

Heaven - our living Hope!

Part 3

By Pastor Grant Williams

The New Testament church, after Jesus ascended into heaven thought they were going through the tribulation, they thought they had missed the rapture as a result of the religious leaders lying to them about Jesus.

This was the same Jesus who they had been reading about and were waiting for as it was prophesied. But, when prophecy was being fulfilled as was foretold, the very people in charge of sounding the alarm to prophecy, charge with rightly identifying and proclaiming the truth about sin, judgment, righteousness and the “things” to come... the Spiritual leaders (modern day pastors, preachers and teachers) twisted the truth about Jesus (the Word), deceived many and even denied it was Him.

John 1:1 AMPC

1 In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself.

Satan knows his fate and he wants to take as many people to hell as he can and he uses pastors, preachers and teachers to do his work... how? By them adding, deleting or twisting God's Word.

Malachi 3:6 KJV

6 For I am the Lord, I change not;

Hebrews 13:8 KJV

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

Matthew 5:18 AMPC

*18 For truly I tell you, until the sky and earth pass away and perish, **not one smallest letter nor one little hook** [identifying certain Hebrew letters] **will pass from the Law until all things [it foreshadows] are accomplished.***

So, no “thing” has changed. Pastors, preachers and teachers are to tell the truth, the whole truth and no “thing” but the truth.

John 14:6 AMPC

6 Jesus said to him, I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me.

The Pastor, preacher and teacher is to sound the alarm about the truth...

Ezekiel 33:1-9 AMPC

1 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying,

*2 Son of man, speak to your people [the Israelite captives in Babylon] and say to them, When I bring the sword upon a land and the people of the land take a man from among them and **make him their watchman,***

*3 **If when he sees the sword coming upon the land, he blows the trumpet and warns the people,***

*4 Then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, **his blood shall be upon his own head.***

5 He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning shall save his life.

*6 **But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned,** and the sword comes and takes any one of them, he is taken away in and for his perversity and iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. **7 So you, son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at My mouth and give them warning from Me.***

8 When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his perversity and iniquity, but his blood will I require at your hand.

*9 **But if you warn the wicked to turn from his evil way** and he does not turn from his evil way, he shall die in his iniquity, **but you will have saved your life.***

But many pastors won't and don't and it has always been that way, there is no "thing" new under the sun.

Jeremiah 23:20-22 AMPC

20 The anger of the Lord shall not turn back until He has executed and accomplished the thoughts and intents of His mind and heart. **In the latter days** you shall consider and understand it perfectly.

21 I did not send these [false] prophets, yet they ran; **I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied.**

22 **But if they had stood in My council, then they would have caused My people to hear My words, then they would have turned them [My people] from their evil way and from the evil of their doings.**

Matthew 24:5 AMPC

5 For **many** will come in (on the strength of) My name [[a]appropriating the name which belongs to Me], saying, I am the Christ (the Messiah), and they will lead **many** astray.

Matthew 24:11 AMPC

11 And **many** false prophets will rise up and deceive and lead **many** into error.

As a result of the deception from the pulpit (the church or spiritual leaders), the people who wanted to know the truth were lulled to sleep about what was happening or the signs of Jesus arrival and now His return. Many were angry that they had been lied to about the truth in God's Word by the twisting of or adding and deleting of scripture. The pastor, preacher and teachers job is to rightly divide the Word. This is a letter from Paul to Timothy on how to train pastors and lead by example.

2 Timothy 2:15 AMPC

15 **Study and be eager** and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, **correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.**

Timothy was taught the Word of God by his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5), and he was disciplined by Paul and served with Paul in ministry for years. Timothy knew the Word of God and was well-equipped. Even still, Paul tells Timothy that he needed to be diligent in the study of the Word and in rightly dividing the Word of truth. Without that continuing diligence in the Word, Timothy would not be able to stand firm, and he would not be able to maintain sound teaching. Paul warned Timothy to pay attention to himself and to his teaching (1 Timothy 4:16). Because all Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness, it is exactly what we need in order to be equipped for every good work God intends for us (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Paul encourages Timothy to be diligent to present himself as a workman approved by God who would not need to be ashamed because he was rightly dividing or accurately handling the Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). First, Paul’s instruction makes it clear that the study of the Bible is work. It takes effort. It takes diligence. We need to be committed to doing that work if we desire to be equipped for what God intends us to do in life. Second, Paul helps us to focus on the idea that this work in the Word is not about the approval of other people. Rather, it is God who is assessing how we handle His Word, and so we are studying His Word for Him. Also, we understand that, if we are diligent, we will not need to be ashamed because we will have been faithful with the remarkable stewardship of His Word.

