

## 2 CORINTHIANS 5 | *Ambassadors of Reconciliation*

### *The Mortal Swallowed Up by Life*

1 For we know (οἶδα) that if the tent (σκῆνος) that is our earthly home is destroyed (καταλύω, aor. pass.), we have a building (οικοδομή) from God (ἐκ θεοῦ), a house not made with hands (ἀχειροποίητος), eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan (στενάζω, pres. act.), longing (ἐπιποθέω, pres. act.) to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked (γυμνός). 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened (βαρέω, pres. pass.)—not that we desire to remove our clothing, but to put on a garment over our existing garment (ἐπενδύομαι), so that what is mortal may be swallowed up (καταπίνω, aor. pass.) by life (ζωή). 5 He who prepared (κατεργάζομαι, aor.) us for this very thing is God, who gave us the guarantee of the Spirit (τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος).

### *Always of Good Courage*

6 So we are always (πάντοτε) of good courage (θαρρέω, pres. act). We know (οἶδα) that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk (περιπατέω, pres.) by faith (διὰ πίστεως), not by sight (οὐ διὰ εἶδους). 8 Yes, we are of good courage (θαρρέω, pres.), and we would rather be away from the body (σῶμα) and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim (φιλοτιμέομαι, pres.) to be pleasing (εὐάρεστος) to him. 10 For we must (δεῖ) all appear (φανερῶ, aor. pass.) before the judgment seat of Messiah (ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ), so that each one may receive what is due (κομίζω, aor. mid.) for what he has done (πράσσω, aor. act.) in the body, whether good (ἀγαθός) or worthless (φαῦλος).

### *Guided by Messiah's Love*

11 Therefore, knowing (οἶδα) the fear (φόβος) of the Lord, we persuade (πείθω, pres.) others. But what we are has been revealed (φανερῶ, perf. pass.) to God, and I hope it has been revealed (φανερῶ, perf. pass.) also to your conscience (συνείδησις). 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance (ἐν προσώπῳ) and not about what is in the heart (ἐν καρδίᾳ). 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God. If we are in our right mind (σωφρονέω, pres. act.), it is for you. 14 For the love (ἀγάπη) of Messiah controls (συνέχω, pres.) us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all (εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν), therefore all have died (οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον). 15 And he died for all (ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν), in order that those who live (οἱ ζῶντες) might no longer live (ζῶω, pres. subj.) for themselves (ἑαυτοῖς) but for him who for them (ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν) died and was raised.

### *Ministers of Reconciliation*

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh (σάρξ). Even though we once regarded Messiah according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if

anyone is in Messiah (εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ), he is a new creation (καινὴ κτίσις).<sup>1</sup> The old has passed away. Behold, the new (καινὰ) has come (γίνομαι, perf.). 18 All this is from the God who reconciled (καταλλάξαντος, aor.) us to himself through Messiah and gave us the ministry of reconciliation (τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς). 19 That is, God was in Messiah (ἐν Χριστῷ) reconciling (καταλλάσσω, pres.) the world to himself, not counting (λογίζομαι, pres.) their [personal] trespasses (παράπτωμα, pres.) against them, and entrusting (τίθημι, pres.) to us the message of reconciliation (τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς). 20 Therefore, on behalf of (ὑπὲρ)<sup>2</sup> Messiah we are ambassadors (πρεσβεύω), God making his appeal (παρακαλέω, pres.) through us. We implore (δέομαι, pres.) you on behalf of Messiah, be reconciled (καταλλάσσω, aor. pass.) to God. 21 For our sake (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν) he [God] made him [Messiah] to be sin who knew (γινώσκω) no sin, in order that we might become (γίνομαι, aor. mid. subj.) the righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) of God in him.

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<sup>1</sup> Our “new creatureness” matches our “new covenantness.”

<sup>2</sup> “[A] marker indicating that an activity or event is in some entity’s interest, *for, in behalf of, for the sake of someone/someth.*” (BDAG, 1030).

