” per **2 Corinthians 5:1** “*For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*”.

- But let’s see what the apostle Paul is really saying. In ordinary life, a **house** is built to be a place to live for a **long time**. A tabernacle or **tent** is a place to stay for a **short time**. So a tent is a good way to represent the “*natural body*,” which belongs to this short mortal life. Paul did not desire always to exist in this earthly tent. He knew that as long as he lived in this mortal flesh it would be impossible for him to enjoy eternal life - “*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*” - **1 Corinthians 15:50**.

Paul “*earnestly desired to be clothed*” with a **heavenly house** = a “*spiritual body*.” We may ask, Why is the body in the future life called a “*heavenly house*”? This is explained by Paul’s words of encouragement to the faithful saints in Colosse, “*Your life is now hidden with Christ in God*” - **Colossians 3:3**.

- This is to say that Jesus **now holds the power** to give a deathless body (the “*heavenly house*”) to the faithful. Jesus himself gives the details. He says that the Father gave him the power. He says that he will use this power **at the resurrection**. Until that time, those who have “*fallen asleep*” - **1 Corinthians 15:18** - “*know nothing*” - **Ecclesiastes 9:5** -

Jesus plainly says that they are **in their graves**. To claim that anyone “has gone to heaven” is to **directly contradict** the words of the Lord Jesus Christ -

- **John 5:26-29** “*For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man... a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out - those who have done good will rise to live*”.

The ancient pagan teaching is that a man’s “immortal soul” is set free by death, being imprisoned in his material body. Most of the Christian church now believe this human philosophy. You can tell who they are. They do not look forward to be “clothed” as Paul did. Instead, **their idea is to be unclothed**. This is the very thing which Paul did not desire:—

- “*We do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life*” - **2 Corinthians 5:4**. Paul plainly says here that he **did not desire to die**. What he really wanted was Jesus Christ to reappear during his lifetime, so that he would be one of those who would “not sleep.” But, even if he did die, he knew that he would be **raised from the dead** when Jesus comes back.

Paul had earlier told the believers in Corinth that - “*We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed - in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye*” - when? - “*at the last trumpet*” - **1 Corinthians 15:51–52**.

- The next verse shows what the “change” is - “*This corruptible must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality*”. More about this soon, God willing.