

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GO TO HEAVEN?

Session One . . .

First, you adjust to your new surroundings



THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE MORTALITY

- In common with all *nephesh chayyah*, death is natural
 - In a contingent world, death is inevitable! Isa 40:6-8; 51:12; Psa 103:15-16; cf. 1 Pet 1:24.
 - Eden's Tree of Life counters the “natural” character of flesh/matter
- Death gives life “incalculable moral significance”
 - Life is limited in duration/quantity and must be used wisely – bearing God's image within creation, to one another, and co-ruling the cosmos
 - Life is a matter of urgency because of death as limitation. Cf. Luke 12:20-21



DEATH: BODY-SPIRIT SEPARATION

- **Body: Returns to the dust / inanimate / unaware**
 - Burial / Cremation / Lost at Sea / Eaten by Cannibals
 - The body is in some form of cessation / sleep / decomposition
- **Spirit: Returns to God's care / alert / aware**
 - Jesus to the thief on the cross / Luke 23:43 (cf.v.46)
 - Paul's experience / 2 Cor 12:4
 - Promise to overcomers / Rev 2:7



2 COR 4:16-5:10: WHEN I DIE . . .

- Context of 2 Corinthians: *Paul's defense of his ministry*
- Context of 4:16-5:10: *Paul's personal optimism in hardship*
- Outline of these verses:
 - I. What I *can't* see is more precious/real than what I *do* see today! (4:16-18)
 - II. Between *tent life* and *heavenly dwelling* is a strange “naked” period (5:1-3)
 - III. Ultimate hope is in being “clothed” in the *heavenly dwelling* (5:4-5)
 - IV. That things can only get better keeps me going through hardship (5:6-10)



FOCUS: THE “NAKED” EXPERIENCE

- Paul affirms *differentiated unity* of “inner” and “outer” person (4:16)
 - Great personal comfort here to sick, injured, handicapped, elderly, *et alia*
 - Solution of our limitations will not come in this life and this bodily experience
- Yet we do not pass from *this* bodily experience to a *resurrected and transformed body*
- We experience a *disembodied* (i.e., naked [v.3] or unclothed [v.4]) state
 - Inner person (*i.e., spirit, mind, personality*) does not die, sleep, or perish
 - Spirit is alert, conscious, in God’s presence, blessed, joyous, etc!
 - Texts that affirm this: Luke 23:43; Rev 2:7; Luke 16:19-31; cf. 2 Cor 12:3-4



MORE: THE “NAKED” EXPERIENCE

- Paul seems uncertain-to-anxious about it!
- He knows he will not be a “human being” for that period of existence
- The ultimate hope is not this disembodied state
 - That is Platonism – and much of today’s Christian thought
 - In Platonism, death is hope; in Christian faith, RESURRECTION is our hope
- YET, the intermediate period is relief, bliss, and the experience of God
 - More desirable than this bodily existence / Phil 1:22-24
 - Our physical bodies are tainted by sin, weakness, and corruption / 1 Cor 15:50

