

The House Not Made With Hands

2 Cor. 5:1

2 Corinthians 5:1 - For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Introduction:

- A. In Bible times, certain people followed a nomadic lifestyle, living in tents. Among these were the ancestors of the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Heb. 11:9).
- B. They would go somewhere and put up tents, stay awhile, take down the tents, move, and do the whole process over again. We'd assume that after a time the tents would become worn and need to be repaired and eventually completely replaced.
- C. Most of us, I am sure, would probably prefer dwelling in a more permanent structure rather than spending all our lives in a movable tent.
- D. The apostle Paul uses this picture to teach us an important lesson--TEXT.

I. What Is "Our Earthly Tent"?

- A. Paul calls it "this tent" (or "house" NKJV; "tabernacle" KJV)
 - 1. Word translated "tabernacle" means a tent, booth, or some kind of temporary, movable structure - Exo. 25:9; Lev. 23:34

Exodus 25:9 - "According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.

Leviticus 23:34 - "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the LORD.

- B. Often the Bible writers use this figure of speech to describe the physical body - Jn. 1:1, 14

John 1:1 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- 1. "The Word" became flesh and dwelt (lit. "tabernacled") among us
- 2. "As long as I am in this tent" (KJV: "this tabernacle"; NKJV footnote: "this body") - 2 Pet. 1:13

2 Peter 1:13 - I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

- C. Thus, "this tent, our earthly house" refers to the physical body
 - 1. God made us spiritually in His image - Gen. 1:26-27

Genesis 1:26-27 - Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

- 2. This refers to the spirit or the soul - note Heb. 12:9

Hebrews 12:9 - Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

- 3. However, He also gave us a physical body that's made from the elements of the earth - Gen. 2:7

Genesis 2:7 - Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

II. *What Does It Mean “Is Torn Down”?*

A. The KJV says “dissolved”; NKJ says “destroyed”

1. Since “our earthly house, this tent” refers to the physical body, then the destruction or dissolution of it must be death, the penalty that God pronounced upon all mankind because of Adam and Eve’s sin at the beginning - Gen. 3:19; Psa. 90:10

Genesis 3:19 - By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

Psalms 90:10 - As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; For soon it is gone and we fly away.

B. Thus, physical death is the separation of the spirit from the physical body - Eccl. 12:7; Jas. 2:26

Ecclesiastes 12:7 - then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

James 2:26 - For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

1. Note—the body is said to be dead without the spirit and returned to the earth

2. The spirit is never said to be dead in this sense but returns to God who gave it

C. Peter uses this picture to describe his own coming decease - 2 Pet. 1:14-15

2 Peter 1:14-15 - knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

1. In this verse, Peter is talking about the physical body, intended only to be a temporary dwelling place for the spirit, and anticipating the time when it would be destroyed or dissolved in death

III. *What Is The “Building From God”?*

A. If “our earthly house, this tent” refers to the physical body, then the “building of God, a house not made with hands” must refer to the spiritual body that will be raised when Jesus comes again - 1 Cor. 15:35-54

1 Corinthians 15:35-54 - But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?" You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the

earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly. Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.

1. Note "with what body?"

2. Answer—dead raised incorruptible (not flesh and blood) and living changed

B. So the physical body, a temporary dwelling place for the spirit on this earth, will die

1. At the second coming it will be replaced by a new spiritual body as a permanent dwelling place for the soul in eternity

2. And "thus we shall always be with the Lord" - 1 Thess. 4:15-17

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 - For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

C. Therefore, I believe we don't go directly to heaven when we die but to a place (Hades) where our spirits await the resurrection

1. God doesn't intend for us to be disembodied (or 'naked') spirits for all eternity

2. But to be clothed with immortal spiritual bodies, which will occur at the resurrection - cf. vs. 2-4; Phil. 3:10-11

2 Corinthians 5:2-4 - For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

Philippians 3:10-11 - that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

IV. Where Will This Be?

A. Paul says that our "building from God" or "house not made with hands" will be "eternal in the heavens."

1. Religious materialists (such as Jehovah's Witnesses) teach that the eternal dwelling place of the righteous will be on a renewed earth

2. Jesus taught otherwise - Jn. 14:1-3

John 14:1-3 - "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

- B. Hence, we must conclude that the hope of the Christian is NOT to live an eternal material existence upon this earth, but to live an immortal spiritual existence in our resurrected bodies in heaven: 1 Pet. 1:3-5

1 Peter 1:3-5 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

- C. Another factor leading to this conclusion is that when Jesus comes again, this physical earth will be destroyed - 2 Pet. 3:10-13

2 Peter 3:10-13 - But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

1. We look for a new heavens and new earth, i.e. a completely new order of things, where we shall be “clothed with our habitation which is from heaven.”

Conclusion:

- A. All will be raised when Jesus comes (Jn. 5:28-29). However, only the righteous will be saved forever in heaven (Matt. 25:21).
- B. The wicked will be punished forever in hell (2 Thess. 1:7-9). You make the decision as to which it will be by whether you obey God in this life or not...