

NAKED BODIES AND HEAVENLY CLOTHING:
ΓΥΜΝΟΣ IN 2 CORINTHIANS 5.3

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Introduction

Second Corinthians 5.1-10 contains some of the most elusive metaphors in the Pauline corpus. The extensive secondary literature on this passage attests to the difficulty of the images, and some major studies have been done simply to track the interpretations.¹ One of the most difficult issues arises in v. 3, where Paul states his desire to put on his heavenly dwelling and ‘not be found naked’ (οὐ γυμνοὶ εὐρεθησόμεθα). The list of interpretations of ‘naked’ is not especially long, but the proposals are diverse. The study will begin with a survey of the background of the metaphor of nakedness in Greek thought and the Hebrew Bible. Although it will be argued that the Hebrew background deserves more weight, the argument will rest primarily on an examination of the contextual clues in 2 Corinthians 4–5 and 1 Corinthians 15, the only two places where Paul uses γυμνός. Finally, the image of nakedness will be situated within the broad contours of Paul’s theology. The goal is to present a compelling defense of the minority view that γυμνός in 2 Cor. 5.3 is a metaphor for bodily solidarity with the present age.²

1. See especially F.G. Lang, *2. Korinther 5, 1-10 in der Neueren Forschung* (BGBE; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1973); E.-B. Allo, *Saint Paul: Seconde Epître aux Corinthiens* (Paris: Gabalda, 2nd edn, 1956), pp. 137-54. More recently, F. Lindgård offers a taxonomy of interpretations in *Paul’s Line of Thought in 2 Corinthians 4:16–5:10* (WUNT, 2.189; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), pp. 5-18.

2. Those who identify nakedness as a present condition of the body include H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 503 n. 47; Lindgård, *Paul’s Line of Thought*, pp. 13, 162; and N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), p. 367 (but cf. p. 371). Neither Ridderbos nor Wright offers a detailed defense. The present/future age distinction plays a negligible role in Lindgård, who looks for the background of

The Background of γυμνός

The two main approaches usually taken to understanding nakedness in 2 Cor. 5.3 can be designated as the ethical and the anthropological interpretations.³ These interpretations correspond to the two general backgrounds for the image, in the Hebrew Bible and in Greek literature. The former emphasizes nakedness as either the cause or the result of judgment.⁴ Many recent scholars, however, virtually ignore the Hebrew background in favor of parallels in Greek literature.⁵ This results in interpreting nakedness as a reference to a disembodied existence that Paul either affirms or denies will be the future experience of believers.

Such a firm distinction between Greek and Hebrew thought has certainly been challenged.⁶ For one thing, notions of shame and guilt are clearly present in both of these traditions. The argument defended here, however, is simply that the metaphor of nakedness has clearly distinguishable meanings that are generally connected to the Greek tradition and the Hebrew Bible, and that these differences suggest different meanings of 2 Cor. 5.3. The Greek background situates the image within the context of anthropological dualism,⁷ while the Hebrew background has ethical

Paul's thought in his social status (see pp. 169-73).

3. M.E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), I, p. 376; R.P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC, 40; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), p. 105; M.J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), p. 385.

4. Contemporary scholars who take this approach include E.E. Ellis, 'II Cor. 5.1-10 in Pauline Eschatology', *NTS* 6 (1960), pp. 211-24; Lang, *2. Korinther 5, 1-10*; K. Hanhart, 'Paul's Hope in the Face of Death', *JBL* 88 (1969), pp. 445-57; G. Wagner, 'The Tabernacle and Life "in Christ": Exegesis of 2 Corinthians 5.1-10', *IBS* 3 (1981), pp. 145-65; F.W. Danker, *II Corinthians* (ACNT; Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1989), p. 71.

5. For example, H. Weigelt, 'Clothe, Naked, Dress, Garment, Cloth', *NIDNTT*, I, pp. 312-17; D. Aune, 'Anthropological Duality in the Eschatology of 2 Cor 4:16-5:10', in T. Engberg-Pedersen (ed.), *Paul beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001), pp. 215-39 (229); M.-E. Boismard, *Our Victory over Death: Resurrection?* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), p. 94.

6. See the articles in Engberg-Pedersen (ed.), *Paul beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*.

7. By way of caveat, Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, pp. 162-64, cites examples from Seneca and Epictetus to show that the metaphor of nakedness can have a non-dualistic meaning in the Greek tradition. But Lindgård also agrees that

connotations that do not necessarily entail this dualism.

The Greek Background

Plato's use of γυμνός for the soul denuded of the body is well known.⁸ This background is popular among those who see 2 Corinthians 5 as an anti-gnostic polemic.⁹ Scholars in the German tradition have been especially fond of such Greek parallels.¹⁰ This approach usually results in one of three interpretations: (1) Paul stated his hope to avoid an intermediate disembodied state; (2) nakedness is specifically the destiny of the unredeemed, who will be left without a resurrection body; (3) against the gnostic/Greek ideal, Paul reminded the Corinthians that bodilessness is not the Christian hope.¹¹ Despite their nuances, all of these interpretations understand nakedness as a reference to a future state of disembodied existence.

This approach, however, raises problems within 2 Corinthians 5 and within Pauline theology in general. Perhaps the weakest point sometimes made is that the idea of a disembodied soul is contrary to a holistic view of the human person, which many have argued is closer to Paul's view than anthropological dualism.¹² More certain is the point that an

most scholars assume that the relevant Greek parallels for understanding 2 Cor. 5.3 are dualistic.

8. Plato, *Crat.* 403b; *Gorg.* 523-24; *Phaed.* 67d-e, 81c. Philo also knew this meaning: *Virt.* 70, 76; *Leg. All.* 2.57, 59; *Praem. Poen.* 120.

9. For example, H. Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1969), pp. 190-91; W. Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 260; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, pp. 100-101; G. Bornkamm, *Paul* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 224; T.F. Glasson, '2 Corinthians v. 1-10 versus Platonism', *SJT* 43 (1990), pp. 145-55.

10. For example, H. Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief* (KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924), pp. 157-75; W. Michaelis, 'σκήνος', *TDNT*, VII, pp. 381-83; R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), p. 201. O. Michel suspects an Iranian origin ('οἰκοδομή', *TDNT*, V, pp. 144-47 [147]).

11. Aune, 'Anthropological Duality', p. 229; Weigelt, 'Clothe', pp. 313-14; P. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 262-63.

12. See, for example, J.A.T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1952); H.W. Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 3rd edn, 1947); Bultmann, *Theology*; E.E. Ellis, 'Soma in First Corinthians', *Int* 44 (1990), pp. 132-44; P. Althaus, *Die letzten Dinge: Lehrbuch*

expression of fear in v. 3 is inconsistent with Paul's apparent longing for death in v. 8.¹³ The idea of fear in v. 3 also does not do justice to Paul's concept of 'groaning' (στενάζομεν) in vv. 2, 4 (see below). Finally, the disembodied interpretation of nakedness has convinced some scholars that Paul changed from an emphasis on the Parousia as the time for receiving the new body (1 Corinthians 15) to its reception at the moment of death (2 Corinthians 5).¹⁴

The Hebrew Bible

Although the dualistic reading of nakedness is prevalent now, scholars from earlier generations gave more weight to the ethical connotations of nakedness.¹⁵ In the Hebrew Bible, 'naked' could connote (1) helplessness, (2) guilt and (3) judgment resulting in shame.¹⁶ Ezekiel 16 contains an allegory of Jerusalem that illustrates all of these ideas. Jerusalem is

der Eschatologie (Gütersloh: Carl Bertelsmann, 7th edn, 1957), pp. 155-58.