Paul’s final comment in 2 Timothy 2:15 is helpful because it tells us what success looks like in the study of the Word: to be “rightly dividing” the Word of truth (NKJV). The Greek word translated as “rightly dividing” is *orthotomounta*—*ortho* means “right or proper,” and *tomounta* means “to cut.” Literally, success in handling the Word is to cut it properly or correctly. This is farming imagery, as a farmer who is plowing a field would seek to cut straight furrows in order to plant rows of seed. When plowing, a farmer would look at a point on the other side of the field and focus on that point to ensure the line cut in the dirt was straight. This is what the good student of the Word is doing, as well: remaining focused on the goal or outcome and being diligent to handle the Word of God properly. To rightly divide the Word of truth is to “cut it straight.”

Ultimately, in studying the Word, we are trying to understand what the Author has said and not allow our own opinions or views to cloud the meaning of what He has written. When we are diligent to “cut straight”—to rightly divide the Word of truth—we can understand what He has communicated in His Word and be well-equipped for what He would have us to do and how He would have us to think.

The pastor, preacher, teachers job is to proclaim the the truth regardless if it goes against culture...**you love people so much you are willing not to be liked to show how much you love them by where they spending eternity.**

2 Timothy 4:1-8 AMPC

*1 I charge [you] in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, **Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by (in the light of) His coming and His kingdom:***

*2 Herald and preach the Word! **Keep your sense of urgency** [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be **favorable or unfavorable.** [Whether it is **convenient or inconvenient,** whether it is **welcome or unwelcome,** **you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong.**] And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.*

*3 For the time is coming when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], **they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold,***

*4 And **will turn aside from hearing the truth** and wander off into myths and man-made fictions.*

*5 As for you, **be calm and cool and steady, accept and suffer unflinchingly every hardship,** do the work of an evangelist, fully perform all the duties of your ministry.*

*6 For I am already about to be sacrificed [my life is about to be poured out as a drink offering]; **the time of my [spirit's] release [from the body] is at hand and I will soon go free.***

*7 **I have fought the good (worthy, honorable, and noble) fight, I have finished the race, I have kept (firmly held) the faith.***

*8 [As to what remains] henceforth there is laid up for me the [victor's] crown of righteousness [for being right with God and doing right], which the Lord, the righteous Judge, **will award to me** and recompense me on that [great] day—and not to me only, **but also to all those** who have loved and yearned for and welcomed His appearing (His return).*

The followers of Christ today (Word and deed - habitually obedient to His Word), just like at the time of Peter and Paul needed to be reminded on what we must do to be ready for judgment or the rapture. The pastor is commanded to preach the signs that Jesus is coming to bring us Hope in the midst of the chaos that is all around.

1 Peter 1:3-25 AMPC

3 Praised (honored, blessed) be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah)! By His boundless mercy **we have been born again to an ever-living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

4 **[Born anew] into an inheritance** which is beyond the reach of change and decay [imperishable], unsullied and unfading, **reserved in heaven for you,**

Jesus is our Living Hope and our inheritance is reserved in Heaven!

5 Who are being guarded (garrisoned) by God's power through [your] faith **[till you fully inherit that [c]final] salvation that is ready to be revealed [for you] in the last time.**

6 [You should] be exceedingly glad on this account, **though now for a little while you may be distressed by trials and suffer temptations,**

7 **So that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested,** [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold **which is tested and purified by fire.** [This proving of your faith is intended] to redound to [your] praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) is revealed.

8 Without having seen Him, you love Him; though you do not [even] now see Him, you believe in Him and exult and thrill with inexpressible and glorious (triumphant, heavenly) joy.

