

*A New House for Eternity*  
*II Corinthians 5:1-5*

**INTRODUCTION**

The first house, Alice and I lived in, would not do for today. We are in different circumstances. It was a two-room, upstairs apartment in an old house and we shared a bath with the couple that lived next door. When we walked across the floor, the ceiling of the couple downstairs, would sway a little. Our living room was also our bedroom and den. Our kitchen was also my study and whatever else we might need. Can you imagine trying to live in that little apartment with four boys? Our move to Lubbock made yet another house necessary, much to the regret of my wife.

What about our last move? Will not our move from time into eternity make another house a necessity? This is the figure developed by Paul in our text. He likens the body in which we now live to a tent, a dwelling place. This tentmaker realizes the very nature of the tent. It is designed for temporary dwelling. But with certainty, Paul affirms that we have a dwelling place, a body that is suited for eternity. He affirms "we know". He does not mean that we know by experience. Nor do we know by observation. This knowledge is an inner, intuitive knowledge that has come to us from God. We know because it has been revealed to our inner spirit by His Holy Spirit.

You need to think about eternity, as much as we dislike to think on such matters. Do you know for sure that you have a body already prepared in which you can live eternally? Maybe the issue can be clarified by our careful study of this passage.

***I. THE GLORY OF THE NEW HOUSE***

The nature of our present body makes such a new body a necessity. Our present body is designed for temporary use. Some last longer than others, but sooner or later they are all "dissolved". The word means to fold up like a tent. It is in the contrast between the present body and the new one that we see the glory of the new body.

The new body is permanent. "We have a building of God." By this word, Paul calls attention to the permanence of the new body. This word refers to a house that is built on a foundation. It is designed to stay in the same place, while a tent is designed for mobility. "Of God" points us to the source of this building. However, as to the source, both bodies actually come from the same gracious God. Will it not be good to have a body that no longer needs repair or medical attention to keep it together? You will have no need to worry about pain, sickness or death in the new body for they will be "no more".

The new body is spiritual. "An house not made with hands". This expression calls attention to the supernatural and spiritual qualities of the new body. Our present body is a physical body and is bound by the limitations of the physical. Jesus in his physical body knew many of these limitations. He required food, rest, and sleep. He was limited in his body in many ways. However, it is rather evident that in the body which he had when he returned from-the grave, these limitations had been removed. Our new body will be like the body which Jesus had after His resurrection. Evidently, Jesus was able to travel in His new body at the speed of thought. He moved over the land of Israel without any of the natural means of conveyance after the resurrection. The new body is heavenly. Our present body is called an "earthly" house. As such, it was specifically and wonderfully designed for life upon the earth. Man's travel into space has confirmed this. The only way man can survive on the moon for any period of time, is to take a part of the earth with him. He must have some of the basic elements of earth or in a moment he would be dead. His body is earthly. The new body will be wonderfully designed in the same way for the atmosphere and activities of heaven. Paul affirms that the new body is "eternal in the heavens". The "eternal" associates it with the nature of the eternal God. "In the heavens" indicates both where it is found and the realm in which it will operate.

Do you see the contrast and the glory? This is not to depreciate the glory of our present body. It is truly a wonder in every way. But the God who made this body reveals that He has made one that is even better. The new body will be designed for man to enjoy the glories that God has reserved for His own.

## ***II. THE GROANING FOR OUR NEW HOUSE***

The knowledge that we have of the new body that will be ours in the resurrection, creates some tensions for us. "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: Not for that we would be unclothed, Lit clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

We must be clear about the words of the Apostle. First, we can be sure that the Apostle is not groaning for death. While he would be ready to affirm that even "death" is a gain, as we will notice tonight, he sees death as being naked. The period in between death and the moving into the new house, the new body, is being in a state of nakedness. Man is incomplete without his body. Your body is an essential part of you. The human spirit needs a body through which to express itself so there can be no full expression during this period of waiting. So the Apostle makes it clear that the real object of this groaning is not death. While death is welcomed as a friend, it is not sought as the supreme answer to man's situation.