13. This point is recently argued by Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, pp. 5-7, 131-32. For attempts to alleviate this contradiction, see R. Hettlinger, '2 Corinthians 5:1-10', *SJT* 10 (1957), pp. 174-94 (185, 191); and J.N. Sevenster, 'Some Remarks on the GUMNOS in II Cor. V.3', in J.N. Sevenster and W.C. van Unnik (eds.), *Studia Paulina in honorem Johannis de Zwaan septuagenarii* (Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn N.V., 1953), pp. 202-14 (207).

14. See C. Demke, 'Zur Auslegung von 2. Korinther 5,1-10', *EvT* 29 (1969), pp. 589-602 (589). For example, see M.J. Harris, '2 Corinthians 5:1-10: Watershed in Paul's Eschatology', *TynBul* 22 (1971), pp. 32-57; M.J. Harris, *Raised Immortal: Resurrection and Immortality in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 98-101, 219-26; Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, I, pp. 397-400; C.F.D. Moule, 'St. Paul and Dualism: The Pauline Conception of Resurrection', *NTS* 12 (1966), pp. 106-23 (107). Harris lists other advocates (*Raised Immortal*, p. 255 n. 2). For a rebuttal, see J. Osei-Bonsu, 'Does 2 Cor. 5.1-10 Teach the Reception of the Resurrection Body at the Moment of Death?' *JSNT* 28 (1986), pp. 81-101. Harris's recent commentary (*Second Corinthians*, pp. 375-80) essentially abandons his earlier position.

15. See Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.36.6 (ANF, Vol. 1, p. 517); Chrysostom, *Hom. 2 Cor. 5.1*, 10.2 (NPNF, Vol. 12, p. 327); John Calvin, *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (trans. T.A. Smail; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 67. Osei-Bonsu claims that the majority of the early Fathers followed the ethical background ('Resurrection Body', p. 92). Ellis attributes the change to the rise of the history-of-religions school ('II Cor. 5:1-10', p. 221).

16. Weigelt, 'Clothe', p. 312; H. Balz, 'γυμνός, γυμνότης, γυμνήτος', *EDNT*, I, pp. 265-66 (265). See Gen. 3.10; Job 26.6; Isa. 20.2-4; 32.11; 47.3; Ezek. 16.7-14, 37, 39; 23.26, 29; Dan. 4.30b (LXX); Hos. 2.3; Amos 2.16; Mic. 1.8. See also A. Oepke, 'γυμνός', *TDNT*, I, pp. 773-75 (774).

depicted as a naked and bloody newborn abandoned in a field (vv. 4-5). Through God's care, she grows into a beautiful young woman, whereupon God bestows glory on her, symbolized by beautiful garments and jewelry. Eventually, God takes her as his bride (vv. 6-14). But Jerusalem uses God's gifts in idolatry and 'prostitution', parading herself for any who want to commit adultery with her (vv. 15-34). The judgment against Jerusalem begins in v. 35: because of her lewd nakedness, God will strip her naked before all of her lovers, who will in turn continue the judgment of stripping her naked (vv. 37-39).¹⁷

The implications of this background for 2 Cor. 5.3, however, are still unclear. Nakedness may refer to (1) the lack of good works, (2) the result of judgment, either at death or the Parousia or (3) the frail human condition, including solidarity with the generation of Adam. Focusing on good works, Hanhart recalls Paul's language of 'putting on' and 'putting off' in ethical contexts (e.g. the 'old person' or 'Christ'; Rom. 13.12; Col. 2.11; 3.8; Eph. 4.22, 25). He takes 2 Cor. 5.3 as Paul's assurance that he will not stand at the judgment with a fruitless ministry.¹⁸ Hanhart then interprets the language of 'putting on' (vv. 2, 4) as a promise that believers will put on 'the *full measure* of this life of the Spirit' that is possessed in part now.¹⁹ This approach treats the 'clothing' of the Spirit in two different senses. First, the Spirit is the fruit of good works. Secondly, the Spirit is the fullness of spiritual life gained at the resurrection. Neither of these approaches seems appropriate to the context. Paul's desire was not to put on good works, but to put on the heavenly dwelling in the event that his earthly dwelling is 'dismantled'.²⁰

Another 'good works' approach is the interpretation of the images in the light of Christian baptism. Norbert Baumert attempts to explain the whole of 2 Cor. 4.4–5.10 non-eschatologically in terms of Paul's

17. A similar allegory of Samaria (Oholah) and Jerusalem (Oholibah) is told in Ezekiel 23 (see vv. 26, 29).

18. Hanhart, 'Paul's Hope', pp. 454-56.

19. Hanhart, 'Paul's Hope', p. 455.

20. Danker's approach (*II Corinthians*, p. 71) has similar problems. He takes nakedness as the present lack of the 'marks of the kind of life that is appropriate to the resurrection body'. The continued presence of the Spirit after death, however, insures that the believer will not be left naked. So, first, nakedness is treated as a present reality. Then, secondly, the Spirit's presence is said to guarantee that death will not result in nakedness. But if the Spirit keeps believers from nakedness after death, why should they be considered naked now, since they already have the Spirit?

present experience of putting on Christ between baptism and death.²¹ J.-F. Collange refers the imagery of nakedness and ‘putting on’ in v. 3 to the baptismal liturgy, where one puts on Christ (see Gal. 3.27). The longing to ‘put on over’ (v. 2), then, is the desire to achieve perfect communion with him; nakedness and ‘putting off’ refers, not to a disembodied existence, but to the possibility, right up until the Parousia, that one might fall away from union with Christ.²²

Although the ethical connotations of nakedness suggest some ways that nakedness might refer to present bodily life, the specific interpretation of this passage must be determined by careful analysis of the text. The following analysis of 2 Cor. 5.1-5 will be guided by three concerns. First, it will demonstrate the essential consistency in Paul’s eschatological statements within 2 Cor. 4.16–5.10 and with his other letters. Secondly, it will show that no image in 2 Cor. 5.1-5 (and probably none in vv. 6-10), attempts to describe an intermediate state. Each image can be understood either in terms of the present state, which culminates in death, or the events surrounding the Parousia. Thirdly, the positive meaning of γυμνός will be sought within the catena of images in vv. 1-5.

1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 5

Scholars commonly recognize the thematic and verbal parallels between 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 5. The importance of 1 Corinthians 15 for the present study is two-fold. First, 1 Cor. 15.37 is the only other place where Paul uses γυμνός.²³ While it cannot be said that ‘naked’ is a technical term in Paul, these two instances may still shed light on each other. Secondly, although most scholars agree that 1 Corinthians 15 teaches the reception of the resurrection body at the Parousia, some have

21. Norbert Baumert, *Täglich Sterben und Auferstehen: Der Literalsinn von 2 Kor 4,12–5,10* (SANT, 34; Munich: Kösel, 1973). Baumert, pp. 183-86, offers his own arguments against taking nakedness as disembodied existence.

22. J.-F. Collange, *Enigmes de la deuxième épître de Paul aux Corinthiens: Etude exégétique de 2 Cor. 2:14–7:4* (SNTSMS, 18; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1972), pp. 215-18, 221, 225. Collange is followed by V.P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB, 32; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), pp. 297-98. Collange (*Enigmes*, p. 224) also sees baptism as the time for receiving the down payment of the Spirit in v. 4.

23. The significance of this relationship is regularly dismissed. Ellis simply states, “‘Naked grain’ is completely different imagery’ (‘II Cor. 5:1-10’, p. 221 n. 5). But see Wright, *Resurrection*, p. 367; and Lindgård, *Paul’s Line of Thought*, p. 161.

claimed that 2 Cor. 5.1-5 places that event immediately after death. This greatly affects the interpretation of 'naked' in v. 3.