9 [At the same time] you receive the result (outcome, consummation) of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 The prophets, who prophesied of the grace (divine blessing) which was intended for you, searched and inquired earnestly about this salvation.

11 They sought [to find out] to whom or when this was to come which the Spirit of Christ working within them was indicating when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow [them].

12 It was then disclosed to them that the services they were rendering were not meant for themselves and their period of time, but for you. [It is these very] things which have now already been made known plainly to you by those who preached the good news (the Gospel) to you by the [same] Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Into these things [the very] angels long to look!

13 So brace up your minds; be sober (circumspect, morally alert); set your hope wholly and unchangeably on the grace (divine favor) that is coming to you when Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is revealed.

14 [Live] as children of obedience [to God]; do not conform yourselves to the evil desires [that governed you] in your former ignorance [when you did not know the requirements of the Gospel].

15 But as the One Who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all your conduct and manner of living.

16 For it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy.

17 And if you call upon Him as [your] Father Who judges each one impartially according to what he does, [then] you should conduct yourselves with true reverence throughout the time of your temporary residence [on the earth, whether long or short].

18 You must know (recognize) that you were redeemed (ransomed) from the useless (fruitless) way of living inherited by tradition from [your] forefathers, not with corruptible things [such as] silver and gold,

19 But [you were purchased] with the precious blood of Christ (the Messiah), like that of a [sacrificial] lamb without blemish or spot.

20 It is true that He was chosen and foreordained (destined and foreknown for it) before the foundation of the world, **but He was brought out to public view (made manifest) in these last days (at the end of the times) for the sake of you.**

21 Through Him you believe in (adhere to, rely on) God, Who raised Him up from the dead and gave Him honor and glory, **so that your faith and hope are [centered and rest] in God.**

22 **Since by your obedience** to the Truth through the [Holy] Spirit you have purified your hearts for the sincere affection of the brethren, [see that you] love one another fervently from a pure heart.

23 You have been regenerated (born again), not from a mortal [d]origin ([e]seed, sperm), but from one that is immortal by the ever living and lasting Word of God.

24 For all flesh (mankind) is like grass, and all its glory (honor) like [the] flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower drops off,

25 But the Word of the Lord ([f]divine instruction, the Gospel) endures forever. And **this Word is the good news which was preached to you.**

We finished part 2 with God's Word telling us that these old bodies, these earthen vessels will one day be gone, back to the dust. Our spirit and soul will live forever and we are to take control of our thoughts, our words, feelings and emotions so we can stop the habitual sin that we did in our former ignorance.

The wisest person who ever lived - (God said so) told us many things.

1 Kings 4:29-34 AMPC

29 And God gave Solomon exceptionally much wisdom and understanding, and breadth of mind like the sand of the seashore.

30 Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the people of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt.

31 For he was wiser [a]than all other men—than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol. His fame was in all the nations round about.

32 He also originated 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.

33 He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall; he spoke also of beasts, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish.

34 Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

King Solomon said when we die, the spirit goes back to God who gave it and it will be judged...

Ecclesiastes 12:7 AMPC

7 Then shall the dust [out of which God made man's body] return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God Who gave it.

So death is a separation of the soul and spirit from the body and it doesn't matter how young in regards to human age or how old that soul and spirit are on this earth. It doesn't matter if a woman miscarried at 7 days, 6 weeks, 5 months...the soul and spirit are eternal life. It's just like when we die, our body goes back to the dust and this is what God told Adam in the beginning of time as we know it.

Genesis 3:19 AMPC

*19 In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; **for dust you are and to dust you shall return.***

So, when we die the spirit and soul comes out of the body and the body itself goes back to the dust of the earth. It doesn't matter how old or how young, even in the womb, the body goes back to dust or the ground.

So what happens the moment we die?

Notes: _____

The Apostle Paul wrote about a place called Paradise... remember our body is prepared for our soul and spirit. The soul and spirit are eternal and we have a choice by how we choose to live, by who is Lord of our life which is shown by our habitual obedience - Heaven or Hell.

2 Corinthians 12:1-4 AMPC

1 True, there is nothing to be gained by it, but [as I am obliged] to boast, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.