The cause for this groaning is the present burdens. "Being burdened" indicates the present continuous position of the people of God. They are under a burden. There are several aspects of this burden. The many afflictions that are a part of the present body become a burden. The present, earthly body is so frail that you have to constantly guard it. It seems to have an inclination toward disease and disintegration. It will break so easily. Later in this book, Paul will talk about a thorn that was in his body. He lived with physical affliction daily and it was a burden. The ease with which the sin principle finds that body responding is also a burden to the Christian. Again and again, he finds himself being drawn into sin by some desire of the flesh. The body seems to have an inclination to respond to the appeal of sin. This can be a burden to the sensitive saint. The limitations of the present body are also a burden. This body is an "earthen vessel". It prevents you from doing many things you may desire to do for the Lord. While it is an effective tool in the hands of the Spirit, it is limited. It is limited in its durability. This partially explains these groans of the Apostle.

However, there is more to the groan. It is a groan prompted by the comparison of the present with what shall be. It is a groan that "mortality might be swallowed up of life". It is not just a groan to escape the present, but that the present body might be clothed in the house from heaven. He mixes his figure in the passage, but does not confuse his message. He wants the Lord to come in His glory and in that moment of revelation, the present mortal body to be transformed into a living, spiritual, supernatural body like unto His own glorious body. What happens to the Christian in the spiritual realm happens in the natural realm all of the time. Have you ever noticed how run down your old car looks after you have gone by just to look at the new ones? The new model makes the old unbearable. Or in a yet more personal way, you may have a pair of shoes that have served you well for a long time. They have been so comfortable. You have just never noticed that they might be worn or scuffed. But, when you stop by the shoe store and purchase a new pair, the old ones look so bad, that you're ashamed to wear them home. You have them put in the box and you wear the new ones home. This present house is a wonder until you catch a vision of the new one that the Lord has prepared for His own. From that moment forward, you begin to groan and to earnestly desire that you might have the new one today.

Do you know anything about His groan? It is the inner attitude that causes Christians to pray with the beloved John, "Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus". It prompts them to pray, "Thy kingdom come".

### ***III. THE GIVING OF OUR NEW ROME***

"Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." The actual moment of the reception of this new body will be at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then "the dead in Christ shall rise first and we also shall be changed". But the point of the Apostle is that this new body will be a work of God. Throughout the passage,

emphasis is placed upon this being the work of God. God is the giver of the new body. However, the tense of the verb used by the Apostle indicates that this is already an accomplished fact. The verb is not a future tense, but rather a historical aorist tense. In the planning and provision of God, the new body is already given. We have not received it experimentally yet, but it is ours. At the moment of our receiving the Lord Jesus as Saviour, we received the new body as a part of the new covenant between us and God. At the coming of the Lord, it will be bestowed upon us.

And we have assurance of this fact. "Who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit". The Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts is the divine down-payment on the final reality of the new home for our spirits. His presence in us is the evidence of the divine intention of making us into the complete new creatures. He is the earnest money toward the final payment. As I-am aware in this moment of worship that the Holy Spirit dwells in me, I can safely deduct from this, that I can be sure of my part in the final resurrection of the dead, or if I be living, in the glorious transformation of the living saints.

Like everything else in the Christian life, then this giving is an evidence of the divine generosity. I do not have to earn this new body, God gives it to me as I place my trust in His only begotten Son. The only thing that could keep you from having a part in this final victory of God is your refusal to place your faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners.

***Conclusion:***

When we knew we were moving to Lubbock, we made sure that we had a house when we got here. With the help of some of the dear people in this church, that provision was taken care of rather quickly. It just seemed like the wise and thoughtful thing to do.

I know that one day, I will move from earth and time into eternity. Does it not seem wise and expedient that we make some provisions for such a move? Does it not seem wise that we make sure that our spirit, which must spend eternity somewhere, have a home in which to live? Is he not a fool who gives all of his attention to this body which must live here only a short time and gives not attention to a new body to replace this one? God help us to be wise this day.