

V.1 – “FOR WE KNOW THAT IF OUR EARTHLY HOUSE OF THIS TABERNACLE WERE DISSOLVED...”

- **“We know”** —
 - **“We”** in 2 Corinthians most literally refers to Paul and his apostolic companions, particularly those involved in his ministry to the Corinthians.
 - In its clearest sense, “we” refers to Paul and Timothy (v. 1:1) and possibly Silvanus (v. 1:19). The first use of the first person plural appears in 2 Corinthians 1:4, and by 1:6 “we” is contrasted with “you.” Verses 6-8 establish a clear distinction between “we” (Paul and Timothy) and “you” (Corinthian recipients) in the pronouns.
 - However, in 1:21 Paul shifts into an “us with you” concept, but by verse 24 it is back to “we” and “you.” Then this pattern (or “I” and “you”) continues into chapter 2. However, 2:14-17 gives the initial appearance of joining the two groups into one “we/us,” but this distinction is proven wrong by 3:1, where the “we” is clearly Paul and his companions. Paul then goes into a lengthy conversation about Israel under Moses, and in 3:18 he uses a “we all,” and **APPEARS** to mean “all of us Israelite believers” and not just Paul and companions, but could be argued in the more limited scope. By 4:1 the “we” continues to be the “we all” in the broader sense of believing remnant of Israel, and “them” (v. 3) becomes those who are lost (presumably of Israel, but perhaps worldwide). In 4:4 Paul speaks of the “Gospel of Christ” which is the message to Israel that Jesus is her Messiah. In 4:5, however, Paul seems to revert to the original and more narrow “we” and “you.” This narrow focus continues in a personal testimony of suffering through verse 11, with a conclusion in verse 12, confirming the “we” and “you” context. In 4:14 Paul moves to “us with you” together. In 4:15 there is a momentary “we” and “you” context, but by 4:16, continuing through 18, the first-person plural pronouns have a better fit being the “us with you” collective “we.”
 - All of this becomes important to interpret the message of 5:1-11.
- **“Earthly house of this tabernacle”** (ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκηνῶν)
 - “Tabernacle” evokes **Israel’s wilderness era**—a temporary and mobile identity.
 - May symbolize the **Mosaic covenant body**, that is, National Israel—earthly, fragile, provisional (cf. Heb. 9:1–10).
 - Hebrews 9:8-9 - “the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which **WAS** a figure for the time then present”
 - If this is correct, then the “tabernacle” is not the physical body of a person, but the **corporate structure of national Israel**.
 - However, we should note that in 2 Peter 1:13-14, Peter speaks of the body as a tabernacle, and in Greek a similar use is found in John 1:14.
- **“Dissolved”** (καταλυθῆ) — often used for **tearing down a structure or system** but never for a metaphor of death (e.g., temple, cf. Matt. 24:2); Israel’s old form is passing away.

💡 Argument: Israel’s national structure is failing; Paul sees its dissolution as inevitable and imminent.

“...WE HAVE A BUILDING OF GOD, AN HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS.”

- **“Building of God”** (οἰκοδομὴν ἐκ Θεοῦ) — contrast to “tabernacle,” a more permanent “building.”
- **“Not made with hands”** — a phrase that seems reminiscent of promises of a kingdom from above.
- **“Eternal in the heavens”** — describes a **promised, permanent structure**—Israel’s kingdom under the Messiah, preserved in God’s plan.

💡 Argument: A future covenantal structure—glorified Israel in the kingdom—is being anticipated here, not individual resurrection bodies.

V.2 – “FOR IN THIS WE GROAN, EARNESTLY DESIRING TO BE CLOTHED UPON WITH OUR HOUSE WHICH IS FROM HEAVEN”

- **“We groan”** — echoes **Romans 8:23**, where Paul says **Israel groans waiting for adoption**, i.e., **national redemption**.
- **“To be clothed upon”** — metaphor of **being covered with glory**, found in Isaiah 61:10 (garments of salvation).
- **“House from heaven”** — consistent with **the New Jerusalem, or Israel’s glorified identity under the new covenant** (cf. Ezek. 37; Zech. 2:10–11).

💡 Argument: The groaning isn't for individual death, but for the completion of Israel's national hope in Messiah's reign.

V.3 – “IF SO BE THAT BEING CLOTHED WE SHALL NOT BE FOUND NAKED.”

- “**Naked**” — status of **covenant shame**, such as exile or judgment (cf. Hos. 2:3; Rev. 3:17).
- Implies a longing to **avoid national disgrace** or rejection.
- “Found naked” echoes Israel's fear of being **cast off and uncovered** before God (cf. Lam. 1:8; Ezek. 16:37).