*2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—**was caught up to the third heaven.***

3 And I know that this man—whether in the body or away from the body I do not know, God knows—

*4 **Was caught up into paradise,** and he heard utterances beyond the power of man to put into words, which man is not permitted to utter.*

2 Corinthians 12:1-4 KJV

1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

*2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one **caught up to the third heaven.***

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

*4 How that he was **caught up into paradise,** and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

Paul is speaking of himself in the third person when he says "I know a man" and reveals an amazing incident that took place 14 years prior when he was "caught up to the third heaven" (vs 2). Paul writes that he saw Paradise and heard inexpressible/unspeakable words and saw things beyond the power of man to put into words and it is not allowed or lawful for him to share what he heard or saw. (vs 4)

Note: many scholars believe this incident occurred at the time Paul was stoned in Lystra and left for dead (Acts 14:8–20). Paul is uncertain if he experienced a vision, or if he died in the spirit, left his body, later, returning to his body, or he was resurrected from the dead after the Saints prayed in Acts 14.

Paul continued to write...

2 Corinthians 12:5-7 AMPC

5 Of this same [man's experiences] I will boast, but of myself (personally) I will not boast, except as regards my infirmities (my weaknesses).

*6 Should I desire to boast, I shall not be a witless braggart, for I shall be speaking the truth. **But I abstain [from it] so that no one may form a higher estimate of me than [is justified by] what he sees in me or hears from me.***

*7 **And to keep me from being puffed up** and too much elated by the exceeding greatness (preeminence) of these revelations, there was given me a thorn (a splinter) in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to rack and buffet and harass me, to keep me from being excessively exalted.*

Paul, by speaking of himself in the third person is trying to keep from boasting when telling the church what happened to him in Lystra.

Boast defined: [Gr. to inflate; Latin fastus.]

1. To brag, or vaunt one's self; to make an ostentatious display, in speech, of one's own worth, property, or actions.
2. To glory; to speak with laudable pride and ostentation of meritorious persons or things.
3. To exalt one's self.

-Websters Dictionary 1828

Acts 14:19 AMPC

19 But some Jews arrived there from Antioch and Iconium; and having persuaded the people and won them over, they stoned Paul and [afterward] dragged him out of the town, thinking that he was dead.

Acts 14 AMPC

1 Now at Iconium [also Paul and Barnabas] went into the Jewish synagogue together and spoke with such power that a great number both of Jews and of Greeks believed (became Christians);

2 But the unbelieving Jews [who rejected their message] aroused the Gentiles and embittered their minds against the brethren.

3 So [Paul and Barnabas] stayed on there for a long time, speaking freely and fearlessly and boldly in the Lord, Who continued to bear testimony to the Word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be performed by their hands.

4 But the residents of the town were divided, some siding with the Jews and some with the apostles.

5 When there was an attempt both on the part of the Gentiles and the Jews together with their rulers, to insult and abuse and molest [Paul and Barnabas] and to stone them,

6 They, aware of the situation, made their escape to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and the neighboring districts;

7 And there they continued to preach the glad tidings (Gospel).

8 Now at Lystra a man sat who found it impossible to use his feet, for he was a cripple from birth and had never walked.

9 He was listening to Paul as he talked, and [Paul] gazing intently at him and observing that he had faith to be healed,

10 Shouted at him, saying, Stand erect on your feet! And he leaped up and walked.

11 And the crowds, when they saw what Paul had done, lifted up their voices, shouting in the Lycaonian language, The gods have come down to us in human form!

12 They called Barnabas Zeus, and they called Paul, because he led in the discourse, Hermes [god of speech].

13 And the priest of Zeus, whose [temple] was at the entrance of the town, brought bulls and garlands to the [city's] gates and wanted to join the people in offering sacrifice.

14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothing and dashed out among the crowd, shouting,

15 Men, why are you doing this? We also are [only] human beings, of nature like your own, and we bring you the good news (Gospel) that you should turn away from these foolish and vain things to the living God, Who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything that they contain. 16 In generations past He permitted all the nations to walk in their own ways;

17 Yet He did not neglect to leave some witness of Himself, for He did you good and [showed you] kindness and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with nourishment and happiness.