Perhaps the greatest problem with proposing a change between 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 5 is explaining what could have caused Paul to change his mind in such a fundamental way. One often-cited reason is Paul's close brush with death in Asia between the writings of 1 and 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 1.8-11). The possibility of dying before the Parousia ostensibly convinced him to rethink the time for receiving the new body.²⁴ Alternatively, Thrall suggests that Paul's ongoing experience of unity with Christ eventually convinced him that even death could not threaten that union in any way.²⁵ Moule attributes the change to a Hellenization of Paul's thought in which the notion of matter was finally excluded from the eternal state. So the ruling concept of transformation in 1 Corinthians 15 was changed to that of replacement in 2 Corinthians 5.²⁶ Finally, Boismard proposes that Paul abandoned Semitic anthropology, including the notion of a bodily resurrection, upon discovering that 'the Greeks are allergic to any notion of resurrection'.²⁷

The idea that Paul made such a drastic change after writing 1 Corinthians 15 has not set well with many scholars.²⁸ For one thing, this would open him up to the charge of fickleness—a charge he was eager to avoid (see 2 Cor. 1.15-25; 2.17). In addition, Paul's life-threatening experience in Asia was hardly his first brush with death (see 2 Cor. 11.23-26; Acts 14.5-6, 19), nor was it the first time he had to deal with the death of believers

24. See Hettlinger, '2 Corinthians 5:1-10', p. 186; Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, p. 260; W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 317-18. For criticism of Schmithals, see Demke, '2. Korinther 5,1-10', p. 590.

25. Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, I, pp. 398-99.

26. Moule, 'Paul and Dualism', pp. 107, 118.

27. Boismard, *Our Victory*, p. 82.

28. For example, Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, pp. 5-7, 131-32; H.A.A. Kennedy, *St Paul's Conception of the Last Things* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1904), pp. 264-72; A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), pp. 160-64; H.L. Goudge, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Methuen & Co., 2nd edn, 1928), pp. 45-55; J. Héring, *The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Epworth Press, 1967), pp. 37-38; F.W. Danker, 'Consolation in 2 Cor. 5:1-10', *CTM* 39 (1968), pp 552-56 (555); A. Lindemann, 'Paulus und die Korinthische Eschatologie: Zur These von einer "Entwicklung" im Paulinischen Denken', *NTS* 37 (1991), pp. 373-99.

(see 1 Thess. 4.13-18).²⁹ Even if his personal expectation for living until the Parousia had changed, there is still abundant evidence that the focus of Paul's hope was the Parousia.³⁰

Ultimately, the argument that Paul changed his mind must find support in a comparison of 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 5. While both passages are, broadly speaking, polemical, and both deal with the themes of death and hope, the differences are significant.³¹ In 1 Corinthians 15, since Paul's opponents seem to have assumed that all flesh is the same (v. 35), they could only conceive of eternity in a body in the most vulgar terms.³² The Corinthians may have asked how a bodily resurrection was possible or even desirable. Paul used the analogy of a 'naked seed' (γυμνὸν κόκκον, v. 37) to illustrate that the present form of the body will not hinder the glory of the future body. The important thing here is that, even though Paul uses the metaphor of the naked seed for the body after death, nakedness is presented as a condition *of* the body, not separation *from* the body; it is precisely the body that is naked, and it is naked in comparison with the resurrection body.³³

The context of 2 Cor. 2.14–7.4 is also polemical, but the issue was

29. Hanhart, 'Paul's Hope', p. 449. It is far from certain that Paul ever assumed that he would live until the Parousia. See C.E.B. Cranfield, 'Thoughts on New Testament Eschatology', *SJT* 35 (1982), pp. 497-512; B. Witherington III, 'Transcending Immanence: The Gordian Knot of Pauline Eschatology', in K.E. Brower and M.W. Elliott (eds.), *Eschatology in Bible and Theology: Evangelical Essays at the Dawn of a New Millennium* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), pp. 171-86.

30. See Rom. 8.11, 18-25; 1 Cor. 15; Eph. 4.30; Phil. 3.20-21; Col. 3.4; 1 Thess. 4-5; 2 Thess. 2.1-12. In the Pastoral Epistles, see 1 Tim. 6.14-15; 2 Tim. 4.1, 8; Tit. 2.13. Wright, *Resurrection*, p. 365, notes that, if Paul did change his view between 1 and 2 Corinthians, he must have changed it back before writing Romans not many months later.

31. See A.C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 1172-78, for a survey of the possible issues behind 1 Corinthians 15.

32. J. Hering, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Epworth Press, 1962), p. 173. See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p. 1262.

33. The image of a naked seed as a metaphor for the body planted at burial occurs in the Talmud in a discussion of the resurrection (*b. Sanh.* 90b; c. 150 CE), but no anthropological dualism is implied. See O. Michel, 'κόκκος,' *TDNT*, III, pp. 810-14 (811 n. 4); H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 281 n. 14. It is especially odd, then, that J. Lambrecht cites 1 Cor. 15.37 as evidence that nakedness refers to a disembodied intermediate state (J. Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* [SP, 8; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999], p. 83).

not the nature of the resurrection body as such. Paul was defending the nature and consistency of his ministry in the light of his failure to return to Corinth and in the light of his suffering. The polemical element can probably be discerned in 4.2-6, and the description of the body as a mere 'tent' (σκῆνος, 5.1) may be aimed at those who think they already have the resurrection body.³⁴ The polemical element, however, is interwoven with comfort early on (1.3-11), and, although Paul is relating his personal hope, the language of encouragement around this passage (4.1, 16; 5.6) could serve to assure his readers as well.

The first direct connection with 1 Corinthians 15 in 2 Corinthians 5 may be 'for we know' (οἶδαμεν γάρ, 5.1), which some scholars take as Paul's reference to his earlier teachings.³⁵ Even if 'for we know' is merely rhetorical, it is difficult to believe that the Corinthians would have missed the verbal connections with 1 Corinthians 15, and 'for we know' would be an immensely odd way of introducing material that actually contradicted previous teachings.

First Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 5 present a mixture of contexts that include polemic and exhortation. In 1 Corinthians 15, however, the issue is precisely the nature of the resurrection body and the time of its reception. The eschatological descriptions of 2 Corinthians 5 serve to explain Paul's hope in the midst of his sufferings; they are given with a freer use of poetic language. As a result, 1 Corinthians 15, while containing its own unique elements, is a more detailed treatment of the resurrection body, and could even provide interpretive guidance for reading 2 Corinthians 5. This conclusion is bolstered if 'for we know' in 2 Cor. 5.1 is a conscious invitation for Paul's readers to hear his new words in the light of what he had already said in 1 Corinthians 15.

34. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 246; Héring, *Second Corinthians*, p. 29; C. Roetzel, "'As Dying and Behold We Live": Death and Resurrection in Paul's Theology', *Int* 46 (1992), pp. 5-18 (15).

35. A. Feuillet, 'La demeure céleste et la destinée des chrétiens. Exégèse de 2 Co 5,1-10 et contribution à l'étude des fondements de l'eschatologie paulinienne', *RSR* 44 (1956), pp. 161-92 (175-76); Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 102. For the contrary view, see Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, p. 82; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, pp. 263-64; Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, I, p. 359 nn. 1170, 1171.