## Commentary

### 1. Overview.

- a. The big questions are:
  - (1) Why are we not to lose heart? Why are we to be of good courage?
- b. The big answers are:
  - (1) Because of our guaranteed resurrection body.
  - (2) Because as soon as we die, we will be with Lord Jesus.
  - (3) Because what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
  - (4) Because Jesus will evaluate us at his judgment seat.
  - (5) Because of Jesus' love for us, as demonstrated at the cross.
  - (6) Because we have been reconciled to God through Jesus.
  - (7) Because God has designated us to be his ambassadors in the world.
- c. "The extent to which we Christians view life from Paul's spiritual viewpoint will be the extent to which we do not lose heart in our ministry."<sup>3</sup>

### 2. The Mortal Swallowed Up by Life (2 Co 5:1-5).

- a. **2 Co 5:1-5** 1 For we know (οἶδα) that if the tent (σκῆνος) that is our earthly home is destroyed (καταλύω, aor. pass.), we have a building (οἰκοδομή) from God (ἐκ θεοῦ), a house not made with hands (ἀχειροποίητος), eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan (στενάζω, pres. act.), longing (ἐπιποθέω, pres. act.) to put on our heavenly dwelling (οἰκητήριον), 3 if (εἰ) indeed [assumed true for the purpose of argument] by putting it on we will not be found naked (γυμνός). 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened (βαρέω, pres. pass.)—not that we desire to remove our clothing, but to put on a garment over our existing garment (ἐπενδύομαι), so that what is mortal may be swallowed up (καταπίνω, aor. pass.) by life (ζωή). 5 He who prepared (κατεργάζομαι, aor.) us for this very thing is God, who gave us the guarantee of the Spirit (τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος).
- b. Continuing from 2 Co 4:17-18, another reason we do not lose heart is because even if we die physically, our resurrection body awaits (v. 1).
  - (1) Believers do experience physical death. Death is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body.
    - (a) **2 Pe 1:13-14** 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, 14 because I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Messiah made clear to me.
    - (2) σκῆνος: "a temporary abode as opposed to a permanent structure, *tent, lodging*" (*BDAG*, 929).
      - (a) **Jn 1:14** 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt (σκηνώω) among us....
      - (b) **Jn 7:2** 2 Now the Jews' Feast of Booths (σκηνοπηγία) was at hand.
        - 1) σκηνοπηγία: prim. 'the setting up of tents' or 'construction of huts'. As name for the *Festival of Booths/Tabernacles*..., a festival celebrated Tishri (roughly=October) 15–21, out of doors when poss., in booths made fr. tree branches (תִּשְׁבֻּעַת לֶחֶם). Joseph. declares (*Ant.* 15, 50; cp. 8, 123) that it is the most important Jewish festival" (*BDAG*, 928).

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Constable, *Notes on 2 Corinthians*, 87.

- (c) **Re 21:3-7** 3 I [John] heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place (σκηνή) of God is with man. He will dwell (σκηνώω) with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.
- (3) καταλύω: “tear down, demolish...Of the body as an earthly tent...if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed or taken down” (BDAG, 522).
- (4) The “building” (v. 1) could be a temporary intermediate body, a permanently heavenly home, or a permanent resurrection body. Most likely Paul is referring to a permanent resurrection body. Paul is building upon what he said in 1 Co 15:12-58.
- (a) **1 Co 15:20-22** 20 But in fact Messiah has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Messiah shall all be made alive.
- (b) **1 Co 15:30-31** 30 Why are we in danger every hour? 31 I protest, brothers and sisters, by my pride in you, which I have in Messiah Jesus our Lord, I die every day!
- (c) **1 Co 15:42-44** 42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.
- (d) **1 Co 15:49** 49 Just as we have borne the *image* of the man of dust [Adam], we shall also bear the *image* of the man of heaven [Jesus].
- 1) **2 Co 3:18** 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord [Jesus], are being transformed into the same *image* from one degree of glory to another.
- (e) **1 Co 15:51-54** 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 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 shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.
- c. We groan in our present body and long to put on our resurrection body (vv. 2, 4).
- (1) στενάζω: “to express oneself involuntarily in the face of an undesirable circumstance, *sigh, groan*” (BDAG, 942).
- (a) **Ro 8:23** 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.
- (b) It’s okay to have a holy dissatisfaction with our current physical body.
- (2) ἐπιποθέω: “to have a strong desire for someth., with implication of need, *long for, desire*” (BDAG, 377).
- (3) οἰκητήριον: “a place for living, *dwelling, habitation*...The glorified body of a transfigured Christian, *dwelling*” (BDAG, 695).