18 Even in [the light of] these words they with difficulty prevented the people from offering sacrifice to them.

19 But some Jews arrived there from Antioch and Iconium; and having persuaded the people and won them over, they stoned Paul and [[a]afterward] dragged him out of the town, thinking that he was dead.

20 But the disciples formed a circle about him, and he got up and went back into the town; and on the morrow he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 When they had preached the good news (Gospel) to that town and made disciples of many of the people, they went back to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch,

22 Establishing and strengthening the souls and the hearts of the disciples, urging and warning and encouraging them to stand firm in the faith, and [telling them] that it is through many hardships and tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had appointed and ordained elders for them in each church with prayer and fasting, they committed them to the Lord in Whom they had come to believe [being full of joyful trust that He is the Christ, the Messiah].

24 Then they went through Pisidia and arrived at Pamphylia.

25 And when they had spoken the Word in Perga [the doctrine concerning the attainment through Christ of salvation in the kingdom of God], they went down to Attalia;

26 And from there they sailed back to Antioch, where they had [first] been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had [now] completed.

27 Arriving there, they gathered the church together and declared all that God had accomplished with them and how He had opened to the Gentiles a door of faith [in Jesus as the Messiah, through Whom we obtain salvation in the kingdom of God].

28 And there they stayed no little time with the disciples.

John 15:17-19 AMPC

17 This is what I command you: that you love one another.

18 If the world hates you, know that it hated Me before it hated you.

19 **If you belonged to the world, the world would treat you with affection and would love you as its own.** But because you are not of the world [no longer one with it], but I have chosen (selected) you out of the world, the world hates (detests) you.

John 13:12-19 AMPC

12 So when He had finished washing their feet and had put on His garments and had sat down again, He said to them, Do you understand what I have done to you?

13 You call Me the Teacher (Master) and the Lord, and you are right in doing so, for that is what I am.

14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher (Master), have washed your feet, you ought [it is your duty, you are under obligation, you owe it] to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you this as an example, so that you should do [in your turn] what I have done to you.

16 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, **A servant is not greater than his master, and no one who is sent is superior to the one who sent him.**

17 **If you know these things, blessed and happy and to be envied are you if you practice them [if you act accordingly and really do them].**

18 I am not speaking of and I do not mean all of you. I know whom I have chosen; **but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled,** He who eats My bread with Me has raised up his heel against Me.

19 **I tell you this now before it occurs, so that when it does take place you may be persuaded and believe that I am He [Who I say I am—the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah].**

Matthew 28:18-20 AMPC

18 Jesus approached and, breaking the silence, said to them, All authority (all power of rule) in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

19 **Go then and make disciples of all the nations,** baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 **Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you,** and behold, I am with you all the days (perpetually, uniformly, and on every occasion), to the [very] close and consummation of the age. Amen (so let it be).

Paul survives this stoning but doesn't stop preaching and teaching the truth about the only way to Heaven... it is through Jesus the Word.

Here's Paul telling about 14 years ago in 2 Corinthians about seeing heaven and goes to a place called Paradise and said "whether in the body or out of the body I do not know"

2 Corinthians 12:1-4 AMPC

*2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—**was caught up to the third heaven.***

Paul is saying, 'I don't know if I died and left my body or if I died and God showed me a vision.' But, this is key either way...

2 Corinthians 5:8 KJV

*8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather **to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.***

2 Corinthians 5:8 AMPC

*8 [Yes] we have confident and hopeful courage and are pleased rather **to be away from home out of the body and be at home with the Lord.***

2 Corinthians 5:8 GNT

*8 We are full of courage and would **much prefer to leave our home in the body and be at home with the Lord.***

What did the wisest person ever tell us in the Old Testament?

Ecclesiastes 12:7 AMPC

*7 Then shall the dust [out of which God made man's body] return to the earth as it was, **and the spirit shall return to God Who gave it.***

**The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed;
the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed...**

2 Corinthians 5:1-11 AMPC

1 For we know that if the tent which is our earthly home is destroyed (dissolved), we have from God a building, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 Here indeed, in this [present abode, body], we sigh and groan inwardly, because we yearn to be clothed over [we yearn to put on our celestial body like a garment, to be fitted out] with our heavenly dwelling,

3 So that by putting it on we may not be found naked (without a body).

4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan under the burden and sigh deeply (weighed down, depressed, oppressed)—not that we want to put off the body (the clothing of the spirit), but rather that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal (our dying body) may be swallowed up by life [[a]after the resurrection].