*2 Corinthians 5.1-5**The Immediate Context*

Against triumphalistic ideas that had spawned criticism of his ministry, Paul asserted the value of his sufferings in 2 Cor. 4.10-12 (see 1.3-11).³⁶ The revelation of God's treasure in 'earthen vessels' (ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, v. 7) showed that divine power, rather than human ability, was at work in Paul. Against the pretenses of some (11.5, 13; cf. 3.1; 11.6; 12.1), Paul portrayed suffering as the mark of union with Christ (4.10). Two antitheses in 4.16-18 explain that Paul did not rely on external realities: (1) the 'inner person' (ἔσω ἄνθρωπος) and the 'outer person' (ἔξω ἄνθρωπος), and (2) 'the things which are seen' (τὰ βλεπόμενα) and 'the things which are not seen' (τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα). The first pair relates to the present dual experience of bodily suffering and spiritual renewal. The second antithesis is between present suffering, which is temporary, and future glory, which is presently unseen but eternal. These antitheses were immediately preceded by a reference to the resurrection (4.14), implying that the time for experiencing the eternal things is the resurrection. The introductory 'for' in 5.1 introduces another reason why Paul does not rely on things that are seen (4.18): because of his hope in a future building from God.³⁷ As Paul had taught in 1 Corinthians 15, Christian hope is oriented toward a future that is not limited by external and temporal realities, which will be realized at the Parousia.³⁸

In a recent extensive study, Lindgård has argued that the contextual function of 4.16–5.10 overrules the doctrinal content of the text.³⁹ Paul's concern is to convince the Corinthians through an emotional appeal that he is 'sincere and frank'; in the process of opening his heart, he makes inconsistent statements. In fact, 'a more elaborate and harmonious self-

36. Other links between ch. 4 and 5.1-10 include οἶδαμεν (5.1) with εἰδότες (4.14); ἐπίγειος οἰκία (5.1) with ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν (4.7); κατεργασάμενος (5.5) with κατεργάζεται (4.17); and θαρροῦντες οὖν πάντοτε (5.6) with οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν (4.1, 16).

37. So also καὶ γὰρ at the beginning of 5.2 (Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, pp. 130, 149).

38. A. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to his Eschatology* (SNTSMS, 43; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 59-60.

39. Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, pp. 2-3, 22-27, 86-87 (esp. n. 15), 90, 137, 157-58, 176, 220, 223.

description would inspire less confidence in the sincerity of the author'.⁴⁰ A primary example of this inconsistency is the putative switching back and forth between 'dualistic' and 'holistic' language.⁴¹ For example, in v. 3, 'Paul interrupts his dualistic train of thought describing his present state in 5.2 by referring, in a holistic way, to the future when his longing is fulfilled'.⁴²

Some of the alleged inconsistencies will be dealt with in the analysis below, but the general coherence of Lindgård's argument is disputable. As far as the doctrinal content of the letter is concerned, it is simply not clear how Paul's emotional openness is supposed to inspire the Corinthians to respect and sympathize with him. Nor does it adequately explain the detail of Paul's discussion. The idea that a less consistent presentation would actually help Paul appear more sincere does not even square with Lindgård's own assertions. The belief that Paul wanted to avoid the charge of inconsistency is one of the reasons Lindgård rejects a change in eschatology between 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 5.⁴³ The desire for harmony is also the reason Lindgård rejects the 'normal' Hellenistic (i.e. dualistic) reading of 'naked' in v. 3; fear of a disembodied intermediate state contradicts Paul's desire to die and be with the Lord in v. 8.⁴⁴ In the end, the question of Paul's consistency must be answered by detailed attention to the text.

40. Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, p. 90.

41. Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, pp. 3, 165 n. 199, 225. Other examples of alleged inconsistencies include an attitude of indifference about his sufferings in 4.16–5.1 versus his emotional distress in 5.2–4 (p. 176), discontinuity versus continuity in the relation of the old body to the new (pp. 169, 177–79, 224), an assumption of dying before the Parousia in 5.1 versus the anticipation of living until the Parousia in vv. 2–4 (pp. 3, 223) and the juxtaposition of the ideas of 'the parousia as a downward direction' of receiving a new body with 'the ascent of the self with an upward direction' (p. 152 n. 166). In addition, while it is not necessarily an inconsistency, Lindgård (pp. 4, 89, 137, 221) stresses that the sufferings in 4.16–5.1 have functional significance (e.g. bringing about glory), whereas those in 5.2–5 are purely negative.

42. Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, p. 169. Furthermore, Lindgård (p. 89) states that the 'dualistic turns in 5:6, 8, 9' actually 'destroy the argumentation in 5:1–5', meaning that Paul's desire in vv. 1–5 is to receive the resurrection body at the Parousia, while in vv. 6, 8 and 9 he wants to be absent from the body and present with the Lord immediately after death, probably in heaven (see pp. 131, 155, 223–24). This reading of vv. 6–10 will be addressed below.

43. Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, p. 165 n. 199. He states, 'a change in doctrines would poorly suit the character of 2 Cor 1–9' (p. 132).

44. Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, pp. 164–65.

The Images and Chronology of Verses 1-5

The comparison of 2 Corinthians 5 and 1 Corinthians 15 has already suggested a way that nakedness can refer to the present condition of the body, but it must also be shown how nakedness in 2 Cor. 5.3 fits into the dense collection of images in vv. 1-5. These verses have been a minefield for interpreters. Verses 1-2 relate the assurance of having a ‘building from God’ (οἰκοδομὴν ἐκ θεοῦ) and a ‘heavenly dwelling’ (τὸ οἰκητήριον...τὸ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ), which is contrasted with the ‘earthly tent-house’ (ἡ ἐπίγειος...οἰκία τοῦ σκηνούς) that will be provided in the event that the earthly house is ‘dismantled’ (καταλύω). To receive the heavenly dwelling is to ‘put on over’ (ἐπενδύομαι) in vv. 2 and 4. Once clothed, Paul will ‘not be found naked’ (οὐ γυμνοὶ εὑρεθησόμεθα, v. 3), and what is mortal will be ‘swallowed up by life’ (καταποθῆ τὸ θνητὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς, v. 4). Paul has been ‘prepared’ (κατεργάζομαι) for this by God, who gave him the ‘down payment’ (ἀρραβῶν) of the Spirit (v. 5).

The diversity and mixture of metaphors warns against taking any of them as precise metaphysical descriptions. There are two main groups: building/dwelling imagery and clothing imagery.⁴⁵ Verse 1 presents Paul’s only clearly figurative use of οἰκία.⁴⁶ Thrall surveys nine interpretations of the dwelling imagery and concludes that it refers to the individual bodies of believers.⁴⁷ Against this, some have interpreted vv. 1-4 as descriptions of corporate realities.⁴⁸ The evidence cited includes the present tense of ἔχομεν (‘we have’), which supposedly requires that the building must refer to a present possession of believers, and the term ἀχειροποίητον (‘not made with hands’) as a designation for the age to come.

On the other hand, since ‘we have’ occurs in the apodosis of a conditional clause, it is possible that the present tense still has a future reference.⁴⁹

45. Verses 6-10 add the imagery of homecoming.

46. The corresponding idea of ‘household’ is present in 1 Cor. 16.15 and Phil. 4.22. See also Acts 7.47; 2 Tim. 3.6; Heb. 3.2-4, 6. Similar imagery is found in Job 4.19, 21; and Wis. 9.15. See O. Michel, ‘οἰκία’, *TDNT*, V, pp. 119-34 (132).

47. Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, I, pp. 363-67.

48. Robinson, *Body*; Ellis, ‘II Cor. 5.1-10’. Hanhart, ‘Paul’s Hope’, pp. 453-54 and Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 297, also defend a corporate interpretation.

49. Plummer, *Second Corinthians*, p. 144. A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 3rd edn, 1934), p. 1019; Ridderbos, *Paul*, pp. 500-501; Barnett, *Second Corinthians*, p. 257 n. 8; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 265; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, p. 82.

Such is the case in Rom. 7.3, which is grammatically parallel.⁵⁰ There, a wife is said to be free (ἐλευθέρα ἐστίν) if her husband dies (ἐὰν... ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ). Despite the present tense, this certainly does not mean that the wife is free while her husband is still living.⁵¹ The statement ‘we have’, then, can still refer to a heavenly dwelling that will only become a possession in the future.

