

## AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: II Corinthians 5

Scripture of Lesson: II Corinthians 5: 1-21

In this chapter the apostle Paul write of assurance of resurrection in the heavenly home of eternal realm, the certainty of the judgment of Christ to come, regeneration of souls and the call to reconciliation with God. This is a chapter of the gospel message of Christ.

### 1. Assurance of resurrection: 1-8

Paul points to the Corinthian Christians that the “groaning” in their present body is not the end of their endeavors. “*Stenazomen*” refers to the “groan” we do while wearing this human body of sin and corruption while yearning to be housed in a heavenly clothing [v 5:2]. Paul refers to this body as a temporary “tabernacle,” indicating its temporary nature through a typology of the tents that the people of Israel lived during their 40-year journey through the wilderness of Arabia before crossing Jordan into the Promised Land. We groan while in this body because our sinful body is loaded with heavy burdens [v 5:4]. What are these burdens? We are burdened every day because of (1) the burden of sustaining the physical life of the body; (2) fighting and controlling the desires of the body to satisfy its desires of sin and decadence; (3) and governing the functions of the body to make it useful for the righteous purpose of serving and honoring God.

We are reminded that Christ promised eternal habitations for us in the heavenly realm for God’s people: “*In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*” [John 14:2]

Adam and Eve were found to be naked after they sinned. They attempted to cover their nakedness with some leaves. God provided animal skin covers for them so they were no longer naked before God [Genesis 3:21]. The animal deaths to make such covers symbolize the sacrifice of Christ for humanity. Paul refers to the “robe of righteousness” that will make Christians “not be naked” before God [v 5:3]. Saved souls, when they stand before Christ in eternity, shall not be found naked but will be wearing the robe of righteousness that covers their sins and shame.

*So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. [Rev 7:14]*

God gave Holy Spirit to do the necessary work of sanctification in us to make this possible. “*He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*” [v 5:5].

KJV says “He has given us the earnest of the Spirit.” The definition of “earnest money” when we enter a contract is that a partial sum, deposited as the guarantee money of contract, ensures us that the full payment be made at a later date as specified in the contract. Likewise, God has given us His Spirit as the earnest of His part of the covenant [contract] with His people. The benefits of this earnest, that is, Holy Spirit, in the form of His grace, teachings, and comforts assure us that what has been promised to us through the gospel will be fulfilled in the fullest measure when “the Day comes.”

True Christians are pilgrims and strangers who sojourn in this world, wearing the mortal body but yearning to put on the heavenly robe of righteousness someday [v. 5:7]. We walk by faith and not by sight [v 5:7]. Faith is necessary for us while here on the earth, when we reach the heavenly city, we will no longer need faith. Then, we will walk by sight that we see with the heavenly sight granted to all of us to see all things and beings of God’s heavenly realm. Knowing this future blessed state through faith, we desire to be rather out of this mortal body and be with Christ [v. 5:8].

### 2. Judgement of Christ: 9-11

True ministers of Christ labor to be accepted by God--to please Him who has chosen them [v 5:9]. God has granted His salvation out of His grace and mercy. It is God's unconditional gift to all who believe in Christ in repentance. But God's "favor" is for those who seek to please Him and to honor Him with all their heart, soul and body so that they might receive His "well done." Paul did not want to do the minimal work for Christ, the One whom he used to persecute. Having been reborn as one of His apostles, Paul now wants to do all things he can to be accepted by Him, to find favor from Him and to attain His praise. This should be the goal of all true Christians.

We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ [v 5:10]. God's judgment is a certainty because God is a just God. Christ will sit on the throne in heaven and there will be a cosmos-wide judgment of all souls, both living and the dead, based on the Book of Life [Revelation 20: 11-15]. *"Everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it is good or bad.* [v. 5:10]" Paul then speaks of "terror of the Lord [v. 5:11]." God is a terrible God who will surely pay back for all evil things done by all. And Paul encourages that our true self be made evident "before God and in our consciences" while we are on the earth, so that we may avoid the "terror of the Lord" befalling on us [v. 5:11].

### **3. Regeneration of heart: 12-17**

Paul confesses that his great zeal and fervor for the gospel of Christ and His ministry are all for the glory of God although he might appear as a mad man [v. 5:13]. Paul was accused as being a mad man by King Agrippa [Acts 26:24]. But the love of Christ constrains him [v. 5:14], which should be the true motive of all Christian ministers, because Christ lives in us. We were all dead if Christ had not died for us. He made us alive to God through His death [v. 5:15]. His love commands us to act upon His call to ministry and His commandment to give the same love to the perishing souls.

By believing in Jesus Christ we are made new creatures [v. 5:17]. We are no longer carnal, fleshly minded, but been enabled by divine grace not to mind the things of this world but to live above it as Christ did. Old things are no longer in us and controlling our lives. We now have new thoughts, new views of life and the world, new holy habits, new rules of love and mercy, new goals of live to live for Christ and new fellowship with God's holy people.

### **4. Reconciliation with God: 18-21**

Reconciliation supposes a conflict, a quarrel between two parties. Human sin has caused a breach between God and humanity. It has broken friendship between God and men. God is justly offended with the sinners. However, the offended Majesty is willing to be reconciled with the repentant sinner because His Son has died and paid the ransom price on the cross on behalf of the sinner. Jesus was sinless. Yet He was made a sin offering for our sins so that we might be made right with God [v. 5:21]. God is willing to establish a new treaty, a new covenant of grace, and freely forgive us of all our sins, so that we can go forth to the judgment seat wearing the robe of righteousness.

God has given this ministry of reconciliation to His servants whereas Jesus Christ is our high priest. In any contract making there is an agent who acts as a go-between the parties of the contract. Those of carry the gospel message are assigned the "ministry of reconciliation," wherein he/she proclaims God's message of reconciliation to the people by clarifying the terms of mercy and reconciliation. The message they carry to this perishing world is "Be reconciled to God" [5:20].

*Discussion topic:*

*1. Have you been reconciled with God? Do you have assurance of this reconciliation in you? If so, what gives you this assurance? If not, what will you do about it?*