- d. We don't desire to return to the state of Adam before the fall ("naked") but to proceed to the state of Jesus after his resurrection ("clothed") (vv. 3-4).
- (1) γυμνός: "pert. to being without covering...lit. *naked, stripped, bare*...fig. *uncovered, bare*...pert. to being inadequately clothed, *poorly dressed*...pert. to being lightly clad, *without an outer garment*, without which a decent person did not appear in public" (BDAG, 208).
- (2) Creation.
- (a) **Ge 2:25** 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.
- (3) Fall.
- (a) **Ge 3:7** 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.
- (b) **Ge 3:10-11** 10 And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. 11 He said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?
- (c) **Ge 9:20-24** 20 Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. 21 He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.
- (d) **Ex 20:26** 26 And you shall not go up by steps to my altar, that your nakedness be not exposed on it.
- (e) **Mk 14:51-52** 51 And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, 52 but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.
- (f) **Re 3:17** 17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.
- (g) **Re 16:15** 15 ("Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!")
- (4) Redemption.
- (a) **Ge 3:21** 21 And Yahweh God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.
- (b) **Ga 3:27** 27 For as many of you as were baptised into Messiah have put on Messiah.
- (5) Restoration.
- (a) **Ro 13:14** 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Messiah, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.
- (b) **Re 7:9** 9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands....
- e. Receiving our resurrection body is not taking off our old clothes and putting on new ones. Rather it is putting on additional clothing over the clothing we are already wearing. It is "life swallowing up the mortal" (v. 4).
- (1) ἐπενδύομαι: "in our lit. only mid. to put a garment on over an existing garment, *put on (in addition)*" (BDAG, 361).

- (2) καταπίνω: “to drink down, *swallow, swallow up* τὶ *someh....to destroy completely, in the figure of one devouring or swallowing someh....to cause the end of someh., swallow up*” (BDAG, 524).
- (a) **1 Co 15:54** 54 ... Then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up (καταπίνω) in victory.
- (b) **Is 25:8** 8 He will swallow up death forever, And Lord Yahweh will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for Yahweh has spoken.
- f. God prepared us for receipt of our resurrection body and gave us the Holy Spirit as a down payment (ἀρραβών)(v. 5).
- (1) ἀρραβών: “payment of part of a purchase price in advance, *first installment, deposit, down payment, pledge....*, which secures a legal claim to the article in question, or makes a contract valid...ἄ. is a payment that obligates the contracting party to make further payments” (BDAG, 134).
- (2) It’s like an engagement ring.
- (3) **2 Co 1:22** 22 ... And who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.
- (4) **Ro 8:23** 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit....
- (5) **Eph 1:13-14** 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee (ἀρραβών) of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Phase Two		Phase Three
Present Reality		Future Hope
<b>5:1</b>	Our earthly tent is being dismantled.	We are certain of our eternal building.
<b>5:2</b>	We groan in our present tent.	We long for our heavenly home.
<b>5:3</b>	We don’t want to be naked.	We want to be clothed with our eternal dwelling.
<b>5:4</b>	We groan in our mortality.	We long to be, and will be, clothed with life.
<b>5:6</b>	We are at home in the body.	We want to be with the Lord Jesus.
<b>5:7</b>	We now walk by faith.	We will one day walk by sight.

### 3. Always of Good Courage (2 Co 5:6-10).

- a. **2 Co 5:6-10** 6 So we are always (πάντοτε) of good courage (θαρρέω, pres.). We know (οἶδα) that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord [Jesus], 7 for we walk (περιπατέω, pres.) by faith (διὰ πίστεως), not by sight (οὐ διὰ εἶδους). 8 Yes, we are of good courage (θαρρέω, pres.), and we would rather be away from the body (σῶμα) and at home with the Lord [Jesus]. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim (φιλοτιμέομαι, pres.) to be pleasing (εὐάρεστος) to him. 10 For we must (δεῖ) all appear (φανερῶω, aor. pass.) before the judgment seat of Messiah (ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ), so that each one may receive what is due (κομίζω, aor. mid.) for what he has done (πράσσω, aor. act.) in the body, whether good (ἀγαθός) or worthless (φαῦλος).