The case that 2 Corinthians 5 has individual bodies in view is strengthened by the connection of 2 Cor. 5.1-5 with ch. 4 and with 1 Corinthians 15. In the latter, the clothing and ‘naked seed’ imagery elaborates the ruling metaphor of bodily transformation (‘we will be changed’, ἀλλαγῆσόμεθα, v. 51). In 2 Corinthians 4 and 5, several phrases support the individual against the corporate focus: ‘earthen vessels’ (4.7), ‘our body’ (4.10), ‘our mortal flesh’ (4.11), ‘our outward person’ (4.16), ‘at home in the body’ (5.6), ‘absent from the body’ (5.8) and ‘the things done in the body’ (5.10). After the review of physical hardships in ch. 4, ‘our earthly tent-house’ makes perfect sense as a reference to Paul’s somatic solidarity with the present age.

But does Paul mean that the building from God will be acquired *immediately* upon the dismantling of the tent-house?⁵² One clue might come in the description of the body as coming ‘from heaven’ (ἐξ οὐρανοῦ) in v. 2. Feuillet believes this goes beyond the description of the body as merely ‘in heaven’ (ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς) in v. 1; it indicates that Christians in some sense wait for the body to come at the Parousia.⁵³ This may be overly subtle. Thrall denies that Paul is hoping for the body at the

50. See also 1 Cor. 7.39; 8.8; 14.23; 15.36; 2 Cor. 3.16.

51. See Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 104; Osei-Bonsu, ‘Resurrection Body’, p. 86; A. Oepke, ‘ἐπενδύω’, *TDNT*, II, pp. 320-21; and Harris, *Second Corinthians*, pp. 376-77.

52. Lincoln argues against this view of Davies and Hettlinger (Lincoln, *Paradise Now*, p. 63 n. 38; cf. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, pp. 314-18; Hettlinger, ‘2 Corinthians 5:1-10’, pp. 185-87). See also J. Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), p. 188; U. Borse, ‘Zur Todes- und Jenseitserwartung Pauli nach 2 Kor 5,1-10’, *BibLeb* 13 (1972), pp. 129-38.

53. Feuillet, ‘La demeure’, p. 375 and n. 21. Feuillet’s view is more complex than simply reception of the body at the Parousia. With an eye toward the Two Adams theme of 1 Cor. 15.47-48, he understands the building Christians have in the heavens as the resurrected body of Christ. As ‘first fruits’, however, Christ’s resurrected body already includes the glorified body of all Christians, who will enjoy it immediately at death because they will be in the presence of Christ (Feuillet, ‘La demeure’, pp. 367-78).

Parousia in v. 2, but she is guided by her belief that Paul has changed his eschatology since 1 Corinthians 15.⁵⁴ She also assumes that concern over the interim state would have influenced Paul's language. The same can be said of Harris's suggestion: Paul will acquire a spiritual body at death, which is an 'ideal' possession that will later be 'actualized' by the reception of the resurrection body at the Parousia.⁵⁵ Harris avers that the promise of a resurrection body at the Parousia would be insufficient for Paul, who needed comfort regarding the *moment* of death.⁵⁶ These interpretations tend to neglect the significance of the language of being 'found' in v. 3, which, it will be argued below, indicates that Paul is not seeking consolation about the moment of death at all, but about the prospect of appearing before the judgment seat of Christ at the Parousia (see 2 Cor. 5.10). In the end, there is no reason to suppose that Paul could not simply move from death to the Parousia 'without concentrating on the interval in between'.⁵⁷

The first reference to the body in v. 1 is 'tent-house' (ἡ...οἰκία τοῦ σκηνῶντος), which may reflect a Hebrew designation for the tabernacle.⁵⁸

54. Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, I, pp. 368-70, contra Lincoln, *Paradise Now*, pp. 63-64.

55. Harris, *Second Corinthians*, p. 378. Harris is also influenced by his belief that Paul's hope in 2 Cor. 5.8 'seems to depict a conscious fellowship with Christ during the interval between death and resurrection' (p. 378 n. 53). This will be addressed below.

56. Harris, *Second Corinthians*, p. 380.

57. J. Gillman, 'A Thematic Comparison: 1 Cor 15:50-57 and 2 Cor 5:1-5', *JBL* 107 (1988), pp. 439-54 (442). So Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, p. 136. Hettlinger's comment about the intermediate state deserves more attention than it has received: 'The fact that for nineteen centuries the Parousia has not come and Christians in their millions have died has inevitably made the question of the "intermediate state" of much greater interest for us than it was for the Church of the first century' (Hettlinger, '2 Corinthians 5:1-10', p. 192). See also Hanhart, 'Paul's Hope', p. 452.

58. Hanhart, 'Paul's Hope', p. 454. For the temple/tabernacle connection, see especially Wagner, 'Tabernacle', pp. 145-65; J. Dupont, ΣΥΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΩ: *L'union avec le Christ suivant Saint Paul. Première partie: 'Avec le Christ' dans la vie future* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), p. 146; Feuillet, 'La demeure', pp. 366-67; and Collange, *Enigmes*, p. 195. Although σκηνῶντος only occurs in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 5, it is a synonym for σῶμα in Wis. 9.15. Second Peter 1.13-14 uses σκηνῶμα for the body that will be put off at death. In light of 1 Chron. 9.23 (οἶκος τῆς σκηνῆς) and 6.33 (σκηνὴ οἴκου), Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, pp. 141-42, 146-47, agrees that Paul may intend tabernacle and temple imagery. οἰκοδομή is used for the temple in Jerusalem (see 1 Chron. 26.27; Tob. 14.5; 1 Esd. 2.30; 4.51; 5.64;

This may be related to another Pauline metaphor. Typically, Paul used temple imagery for the corporate church (see 1 Cor. 3.16-17; 2 Cor. 6.16; Eph. 2.21-22), but he applied it to individuals in 1 Cor. 6.12-20 to discourage immorality (v. 15).⁵⁹ Although the image in 2 Cor. 5.1a is the tabernacle rather than the temple, the change in the metaphor is based on the requirements of the immediate context; Paul is contrasting the temporary character of believers' current bodily condition with the permanence of the heavenly dwelling. So Paul could have modified a favorite metaphor to help emphasize the temporal/eternal contrast between believers' current state with what will be attained at the Parousia.⁶⁰

'Dismantle' (καταλύω) in v. 1 also has been used as a clue to the timing of the events in view in 2 Cor. 5.1-5.⁶¹ The image seems inappropriate for those who live until the Parousia. In light of the hardships recounted in 2 Corinthians 4, it is probable that Paul's first thought was of dying before the Parousia.⁶² But even if vv. 2-4 assume being alive at the Parousia, there is no real tension.⁶³ The question of whether or not Paul would live until the Parousia does not seem to be his concern here. As he had said in 1 Cor. 15.51, the same transformation awaits all believers, whether they sleep or not.

The description of the building as 'not made with hands' also points in the direction of the Parousia. The contrast between 'not made with hands' (ἀχειροποίητος) and 'made with hands' (χειροποίητος) is

5.73; 6.6, 22; Mt. 24.1-2; Mk 13.1-2). On the connection between the temple imagery and the saying of Jesus connecting his resurrected body to the temple (Jn 2.18-22), see Dupont, ΣΥΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΩ, p. 150.

59. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p. 474. So also Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, p. 112; C.K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (HNTC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1968), p. 151.

60. Michel, 'οἰκία', p. 133. For different views of the 'tearing down' of the tent-house, see Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, pp. 135-38.

61. The word can apply to either the dismantling of a tent or the pulling down of a house. W. Michaelis, 'σκήνος', *TDNT*, VII, pp. 381-83 (382).

62. Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, I, pp. 362-63; Lincoln, *Paradise Now*, p. 62. Collange, *Enigmes*, pp. 196-97, takes ἐάν with the aorist subjunctive καταλυθῆ as an imprecise 'whenever', referring to all suffering in the present life. Others who see a broader application include Gillman, 'Thematic Comparison', p. 446 and A.C. Perriman, 'Paul and the Parousia: 1 Corinthians 15.50-57 and 2 Corinthians 5.1-5', *NTS* 35 (1989), pp. 512-21 (517-18).

63. Contra Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought*, pp. 3, 223.

often literally between things God has done and human works (e.g. Isa. 2.8; 45.12; 66.2; Acts 7.48-50; 19.26; Col. 2.11). This distinction does not fit 2 Cor. 5.1, however, since neither the heavenly nor the earthly body is a human construction. The key probably lies in Heb. 9.11, where ‘a tent not made with hands’ (σκηνῆς οὐ χειροποιήτου) is further defined as ‘not of this creation’ (οὐ ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως). Things ‘made without hands’ will become realities in the new age, and this will begin at the Parousia.⁶⁴

The imagery of clothing, which becomes dominant in 2 Cor. 5.2-4, was also central in 1 Cor. 15.53-54. As a result, many scholars closely align the two passages.⁶⁵ Moule, however, finds a distinction in the change from ἐνδύεσθαι (‘to put on’) in 1 Cor. 15.53 to the double compound ἐπενδύεσθαι (‘to put on over’) in 2 Cor. 5.2, 4. He claims that 1 Corinthians 15 portrayed the resurrection body in terms of ‘addition’, whereas 2 Corinthians 4–5 conveys the idea of ‘exchange’.⁶⁶ In fact, the evidence is not as clear-cut as Moule suggests. The idea of exchange could also be present in 1 Corinthians 15 (ἀλλάσσω, vv. 51-52; cf. Rom. 1.23), and ‘put on over’ (ἐπενδύεσθαι) in 2 Cor. 5.2, 4 conveys the notion of ‘addition’ more clearly than ‘put on’ (ἐνδύεσθαι). The fact that ‘to put on over’ (double prefix) in v. 2 is paralleled with ‘having put on’ (single prefix) in v. 3 militates against a sharp distinction in meaning.⁶⁷

Verse 3 contains a textual variant with profound significance. Some manuscripts read ‘having put off’ (ἐκδυσόμενοι), while others read ‘having put on’ (ἐνδυσόμενοι). The latter reading has the strongest external evidence.⁶⁸ ‘Having put off’ may have arisen to avoid the apparent tautology, ‘being clothed, we will not be found naked’.⁶⁹ If, however, εἴ

64. Ellis, ‘II Cor. 5.1-10’, p. 217.

65. Ridderbos, *Paul*, p. 501; Ellis, ‘II Cor. 5.1-10’, p. 218; Osei-Bonsu, ‘Resurrection Body’, pp. 86-87; Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), p. 326; Danker, ‘Consolation’, p. 554.

66. Moule, ‘Paul and Dualism’, pp. 107, 118. This theory assumes that Paul’s choices were not simply stylistic. Plummer, *Second Corinthians*, p. 146, noted the alliteration achieved by the double prefix in v. 2: ἐπενδύσασθαι ἐπιποθοῦντες.

67. Oepke, ‘ἐπενδύω’; Osei-Bonsu, ‘Resurrection Body’, pp. 84-85; Lindgård, *Paul’s Line of Thought*, 156.

68. ἐκδυσόμενοι is supported by D*.c ita, fc Marcion Tertullian Speculum; ἐνδυσόμενοι is supported by P46 ⚭ B C D2 Ψ 0243 33 1739 1881 M lat syr cop Clement.

69. B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York:

γε is understood in the positive sense of ‘of course’ or ‘assuming that’,⁷⁰ then ἐνδυσόμενοι is entirely appropriate. If nakedness is a present state of the corruptible body, or the denouement of that state at death, then the meaning is, ‘indeed, once we are clothed with our heavenly dwelling, we will not be found be naked’.

This approach finds further support in the reference to being ‘found’ (εὗρεθησόμεθα) naked in v. 3. Wenham has compared the idea of being found in 2 Cor. 5.3 and 2 Pet. 3.10 to Jesus’ parables where the returning master finds and judges his servants (Mt. 24.46; par. Lk. 12.43; Mk 13.36; cf. Rom. 10.11; 1 Jn 2.28; Rev. 16.15).⁷¹ These verses suggest that the language of being ‘found’ can have connotations of judgment.⁷² The objection that this is not in the context of 2 Cor. 5.3 misses several supporting clues.⁷³ Paul himself speaks of being ‘found’ in a sense that connotes judgment (see 1 Cor. 4.2, εὗρεθῆ; 1 Cor. 15.15, εὕρισκόμεθα; Phil. 3.9, εὗρεθῶ;). The reference to the judgment in v. 10 is certainly part of the current section, and judgment is a natural corollary whenever events surrounding the Parousia are discussed. The ethical background of ‘naked’ itself brings judgment into the context. So Paul is not concerned about the moment of death or a disembodied existence after it; rather, he does not want to stand before Christ in a body that still bears the marks of the judgment on the Adamic race.

‘To put on over’ (ἐπενδύεσθαι, 2 Cor. 5.2, 4) harkens back to ‘to put on’ (ἐνδύεσθαι) in 1 Cor. 15.53, where the Parousia was definitely in

United Bible Societies, 1971), pp. 579-80; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, p. 83; Plummer, *Second Corinthians*, p. 148; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 97; C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 149 n. 2; Barnett, *Second Corinthians*, p. 255 n. 2; Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, I, p. 373 n. 1278; Gillman, ‘Thematic Comparison’, p. 447 n. 24.

70. Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, p. 83, suggests the paraphrase, ‘if (it is) really (true that) by having in fact put on we will not be found naked’. See especially M.E. Thrall, *Greek Particles in the New Testament* (NTTS, 3; Leiden: Brill, 1962), pp. 82-97. See also Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, I, p. 376; Harris, *Second Corinthians*, pp. 368, 385; Danker, ‘Consolation’, p. 554 n. 6; and Lincoln, *Paradise Now*, pp. 66, 212 n. 50.

71. D. Wenham, ‘Being “Found” on the Last Day: New Light on 2 Peter 3.10 and 2 Corinthians 5.3’, *NTS* 33 (1987), pp. 477-79.

72. Similarly, Robinson, *Body*, p. 77 n. 1; Hettlinger, ‘2 Corinthians 5:1-10’, p. 179; Ellis, ‘II Cor. 5.1-10’, p. 221; Lang, *2. Korinther 5,1-10*, p. 188.

73. Contra Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 105.

view. Despite the basic synonymy of these two expressions,⁷⁴ the double preposition of ‘to put on over’ does imply an undergarment that is clothed over. But the thought is simply more explicit in 2 Corinthians 5 than it was in 1 Corinthians 15.⁷⁵ Some see this as evidence of Paul’s desire to live until the Parousia and simply to ‘put on over’ his resurrection body as an ‘overcoat’. The assumption here is that a deceased believer would have nothing to put the resurrection body over.⁷⁶ But ‘to put on over’ is applicable to all Christians, since Paul believed that deceased believers would also be changed or clothed over (see Rom. 8.11; Phil. 3.21; 1 Thess. 4.13-18; 1 Cor. 15.37, 49-54). Regardless of whether Paul envisioned resurrected bodies as already being kept in heaven,⁷⁷ ‘putting on over’ makes perfect sense as a reference to what will happen to all believers at the Parousia.

