THREE OPTIONS

There is perhaps no biblical passage that the Christian world has misunderstood more than 2 Corinthians 5:1–10. There, the apostle Paul expressed his intense desire to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. The critical question in this passage is not whether Paul wanted to be absent from the body and present with the Lord, because he did. The big question is when Paul expected this to occur. Was it at the moment of death or was it at the end of the age, when his mortal body would be transformed into the likeness of Christ’s glorified body?

A close examination of these verses reveals that the apostle did not merely contemplate two options (present with or absent from the Lord) but rather three. There was the possibility of being present in the body on earth and absent from the Lord in heaven or absent from the body on earth and present with the Lord in heaven. Paul also described a third option, which he did not prefer—being found unclothed or naked.

What did the apostle mean by the word unclothed? In order to answer this question, we must carefully analyze the terminology, the immediate context, and other parallel passages in the writings of the apostle Paul. A careful study of this passage reveals that being found “unclothed” is synonymous with the “sleep” of death, that is, the period between this life in a corruptible and mortal body and the future life in our incorruptible and immortal body.
Write out 2 Corinthians 5:1–10 from the Bible translation of your choice. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw Arrows to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in 2 Corinthians 5:1–10. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

How has this passage confused you in the past?

Beyond the imagery Paul used, what is his point in the entire passage?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/dead04-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

How do we similarly experience Paul’s groaning for the redemption of the body?

Read more at [www.inversebible.org/dead04-4](http://www.inversebible.org/dead04-4)
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

2 Corinthians 4:16–18
Romans 8:19–24
Philippians 3:20, 21
2 Peter 1:13–15
1 Thessalonians 4:15–17
2 Timothy 4:6–8

What other verses come to mind in connection with 2 Corinthians 5:1–10?

Review your memorized verse from 2 Corinthians 5:1–10.
Where do you see Jesus in 2 Corinthians 5:1–10?

How are you walking now with God in your “corruptible tent”?

What is Jesus saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/dead04-6
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study of the chapter, what can you apply to yourself?

What can be you apply socially?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/dead04-7
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Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

- Why is our “earthly house” described as a tent and our “heavenly house” as a building?
- Why does Paul write that our present tent burdens us? Why is living in our tent burdensome?
- What does Paul mean by the words unclothed and naked? When are persons “unclothed” and “further clothed”?
- According to Paul, when will mortality be swallowed up in life?
- What has God given us as an assurance and comfort that someday soon we will receive our heavenly building? Can you honestly say that you have that assurance and comfort now?
- In light of the entire passage, what does Paul mean by the expression “absent from the body”?
- Why does Paul include the parenthetical statement, “For we walk by faith, not by sight”?

Absent from the Body, When?