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- b. Because of our guaranteed resurrection body (vv. 1-5), we are always to be confident (θαρρέω)(vv. 6a, 8).
- (1) θαρρέω: “to have certainty in a matter, *be confident, be courageous*” (BDAG, 444).
  - (2) See *Courage*.
- c. Now, at home in the body, we are away from the Lord Jesus (v. 6b).
- (1) Jesus is with us spiritually, true. But he is absent physically.
    - (a) **Mt 18:20** 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.
    - (b) **Mt 28:20** 20 And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.
    - (c) **Jn 14:3** 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.
    - (d) **Jn 17:24** 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me....
- d. At this time, we walk by faith, not sight (v. 7).
- (1) περιπατέω: “to go here and there in walking, *go about, walk around*...to conduct one’s life, *comport oneself, behave, live* as habit of conduct; fig. ext. of 1...of ‘walk of life’, *go about*. ... In the NT this use of the word is decidedly Pauline (the pastoral epp. do not have the word at all); elsewh. it is reasonably common only in 2J and 3J, *live, conduct oneself, walk*, always more exactly defined” (BDAG, 803).
  - (2) We live by what is not seen, not by what is seen.
    - (a) **2 Co 4:18** 18 ...As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.
    - (b) **Jn 20:29** 29 Jesus said to [Thomas], Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.
  - (3) Paul is talking about phase two faith here. See *Phase Two Faith*.
    - (a) **He 11:13-14** 13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.
  - (4) In phases one and two, faith is necessary. In phase three it is no longer necessary.
- e. Our preference is to be away from our current body and to be at home with the Lord Jesus (v. 8).
- (1) This definitively shows we will be with Jesus immediately once we die.
    - (a) **Php 1:21-24** 21 For to me to live is Messiah, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Messiah, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.
  - (2) “For the secularist, death is like stepping off a cliff into a black abyss of nothingness. The Muslim faces a fearsome judgment, and for many Eastern religions, the prospect is equally grim: After death, the law of karma decrees that people must pay the penalty for what they have done in this life, being

reincarnated according to their past deeds. But for the Christian, assured of eternity with the Lord, ‘To die is gain’ (Phil. 1:21).”<sup>4</sup>

- (3) As Church age believers, what happens to us when we die?
  - (a) Our body returns to dust, but our soul and spirit go to be with Jesus in heaven. We may receive an “intermediate body,” but this is conjecture.
  - (b) There is no purgatory.
  - (c) At the rapture, our soul and spirit will be rejoined to our body, this time, our glorious, permanent, resurrection body. In this new body we will live in the millennium and in eternity.
  - (d) Believers alive at the rapture, of course, will not experience physical death and will immediately receive a glorious resurrection body.
- f. Whether here or there, we are to make it our aim to please the Lord Jesus (v. 9).
  - (1) φιλοτιμέομαι: “special honor (τιμή) was accorded pers. who rendered exceptional service to the state or other institutions, and many wealthy pers. endeavored to outdo one another in philanthropic public service (cp. the billionaire Oprahs..., who prob. outdid all) **have as one’s ambition, consider it an honor, aspire**, w. focus on idea of rendering service” (BDAG, 1059).
  - (2) εὐάρεστος: “**pleasing, acceptable** (s. εὐαρεστέω; in the Gr-Rom. world commonly said of things and esp. of pers. noted for their civic-minded generosity and who endeavor to do things that are pleasing...In a parable *well thought of*, i.e. the master was quite satisfied with his performance” (BDAG, 403).
    - (a) **Col 1:10** 10 ...So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord [Jesus], fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God....
    - (b) **1 Th 4:1** 1 Finally, then, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.
    - (c) “To be well-pleasing to Christ is, indeed, the sum of all ambition which is truly Christian.”<sup>5</sup>
- g. The reason is we all, as believers, will appear before Messiah’s judgment seat (βῆμα) to receive (κομίζω) what is due based on what we have done in phase two (v. 10a).
  - (1) βῆμα: **a step forward made by a foot, step...a very limited space, step...a dais or platform that required steps to ascend, tribunal**.... A magistrate would address an assembly from a chair placed on the structure. Esp. *judicial bench*...of the throne-like *speaker’s platform*” (BDAG, 175).
    - (a) **Ac 18:12** 12 But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal (βῆμα)....
    - (b) **Ro 14:10** 10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we [believers] will all stand before the judgment seat (βῆμα) of God....
    - (c) **1 Co 3:11-15** 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Messiah. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one’s work will become

<sup>4</sup> Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?*, 136.