Perhaps the most neglected (or misinterpreted) clue to the images in 2 Cor. 5.1-5 is the reference to ‘groaning’ (στενάζομεν) in vv. 2 and 4. Following the background of anthropological dualism, groaning has been interpreted as fear of a disembodied state.⁷⁸ This interpretation, however, does not accord well with (1) other Pauline references to groaning, (2) v. 2, which has longing desire rather than fear in view and (3) other statements of Paul’s attitude toward death. The other text where Paul mentions groaning is Rom. 8.22-23. Most commentators acknowledge the similarity between these two passages: both are eschatological, both see present sufferings as preliminary to final bodily salvation

74. So Oepke, ‘ἐπενδύω’; Osei-Bonsu, ‘Resurrection Body’, pp. 84-85, contra Moule, ‘Paul and Dualism’, pp. 107, 118; Lindgård, *Paul’s Line of Thought*, pp. 131, 155-56.

75. Gillman, ‘Thematic Comparison’, p. 452.

76. See Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 104; Lincoln, *Paradise Now*, p. 66; Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, I, p. 372; Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, p. 189.

77. So Héring, *Second Corinthians*, p. 36; B. Witherington III, *Conflict and Community: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 391; Wright, *Resurrection*, pp. 367-68; Lindgård, *Paul’s Line of Thought*, pp. 133-34.

78. Dupont, ΣΥΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΩ, p. 139; Boismard, *Our Victory*, pp. 93-95; Lincoln, *Paradise Now*, pp. 66-67; Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, p. 156; Plummer, *Second Corinthians*, p. 148; P.E. Hughes, *Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), pp. 169-71; Osei-Bonsu, ‘Resurrection Body’, pp. 88-91; Moule, ‘Paul and Dualism’, p. 118. Martin is unclear (*2 Corinthians*, pp. 104, 112).

and both link groaning to the presence of the Spirit.⁷⁹ Thus, far from dreading the future, groaning in Romans 8 means ‘waiting expectantly’ (ἀπεκδεχόμενοι, v. 23; cf. Phil. 1.21-23). Whether described as ‘first fruit’ (ἀπαρχή, Rom. 8.23) or ‘down payment’ (ἀρραβών, 2 Cor. 5.5), the Spirit causes Christians to yearn for more of what they experience in part now.⁸⁰ Fear or dread is an unlikely consequence of the Spirit’s work in either Romans 8 or 2 Corinthians 5.

Nevertheless, there is a difference between v. 2 and v. 4. Verse 2 pairs ‘we groan’ (στενάζομεν) with ‘desiring’ (ἐπιποθοῦντες). As in Romans 8, the expectation is focused on a desirable goal. In 2 Cor. 5.4, however, groaning is qualified with ‘being burdened’ (βαρούμενοι). Groaning, in other words, has both a positive and a negative element: groaning out of desire for the future and in dissatisfaction with the current state.⁸¹ These two aspects are complementary. However, Paul nowhere expresses fear of the future. In 2 Cor. 5.8, Paul seems to actually favor the idea of death, which can also be said of Phil. 1.23.⁸² In order to avoid the contradiction that in v. 4 Paul fears what he desires in v. 8, Thrall identifies the focus of the groaning in v. 4 with the moment of death rather than the disembodied state after it.⁸³ It is much more likely, however, that the present experience of being burdened alludes to the present experience of ‘being in the tent’

79. Collange, *Enigmes*, p. 202; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, pp. 295-96; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 104; Barnett, *Second Corinthians*, p. 265; Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, pp. 573-74 and n. 296. See also 2 Cor. 1.21-22; Eph. 1.13-14.

80. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, p. 574 (see n. 300); Wagner, ‘Tabernacle’, p. 157; Perriman, ‘Paul and the Parousia’, p. 520; Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, p. 165. For more on the Spirit as a ‘down payment’, see K. Erlemann, ‘Der Geist als ἀρραβών (2 Kor 5,5) im Kontext der paulinischen Eschatologie’, *ZNW* 83 (1992), pp. 202-23.

81. Lindgård, *Paul’s Line of Thought*, pp. 152-53; Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, I, p. 371; Collange, *Enigmes*, pp. 201-202; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, p. 84. In a major study, W. Szypula has argued that the groaning language in both 2 Corinthians 5 and Romans 8 should not be interpreted as a cry from suffering, but as a positive longing for the future state. Although he is surely correct to connect this groaning with the down payment of the Spirit, it seems that longing for the future is inextricably linked with dissatisfaction over the present condition, especially in the context of 2 Corinthians 4 and 5. See W. Szypula, *The Holy Spirit in the Eschatological Tension of Christian Life: An Exegetico-Theological Study of 2 Corinthians 5,1-5 and Romans 8,18-27* (Serie Teologia, 147; Rome: Gregorian University Press, 2007).

82. More precisely, 2 Cor. 5.8 and Phil. 1.23 refer to Paul’s preference to be with the Lord that happens some time after death.

83. Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, I, pp. 380-82.

(ὄντες ἐν τῷ σκηνῇ) that Paul had just mentioned.

Verse 4 presents a significant challenge to the interpretation defended here. ‘To put off’ (ἐκδύσασθαι) in v. 4 still seems to look to the moment of death as something Paul does not wish to experience. Elsewhere in the New Testament this verb implies a specific event of becoming unclothed rather than an enduring state of nakedness.⁸⁴ In addition, if ἐφ’ ᾧ in v. 4 is given a causal sense,⁸⁵ Paul would seem to mean that he groans *because* he does not want to experience being unclothed at death. The relation between ‘putting off’ and ‘being in the tent’, however, is important. Paul must have had a reason to reintroduce this building image from v. 2. A double cause of groaning that combines ‘being in the tent’ and ‘we do not want to put off’ makes the best sense of his choice of words.⁸⁶ The result is that ‘being in the tent’ is parallel in meaning to ‘we do not want to put off’. This broadens the reference of ἐκδύσασθαι beyond the moment of death to include the suffering quality of life that Paul had recounted in ch. 4.⁸⁷ Second Corinthians 4.10-11 describes the present life as ‘carrying around death’ (τὴν νέκρωσιν... περιφέροντες) and being ‘given over to death’ (εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα). Paul groans now, unsatisfied with his constant experience of tent-like and deathly life. The statement that he ‘does not want to put off’ in v. 4 could still include a reference to death, but that is merely the final stage in the process of carrying around death and wasting away (4.16) that Paul described in ch. 4.⁸⁸

Even if v. 4 does allude to death, the reference to putting off must not be taken in isolation from the following reference to putting on. Paul is not simply saying that he does not want to die; he is clarifying that his

84. Mt. 27.28, 31; Mk 15.20; Lk. 10.30. In each of these cases, however, there is a stated direct object. So also in the LXX: Gen. 37.23; 1 Chron. 10.9; Isa. 32.11; Hos. 2.5.

85. This disputed phrase occurs in the New Testament only here and in Rom. 5.12; Phil. 3.12; 4.10. See Furnish, *II Corinthians*, pp. 269-70; Thrall, *Greek Particles*, 93-94.

86. Barnett, *Second Corinthians*, pp. 263-64, notes that the force of the introductory καὶ γάρ (‘for truly’) in v. 4 is to intensify Paul’s argument. His meaning is, ‘for truly, because we are in this tent, we groan under a burden’.

87. Ridderbos, *Paul*, p. 503. This is more thoroughly defended by Lindgård, *Paul’s Line of Thought*, pp. 152, 175-78.

88. Lindgård, *Paul’s Line of Thought*, p. 175 n. 235, addresses the aorist tense of ‘to put off’, which he recognizes as an obstacle to taking it as a reference to the ongoing process of dying.

groaning leads him to look forward, not to death, but to being clothed.⁸⁹ If so, then v. 4 combines both the positive and negative aspects of groaning. In addition, the combination of dwelling and clothing imagery suggests that ‘naked’ functions within the clothing metaphor in the same way that ‘tent’ functions within the building metaphor: to contrast the present state with what is received at the Parousia.