💡 Argument: The “nakedness” is not the state of a dead person somehow in shame, but Israel's national shame if she remains under the curse and without glory.

V.4 – “FOR WE THAT ARE IN THIS TABERNACLE DO GROAN, BEING BURDENED...”

- Paul again uses “**tabernacle**” (σκήνωμα) — Israel's national, covenantal identity under the Law.
- “**Burdened**” — The burden of the prophets, seeing Israel in her shame (Isa. 22:4, Jer. 9:1, Lam. 2:11, Ezek. 9:4).
- “Not that we would be unclothed” — Paul doesn't want Israel to be **stripped of her identity**, but **transformed**.
- “**Mortality swallowed up of life**” — echoes Isa. 25:8, a **national resurrection text**. This is not a reference to individuals becoming immortal, but to the actual resurrection time when death is swallowed in victory.

💡 Argument: Israel does not want to disappear but be transformed into her promised form—mortality as a national status overtaken by the everlasting kingdom.

V.5 – “HE THAT HATH WROUGHT US FOR THE SELFSAME THING IS GOD...”

- “**Wrought us**” — God has been preparing Israel for this very transformation (Isaiah 43:1,7,21).
- “**Earnest of the Spirit**” — already promised to Israel (Ezek. 36:27) in the new covenant.

💡 Argument: God is preparing Israel for her kingdom future, and the Spirit is the down payment of that national hope.

V.6 – “THEREFORE WE ARE ALWAYS CONFIDENT, KNOWING THAT... WE ARE ABSENT FROM THE LORD”

- Note that the confidence is **NOT STATED IN VERSE 6**. It could be argued that the parenthetical statement of verse 7 begins in the middle of verse 6 (knowing that...).)
- Under the present arrangement, **Israel is without her Lord** (cf. Hosea 3:4–5; Matt. 23:38–39).
- “At home in the body” = Israel's current, failing condition.
- “Absent from the Lord” = national exile, spiritual blindness (Rom. 11:25).

💡 Argument: The nation, while in her old form, is separated from her Messiah.

V.7 – “(FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT:)”

- Supports the idea that Israel's **faithful remnant** is awaiting God's fulfillment **without yet seeing the kingdom**.

💡 Argument: A remnant walks in hope of national glory—still future.

V.8 – “WE ARE CONFIDENT... RATHER TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY, AND TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD.”

- “Absent from the body” = Israel's confidence to **leave the failing nation form it is in today**.
- “Present with the Lord” = **to be joined with Messiah** in His glory, as foretold in Zech. 2:10 and Isa. 4:2–6.

💡 Argument: This is not about dying and going to heaven, but about identifying with Messiah now, before Israel's visible restoration.

V.9 – “WHEREFORE WE LABOUR... TO BE ACCEPTED OF HIM.”

- The remnant **strives** to be among those found faithful at the **national judgment** (cf. Mal. 3:16–18; Isa. 66:5).
- “Accepted” = **covenant approval** at the Messianic evaluation.
- Note the problem if the context is individual salvation, which is “without works” (Eph. 2:8-9).

💡 Argument: Paul's concern is not personal salvation, but faithful participation in Israel's future glorification.

V.10 – “WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST...”

- Applies to **Israel as a covenant nation** (cf. Ezek. 20:33–38; Dan. 12:2).
- “That everyone may receive the things done in the body” — each Israelite judged **according to his role within the national body**.
- The KJV italicizes “done” and “his,” indicating interpretation — the Greek reads more literally:

“That each may receive the things [through] the body...”

This understanding helps us to see that individuals in Israel will be judged according to what they have done **THROUGH** the body of Israel.

💡 Argument: A future national judgment of Israel with individual accounting — echoing OT patterns of covenant evaluation.

V.11 – “KNOWING THEREFORE THE TERROR OF THE LORD...”

- “Terror” (φόβος) — not mere reverence, but fear of judgment (cf. Isa. 33:14).
- This fear **makes sense in the context of Israel's coming reckoning** before her Messiah.
- Paul's urgency: persuading men (likely fellow Jews) to **align with Messiah now**, lest they fall under judgment.

💡 Argument: Paul's fear is covenantal and national, not fear of lost salvation. He's warning of being cut off (cf. Rom. 11:20–22).

CONCLUSION OF THE ARGUMENT:

- The entire structure fits a **covenantal narrative of Israel's transformation**, not a personal meditation on individual death.
- Key language (“tabernacle,” “clothed,” “mortality swallowed,” “present with the Lord”) finds **strong OT support** in Israel's prophetic hope.
- The **corporate reading answers tensions** otherwise created by mixing individual resurrection language with “terror” and “judgment” that doesn't belong in the complete-in-Christ gospel.