<sup>5</sup> Hughes, 178.



manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

- (d) **1 Co 4:5** 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord [Jesus] comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.
- (e) **1 Co 9:24** 24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.
- (2) κομίζω: “**to come into possession of someth. or experience someth., carry off, get (for oneself), receive** freq. as recompense, mid...τὰ ὀψώνια *pay, wages...* receive a recompense for what (each one) has done during life in the body” (BDAG, 557).
- (3) This includes the good we have done, and the worthless (φαῦλος) (v. 10b).
- (a) φαῦλος: “[I]n Gk lit. ranging in mng. fr. ‘easy, light, simple’ to ‘common, bad’...pert. to being low-grade or morally substandard, *base*...those who do not reflect in their behavior the high status they could enjoy as pers. destined for ‘deathless knowledge’... The contrast ἀγ. and φαῦλ. as Pla., Protag. 326ε τῶν ἀγαθῶν πατέρων πολλοὶ υἱεῖς φαῦλοι γίνονται ‘many sons of respected fathers turn out to be worthless’ noting the contrast between socially responsible parents and irresponsible children...whether one has led a high-grade or a low-grade life, or more prob....to be understood as...pert. to being relatively inferior in quality, *ordinary* in ref. to the kinds of awards that are offered...” (BDAG, 1050-51).
- (4) See *Judgment Seat of Messiah*.
- (a) Jesus will reward us for the worthwhile things we did and declined rewards for the worthless things we did (Mt 6:19-21; 1 Co 9:24-27). The worthwhile things are those that contribute to the advancement of God's mission and glory in the world. Worthless deeds are those that make no contribution to the fulfillment of God's good purposes (Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:11-27).
- (b) The penalty is the loss of Jesus' recognition and reward, not the lake of fire.
- (c) It's not about condemnation but commendation.
- (d) The great white throne judgement of Re 20 is like a courtroom. The judgment seat of Messiah of 2 Co 5 like an awards or graduation ceremony.
- (e) “The judgment seat of Christ might be compared to a commencement ceremony. At graduation there is some measure of disappointment and remorse that one did not do better and work harder. However, at such an event the overwhelming emotion is joy, not remorse. The graduates do not leave the auditorium weeping because they did not earn better grades. Rather, they are thankful that they have been graduated, and they are grateful for what they did achieve.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Samuel L. Hoyt, “The Negative Aspects of the Christian's Judgment,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 137:546 (April-June 1980):131. See also idem, “The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sins,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 137:545 (January-March 1980):38-39.

- (f) Both with regard to unbelievers and believers, there will be a great distinction in the recompense each will receive.<sup>7</sup>
- (g) Paul again and again connects the judgment seat of Messiah to our present motivation.
  - 1) **1 Co 15:58** 58 Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord [Jesus], knowing that in the Lord [Jesus] your labor is not in vain.
  - 2) “If we learn to live as Paul did with the judgment-seat of Christ before us, we will not be men- pleasers, but we will be Christ-pleasers.”<sup>8</sup>
- (h) As ministers and servants, it is ultimately Jesus we have to answer to.

#### 4. Guided by Messiah’s Love (2 Co 5:11-15).

- a. **2 Co 5:11-15** 11 Therefore, knowing (οἶδα, perf.) the fear (φόβος) of the Lord [Jesus], we go on persuading (πείθω, pres.) others. But what we are has been revealed (φανερῶ, perf. pass.) to God, and I hope it has been revealed (φανερῶ, perf. pass.) also to your conscience (συνείδησις). 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance (ἐν προσώπῳ) and not about what is in the heart (ἐν καρδίᾳ). 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God. If we are in our right mind (σωφρονέω, pres. act.), it is for you. 14 For Messiah’s love (ἀγάπη) [for us] guides (συνέχω, pres.) us, because we have concluded this: that one [Jesus] has died in the place of all (εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν) [people], therefore all [people] have died (οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον) [potentially in him]. 15 And he died in the place of all (ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν) [people], in order that those who live (οἱ ζῶντες) [believers] might no longer live (ζάω, pres. subj.) for themselves (ἑαυτοῖς) but for him [Jesus] who in their place (ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν) died and was raised.
- b. With a healthy fear of the Lord Jesus, knowing he will be evaluated at Jesus’ judgment seat, Paul goes on persuading people of the gospel message (v. 11).
  - (1) φόβος: “the product of an intimidating/alarming force, the pass. sense...fear, alarm, fright...reverence, respect” (*BDAG*, 1062).
    - (a) **Ac 9:31** 31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the *fear* of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.
    - (b) **He 10:31** 31 It is a *fearful* thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
    - (c) We are to have a healthy sense of our accountability to God.
  - (2) πείθω: “to cause to come to a particular point of view or course of action... *convince* w. acc. of pers....*persuade, appeal to...win over, strive to please*” (*BDAG*, 791-92).
- c. The character of Paul is well-known to God, and it should be well-known to the Corinthians (v. 11).
  - (1) **2 Co 4:2** 2 But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God.