The end of v. 4 brings together the dwelling and clothing metaphors with a third image: ‘the mortal may be swallowed up by life’ (καταποθῆ τὸ θνητὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς). This is a clear allusion to 1 Cor. 15.54, which certainly has the Parousia in view.⁹⁰ The ‘swallowing up’ is the direct antecedent to ‘this very thing’ (αὐτὸ τοῦτο) in v. 5, but the goal of God’s preparation could include all of the preceding images of Christian hope. The Spirit that is connected to groaning and longing for resurrection in Rom. 8.23 is also the agent of God in that resurrection (Rom. 8.11).⁹¹ God’s preparation, which includes the Spirit, recalls 4.17, where current affliction prepares the believer for eternal glory. The goal of both preparations is the same: the eternal weight of glory to be experienced at the Parousia when the mortal is swallowed up by life.

Although 2 Cor. 5.6-10 falls outside the focus of this study, a few comments about these verses are appropriate because they are part of Paul’s current argument, and because so much has been said about Paul’s supposed desire to die in v. 8. For example, Lindgård’s belief that v. 8 refers to being with the Lord immediately after death is a major factor in his refusal to interpret vv. 2-4 in terms of fear of death or a disembodied

89. Thrall, *Greek Particles*, 93-94, takes ἐφ’ ᾧ in the classical sense of ‘on condition that’ and understands Paul’s point to be against a gnostic ideal of wanting to be unclothed. In the interpretation defended here, however, Paul was guarding against the idea that the suffering of tent-like existence would indicate a desire to die and be done with it.

90. Contra Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 297. For a fuller discussion of ‘what is mortal’ (τὸ θνητόν), which may refer abstractly to death or more concretely to the mortal body, see Harris, *Second Corinthians*, pp. 389-90; J. Lambrecht, ‘La vie engloutit ce qui est mortel. Commentaire de 2 Corinthiens 5,4c’, in R. Bieringer and J. Lambrecht (eds.), *Studies on 2 Corinthians* (BETL, 112; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), pp. 351-61 (353-54); Dupont, ΣΥΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΩ, p. 138.

91. So Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), pp. 492-93 and M. Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament Church and Today* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, rev. edn, 1996), p. 122 n. 20; contra Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, pp. 808-11.

state.⁹² But, although v. 8 does allude to death, the assumption that Paul is thinking of what happens immediately after death is based on a refusal to believe that he could simply ignore the so-called intermediate state. In response, the following points deserve notice. First, v. 8 is immediately preceded by the phrase ‘for we walk by faith, not by sight’, which recalls the argument in 4.16-18. The latter contrasts the seen, present sufferings and the unseen glory that will be seen at the Parousia. It is perfectly logical in this context to interpret Paul’s statements in 5.6-8 in terms of these two periods—present suffering, and glory at the Parousia. The latter is the time of seeing and the time Paul has in mind for coming home to the Lord. Secondly, this interpretation suggests a solution to one of the oddities of v. 9: the idea that Paul will still be trying to please the Lord during the intermediate state.⁹³ Rather, Paul simply means that he wants to please Christ now (away from home) and when he stands before Christ at the judgment (being at home). This is supported by v. 10 in two ways. First, ‘for’ in v. 10 introduces impending judgment as the reason he wants to please the Lord. Secondly, v. 10 specifies that believers will be judged for the deeds committed while in the body, not for the deeds committed in the intermediate state. If this interpretation is correct, there is no explicit reference to or description of the intermediate state in all of 2 Cor. 5.1-10.

γυμνός, *Eschatology and Anthropology*

The proposal that nakedness refers to a condition of the corruptible body is supported by the relationship between 2 Cor. 5.1-5 and 1 Corinthians 15, and by the analysis of 2 Corinthians 4–5. In 1 Corinthians 15, the focus of Christian hope is firmly on the Parousia. In 1 Cor. 15.37, nakedness is a condition *of* the body, not separation *from* it. In 2 Corinthians 4–5, Paul repeatedly stresses the antithesis between the present and future condition of believers. All of the images of 2 Cor. 5.1-5 can be related to either of these two conditions: (1) the bodily condition experienced in the present and culminating in death (‘house-tent’, ‘groaning’, ‘naked’, ‘unclothed’), or (2) the reception of the resurrection body at the Parousia (‘building

92. Lindgård, *Paul’s Line of Thought*, pp. 3, 89, 131, 155, 223-24.

93. Paul’s statement about wanting to please the Lord away from the body is regularly dismissed, as in the case of Lambrecht (*Second Corinthians*, p. 86), who calls it ‘less careful writing on the part of Paul or a free rhetorical language that should not be pressed’.

from God', 'heavenly dwelling', 'putting on', 'mortal swallowed up by life'). Paul's various references to groaning, his link between groaning and the Spirit and his stated attitude toward death in other texts, make it unlikely that groaning in 2 Corinthians 5 or Romans 8 refers to fear of death or of a disembodied intermediate state.

This interpretation of 2 Cor. 5.1-5 fits the general contours of Paul's eschatology, including the distinction between this age and the age to come, the idea of corporate solidarity with the Adamic race and the notion that believers still experience the present age in their somatic existence. Romans 5.12-21 and 1 Cor. 15.20-24 both connect death and life with Adam and Christ, respectively. Romans 8.18-25 connects groaning to the revelation of the 'sons of God' (v. 19), while vv. 19-23 refers to 'creation' (κτίσις) five times in the sense of creation in the present age (v. 18; 'the present time'; τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ). Although 2 Corinthians lacks any explicit reference to Adam, a reference to 'this age' (τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου) occurs in 2 Cor. 4.4.

A host of Pauline images characterize the self in its continued solidarity with the old age: 'the body of sin' (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, Rom. 6.6); 'in your mortal body' (τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι, Rom. 6.12); 'this body of death' (τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου, Rom. 7.24); 'our body of humility' (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν, Phil. 3.21); 'sown in dishonor' and 'weakness' (σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίας...ἀσθενείας, 1 Cor. 15.43); and sown 'soulish' (ψυχικόν, 1 Cor. 15.44). Many of these texts specifically contrast the present somatic life of believers with their future hope.

All of this indicates that 'naked' reflects a connection between eschatology and anthropology in Paul's thought. Because of continued solidarity with the present evil age (Gal. 1.4), believers still await the redemption of their bodies (Rom. 8.23). This is most clearly seen in 1 Cor. 15.49-50, which strings together several images to demonstrate the necessity of the resurrection. Believers still 'wear the image of the man of dust' (ἐφορέσομεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, v. 49); 'flesh and blood' (σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα, v. 50) and 'what is perishable' (ἡ φθορά, v. 50) cannot inherit the kingdom of God. A decisive change is needed, and this will occur at the Parousia (vv. 51-54).

Since Christians have not yet been clothed, they are naked now and on their way to a definitive state of nakedness at death. This nakedness refers to the corruptible state of the body in its continued solidarity with Adam. Although this interpretation leans upon the ethical background of 'naked', it is primarily informed by an examination of the passages in which the

word occurs and by the overall theology of Paul. Corruptibility is the result of God's judgment upon the Adamic race. At the Parousia, those who stand before Christ in solidarity with that race will be condemned. Like the one in Jesus' parable without a wedding garment (Mt. 22.2-14), they will be excluded from the kingdom. Paul, on the other hand, had the preparation of the Spirit, who was a promise that he and all believers will be clothed prior to the judgment. This was the source of Paul's hope, and it was the reason he had no fear.