

Restoration of the Kingdom of God – 10

Last time we compared the **Living Bible** (paraphrase) of **2 Corinthians 5:8**, “*We are not afraid, but quite content to die, for then, we will be at home with the Lord*” with the **English Standard Version** (translation) - “*We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord*” (other versions similar). Which one agrees with the other parts of Scripture?

- “*The dead do not praise the LORD, nor do any that go down into silence*” - **Psalm 115:17**
- “*For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol [the grave] who can give you praise?*” - **Psalm 6:5**
- When a man dies, “*his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans* [Hebrew *esh-tonah*, Strong 6250 = thinking] **perish**” - **Psalm 146:4**. When the **brain**, now known to be, among other things, the **organ of thought**, dies, the owner falls **unconscious** and all life functions shut down.
- **Ecclesiastes 9:5-6** “*The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing....their love and their hate and their envy have already perished; never again will they have any share in all that happens under the sun*”.

These inspired words show us why the **resurrection** was so **important** to Paul. Remember how he exclaimed that if there was no resurrection, then the faithful dead had **perished!** Paul himself is now one of those dead ones, who are said to “*sleep in Jesus*” - **1 Thessalonians 4:14**.

Paul is now “*absent from the body,*” but he is **not yet** “*present with the Lord*”. This is because Paul now has no life or consciousness. He will continue to “*sleep*” until the “*Lord will descend from heaven,*” when “*the dead in Christ shall rise,*” after which all who are approved by him will “*ever be with the Lord*” in his kingdom on this earth - **1 Thessalonians 4:16–17**.

Paul desired the two things - “*To be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord*”. The first part has happened. But Paul is not yet “*present with the Lord*”. He has no knowledge of anything, and, therefore, is unconscious of the passage of time. When Paul awakes from his sleep of death, it will seem to him only a short time since he closed his eyes. There is one last thing that Paul says in the passage that we have been looking at in **2 Corinthians 5**. In **verse 10** he says, “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*”

When did Paul expect to stand before the Judgement Seat of Jesus? He tells Timothy, “*The Lord Jesus Christ will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom*” - **2 Timothy 4:1**. In other words, the judgement seat of Christ will be **after Jesus has returned from heaven** to restore the kingdom of David on this earth- so people cannot be rewarded or punished at death, because they have not yet been judged! And then Paul shows in **verse 8** when he expected to be “*present with the Lord*”. On that same day of judgement, when Jesus has judged Paul to have been righteous, Jesus will give Paul his “*house from heaven*” which is his immortal body. More next time, God willing.