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<sup>7</sup> Hodge, 126.

<sup>8</sup> Ironside, 143.

- (2) Every aspect of our life is an open book to God.
- d. Paul is not commending himself again. He merely wants the Corinthians to be able to boast about him (v. 12a).
- (1) We must not confuse confidence with arrogance.
- e. Paul's opponents boast about what is in the face (ἐν προσώπῳ), but Paul boasts about what is in the heart (ἐν καρδίᾳ) (v. 12b).
- (1) See *Heart*.
- f. If Paul appears crazy, it is for God. If he appears in his right mind, it is for the Corinthians (v. 13).
- (1) The super-apostles must be calling Paul a "crazy fool."
- (a) **2 Co 11:1** I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me!
- (b) **2 Co 11:16** I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little.
- g. Jesus' love (ἀγάπη) for us impels us (v. 14a).
- (1) συνέχω: "to hold together as a unit, *hold together, sustain* τὶ *some*th....to close by holding together, *stop, shut*...to press in and around so as to leave little room for movement, *press hard, crowd* τινά *someone*...to hold in custody, *guard*...to occupy someone's attention intensely, *συνέχομαι* τινι *I am occupied with* or *absorbed in* *some*th....to provide impulse for some activity, *urge on, impel*, τινά *someone*...to hold within bounds so as to manage or guide, *direct, control*" (BDAG, 970-71).
- (a) **Ac 18:5** 5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied (συνέχω) with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus.
- h. This impelling is based on these conclusions (v. 14b):
- (1) Jesus has died in place of all people (v. 14c, 15a).
- (a) ὑπέρ: a marker indicating that an activity or event is in some entity's interest, *for, in behalf of, for the sake of someone/someth*....w. gen. of thing, in which case it must be variously translated ὑπέρ (τῶν) ἁμαρτιῶν *in order to atone for (the) sins* or *to remove* them...*in place of, instead of, in the name of*" (BDAG, 1030).
- (b) See *Unlimited Atonement*.
- 1) **Ro 5:15** 15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Messiah abounded for many.
- (2) All people have died, potentially, in him (v.14d).
- (a) Jesus' death was the death of all in the sense that he died the death we should have died. The penalty of our sins was borne by him. He died in our place.<sup>9</sup>
- (3) The purpose is so that those who live, believers, might no longer live for themselves but for him who died and was raised (v. 15).
- (a) Jesus died in our place to save us. Therefore, we owe our lives to him.
- (b) We are positionally alive in Jesus. Now we are to be practically alive in him.

<sup>9</sup> Tasker, 86.

- 1) **Ro 6:11-12** 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Messiah Jesus. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.
- (c) These two verses summarise the doctrine of atonement. See *Atonement* and *Isaiah 53*.