5 Now He Who has fashioned us [preparing and making us fit] for this very thing is God, Who also has given us the [Holy] Spirit as a guarantee [of the fulfillment of His promise].

6 So then, we are always full of good and hopeful and confident courage; we know that while we are at home in the body, we are abroad from the home with the Lord [that is promised us]. **7 For we walk by faith [we [b]regulate our lives and conduct ourselves by our conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, with trust and holy fervor; thus we walk] not by sight or appearance.**

8 [Yes] we have confident and hopeful courage and are pleased rather to be away from home out of the body and be at home with the Lord.

9 Therefore, whether we are at home [on earth away from Him] or away from home [and with Him], we are constantly ambitious and strive earnestly to be pleasing to Him.

10 For we must all appear and be revealed as we are before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive [his pay] according to what he has done in the body, whether good or evil [considering [c]what his purpose and motive have been, and what he has [d]achieved, been busy with, and given himself and his attention to accomplishing].

11 Therefore, being conscious of fearing the Lord with respect and reverence, we seek to win people over [to persuade them]. But [e]what sort of persons we are is plainly recognized and thoroughly understood by God, and I hope that it is plainly recognized and thoroughly understood also by your consciences (your inborn discernment).

We are talking about being absent from this body, our spirit and soul will live forever. Paul wasn't sure if he died but he saw Paradise but he said it wasn't legal for him to come and tell us what he saw or heard.

2 Corinthians 12:4 KJV

*4 How that he was **caught up into paradise,** and heard unspeakable words, which it is **not lawful for a man to utter.***

Remember, John was told or shown what it was going to be like in heaven. He was given the vision of what would happen on earth as well looking down from heaven in the 22 chapters of the book of Revelation or the revealing of all the other 65 books...

- O John saw Jesus opening the scrolls for the judgments to begin
- O John saw the 4 horsemen of the apocalypse
- O John saw the anti christ (Islamic leader) false Prophet (a Pope)

The Old Testament writers saw things in heaven as well...

- O Isaiah saw the Lord on His throne, high and lifted up...

Isaiah 6:1-2 AMPC

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, [in a vision] I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the skirts of His train filled the [most holy part of the] temple.

2 Above Him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two [each] covered his [own] face, and with two [each] covered his feet, and with two [each] flew.

- O Micaiah saw the Lord sitting on His throne and the hosts of heaven

1 Kings 22:19-22 AMPC

19 And Micaiah said, Hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left.

- O Job saw satan standing at the throne of God

Job 1:6-8 AMPC

6 Now there was a day when the sons (the angels) of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan (the adversary and accuser) also came among them.

After what others had seen, Paul said, what I saw/heard - I can't tell you.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 AMPC

9 *But, on the contrary, as the Scripture says, What eye has not seen and ear has not heard and has not entered into the heart of man, [all that] God has prepared (made and keeps ready) for those who love Him **[who hold Him in affectionate reverence, promptly obeying Him and gratefully recognizing the benefits He has bestowed].***

10 ***Yet to us God has unveiled and revealed them by and through His Spirit,** for the [Holy] Spirit searches diligently, exploring and examining everything, even sounding the profound and bottomless things of God [the divine counsels and things hidden and beyond man's scrutiny].*

When people ask, "How do you know that God is real?" - By His Holy Spirit...

When people ask, "How do you know that heaven is real?" - By His Holy Spirit...

John 14 AMPC

1 *Do not let your hearts be troubled (distressed, agitated). You believe in and adhere to and trust in and rely on God; believe in and adhere to and trust in and rely also on Me.*

2 *In My Father's house there are many dwelling places (homes). If it were not so, I would have told you; for I am going away to prepare a place for you.*

3 And when (if) I go and make ready a place for you, I will come back again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.

4 *And [to the place] where I am going, you know the way.*

5 *Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?*

6 Jesus said to him, I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me.

John 14:15 AMPC

15 *If you [really] love Me, you will keep (obey) My commands.*