

"To Be Absent from the Body Is to Be Present with the Lord"?

DID THE APOSTLE PAUL DECLARE THAT TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY, IN DEATH, IS TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD?

By George Lujack

Many misunderstand Paul's statements to mean that Paul desired to be dead, that Paul would 'rather' be dead than living in the present, so that he could be present with the Lord. This is not the case at all, for the dead cannot serve or please God, the dead know nothing, and God does not rule over the dead.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-9:

So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased *rather* TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY AND TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD. Therefore we make it our aim, WHETHER PRESENT OR ABSENT, to be well pleasing to Him.

PSALM 115:17:

The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence.

ECCLESIASTES 9:5:

The dead know nothing...

All who have ever died cannot please God in death and are awaiting the resurrection in a state of death and unconsciousness.

What then did Paul mean when he declared, "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord?"

He was speaking of being absent from the body, *in prayer and meditation*.

There are two ways to interpret and understand 2 Corinthians 5:6-9:

2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-9:

So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body [IN DEATH] and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent [DEAD], to be well pleasing to Him.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-9:

So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body [IN PRAYER AND MEDITATION] and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent [IN PRAYER AND MEDITATION], to be well pleasing to Him.

Paul meditated in prayer through which he was in communion with Yeshua (Jesus), who directed Paul to write his epistles. Paul's letters were the word of God, and he received instruction from Yeshua (Jesus) of what to write, when he was ABSENT FROM THE BODY IN PRAYER AND MEDITATION. We can clearly see this from other related similar verses.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:3:

For I indeed, AS ABSENT IN BODY BUT PRESENT IN SPIRIT, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:1:

I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Messiah (Christ) - who IN PRESENCE am lowly among you, but BEING ABSENT am bold toward you.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:11:

Let such a person consider this, that WHAT WE ARE BY LETTERS WHEN WE ARE ABSENT, such we will also be in deed WHEN WE ARE PRESENT.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:2:

I have told you before, and foretell as IF I WERE PRESENT the second time, AND NOW BEING ABSENT I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:10:

Therefore I write these things BEING ABSENT, LEST BEING PRESENT I should use sharpness, according to the authority that the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

PHILIPPIANS 1:27:

Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Messiah, so that whether I come and see you OR I AM ABSENT, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel...

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13:

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, NOT AS IN MY PRESENCE ONLY, BUT NOW MUCH MORE IN MY ABSENCE, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

COLOSSIANS 2:5:

FOR THOUGH I AM ABSENT IN THE FLESH, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Messiah.

It is clear through a comprehensive reading of Scripture, upon reading other verse examples, that when Paul spoke of being absent from the body and present with the Lord, he was speaking of being absent from the body in spiritual meditation and prayer, not absent from the body in death. Believers are likewise instructed to meditate, pray, and study God's word.

PSALM 19:14:

Let the words of my mouth and the MEDITATION of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and Redeemer.

PSALM 119:15-16:

I will MEDITATE on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. I will delight in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

PSALM 119:27,48,78:

I shall MEDITATE on Your wonderful works. I will MEDITATE on Your statutes. I will MEDITATE on Your precepts. That I may MEDITATE on Your word.