## 5. Ministers of Reconciliation (2 Co 5:16-21).

- a. **2 Co 5:16-21** 16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh (σάρξ). Even though we once regarded Messiah according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Messiah (εἷ τις ἐν Χριστῷ), he is a new creation (καινὴ κτίσις). The old passed away (παρέρχομαι, aor.). Behold, the new (καινά) has come (γίνομαι, perf.). 18 All this is from the God who reconciled (καταλλάσσω, aor.) us to himself though Messiah and gave (δίδωμι, aor.) us the ministry of reconciliation (τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς). 19 That is, God was in Messiah (ἐν Χριστῷ) reconciling (καταλλάσσω, pres.) the world (κόσμος) [of men] to himself, not counting (λογίζομαι, pres.) their [personal] trespasses (παράπτωμα, pres.) against them, and entrusting (τίθημι, pres.) to us the message of reconciliation (τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς). 20 Therefore, on behalf of (ὑπέρ) Messiah we are ambassadors (πρεσβεύω), God making his appeal (παρακαλέω, pres.) through us. We implore (δέομαι, pres.) you on behalf of Messiah (ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ), be reconciled (καταλλάσσω, aor. pass.) to God. 21 For our sake (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν) he [God] made him [Messiah] to be sin who knew (γινώσκω) no sin, in order that we might become (γίνομαι, aor. mid. subj.) the righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) of God in him.
- b. Paul now regards everyone from a new, spiritual viewpoint, not an old, fleshly viewpoint (v. 16a). This especially includes Jesus (v. 16b).
  - (1) What does it mean to regard people according to the flesh? What does it mean to regard people according to the Spirit?
  - (2) **Php 3:7-8** 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Messiah. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Messiah Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Messiah....
- c. Every believer is, by definition, in Messiah, and therefore a new creation (v. 17a).
  - (1) **Ro 16:7** 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were *in Messiah* before me.
    - (a) Every believer is in Messiah, but Jesus isn't in every believer.
    - (2) κτίσις: “**the result of a creative act, that which is created...** of individual things or beings created, *creature*” (BDAG, 573).
      - (a) **Ga 6:15** 15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.
      - (b) **Eph 2:10** 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Messiah Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
      - (c) **Eph 4:24** 24 ...And to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.
    - (3) This is one of the forty things that happens at the moment we believe. See *Forty Things*. We never agreed to become new, and we may not at certain times feel new or act new. But in fact we *are* new.

- (a) Obviously there is both continuity and discontinuity that takes place at the moment of faith. Paul was not denying the continuity. We still have the same physical features, basic personality, genetic constitution, parents, susceptibility to temptation (1 Co 10:14), sinful environment (Ga 1:4), etc.<sup>10</sup>
- d. The old life (phase zero) passed away, and the new life (phases one through three) has come (v. 17b).
- (1) Our “new creaturehood” matches our “new covenantness.”
- e. God alone is responsible for all of this (v. 18a).
- (1) God reconciled us to himself through Messiah (in phase one)(v. 18b).
- (a) καταλλάσσω: “the exchange of hostility for a friendly relationship, *reconcile*” (BDAG, 521).
- 1) **Ro 5:10-11** 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Messiah, through whom we have now received reconciliation.
- (2) God also gave us the ministry of reconciliation (in phase two)(v. 18c).
- (a) καταλλαγῆς: “reestablishment of an interrupted or broken relationship, *reconciliation*” (BDAG, 521).
- 1) Note it is not an initial establishment, but a reestablishment.
- (3) God, in Messiah, reconciled the world (κόσμος) of men to himself (v. 19a).
- (a) All humanity has potential reconciliation, but only believers have actual reconciliation. It is special reconciliation one must have for eternal life.
- (b) If taken out of context, Paul could be accused of universalism, just like Steve Reardon!
- (c) People still need to respond to the offer of salvation by believing the gospel in order to receive justification and adoption. Reconciliation removes a barrier to our salvation, but it does not by itself accomplish our salvation.<sup>11</sup>
- (4) God is not counting people’s personal trespasses against them (v. 19b).
- (a) λογίζομαι: “to determine by mathematical process, *reckon, calculate*, freq. in a transf. sense...*count, take into account τὶ someth....λ. εἶς τινα put on someone’s account, charge to someone* (cp. the commercial terminology...) ... as a result of a calculation evaluate, estimate, look upon as, consider” (BDAG, 597).
- 1) **Ro 4:8** 8 ...Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.
- (b) “All the religions of the world say, ‘Do, do, do.’ The gospel says, ‘Done.’”<sup>12</sup>
- (5) God is entrusting to believers this message of reconciliation (v. 19c).
- (a) τίθημι: “to assign to some task or function, *appoint, assign*” (BDAG, 1004).
- (b) Reconciliation with God comes first (1). Then comes: (2) reconciliation with ourselves; (3) reconciliation with one another; and (4) reconciliation and with nature.
- f. So we as believers are ambassadors/envoys on Messiah’s behalf (v. 20a).

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Constable, *Notes on 2 Corinthians*, 92.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Constable, *Notes on 2 Corinthians*, 93.

<sup>12</sup> J. Vernon McGee, 5:100.



- (a) πρεσβεύω: “**be an ambassador/envoy, travel/work as an ambassador...** ‘be my spokesman’” (BDAG, 861).
- 1) **Eph 6:20** 20 ...For which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.
  - 2) “...[T]he ambassador’s duty is not merely to deliver a definite message, to carry out a definite policy; but he is obligated to watch opportunities, to study characters, to cast about for expedients, so that he may place it before his hearers in its most attractive form. He is a diplomatist.”<sup>13</sup>
- (2) God makes his appeal to the world of men through us (v. 20b).
- (a) παρακαλέω: “**to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage...** The ἵνα-clause expresses not the content of the appeal, as in the pass. referred to above, but its aim...*since God as it were makes his appeal through us: ‘We beg’* **2 Cor 5:20**. Paul serves as God’s agent (like a ‘legate of Caesar’...) and functions as mediator...to make a strong request for someth., *request, implore, entreat*” (BDAG, 765).
- (b) Our presentation of the gospel message should communicate urgency.
- (3) We ask on Messiah’s behalf (v. 21a) with these words:
- 1) δέομαι: “**to ask for something pleadingly, ask, request,** which predominates also in LXX...gener. of address to humans *ask, request...*w. direct discourse foll., (*I beg (of you), or please*” (BDAG, 218).
  - 2) We request acceptance of our message, but we don’t demand it.
- (b) Be reconciled to God (v. 21b).
- 1) Actual reconciliation happens only when one *believes* the gospel message concerning Jesus.
- (c) Messiah knew no sin (v. 21e).
- 1) **1 Pe 2:22** 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.
- (d) God made Messiah to be sin (v. 21d).
- 1) **Ro 4:25** 25 ...Who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
  - 2) **Ro 8:3** 3 By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, [God] condemned sin in the flesh....
  - 3) **Ga 3:13** 13 Messiah redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree....
  - 4) God treated Jesus as if he were a sinner and poured out his just wrath upon him.
- (e) This was in our place (v. 21c).
- 1) ὑπέρ: “a marker indicating that an activity or event is in some entity’s interest, *for, in behalf of, for the sake of someone/someth.*” (BDAG, 1030).
  - 2) In our place, condemned he stood. This is the key doctrine of substitutionary atonement. On Jesus was laid the guilt and penalty for our sin and sins.
  - 3) Our sin was *imputed* to him so that his righteousness could be *imputed* to us. This has been called “the sweet exchange” by F. F. Bruce.

<sup>13</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, *Ordination Addresses and Counsels to Clergy*, 47-48.



- (f) So that we might become the righteousness of God in Messiah (v. 21f).
- 1) **Ro 1:16-17** 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The righteous shall live by faith.
    - a) Remember Paul is writing *Romans* at the same time he is writing *2 Corinthians*.
    - 2) **1 Co 1:30** 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption....
    - 3) We have not gotten or received righteousness, we have become righteousness.<sup>14</sup>
- (g) This message of reconciliation echoes Ge 3, Ge 4, Ge 22, Ex 12, and Is 53.
- g. These verses are some of the most profound in all of Scripture.
- h. An important cross-reference is Colossians 1.
- (1) **Col 1:19-23** 19 For in [the Son, Jesus] all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 And you [believers], who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds [in phase zero], 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death [in phase one], in order to present you [in phase three] holy, blameless, and above reproach before him, 23 if (εἰ) indeed [in phase two] you continue in the [Christian] faith [doctrine/theology], stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel [message] that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.
- (a) Jesus' shed blood on the cross is the means by which all things are reconciled to God. Jesus' death and resurrection have cosmic significance.
  - (b) Reconciliation is potential for all members of the human race.
- i. Philip Bliss, "Hallelujah! What a Saviour!" (1875).

"Man of Sorrows!" what a name  
For the Son of God, who came  
Ruined sinners to reclaim.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Lifted up was He to die;  
"It is finished!" was His cry;  
Now in Heav'n exalted high.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
In my place condemned He stood;  
Sealed my pardon with His blood.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

When He comes, our glorious King,  
All His ransomed home to bring,  
Then anew His song we'll sing:  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Guilty, vile, and helpless we;  
Spotless Lamb of God was He;  
"Full atonement!" can it be?  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

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<sup>14</sup> Lenski, 1055.