

What about...to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord?

The Apostle Paul wrote, that as believers, we are certain that we would rather be absent from (also translated away from or leave) our earthly bodies and be present with the Lord [see [2 Corinthians 5:8](#)]. Does this indicate that at death our soul leaves our body and goes to be with the Lord? It may sound that way but let's look at 2 Corinthians 5:8 in its context.

1 We know that if our earthly house [our body] —the tent we live in here on earth—is destroyed/dissolved [through death and decay], we have a building from God, a house not made with [human] hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 But now we groan in this one [this tent or body], longing to be clothed in our dwelling place [home] from heaven 3 because by putting it on [it will clothe us so] we will not be naked. 4 For while we live in this tent [body], we groan because we are weighed down [with burdens]. We do not want to be unclothed [i.e. remain mortal], but we want to be clothed so that the mortal will be overwhelmed/enveloped by life. 5 This is what God prepared us for, and he has given us the Spirit as a down payment to guarantee it. 6 So we are always certain that we know, while we are at home in this body, we are away from the Lord. 7 (We live by what we believe, not by what we can see.) 8 As I was saying, we are certain we would prefer to be away from this body and be at home with the Lord. 9 Therefore it is our ambition to please him whether we are at home or away 10 because we must all appear before Christ to be judged so that each one may be repaid for what has been done in the body, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:1-10) [Comments in brackets are for clarity]

Paul said if our body is destroyed/dissolved we have a building from God prepared in heaven (v.1) that will envelope our mortal body in life or immortality (v.4). This doesn't happen when believers die. If it did we wouldn't be burying anyone. It happens at the return of Christ instead [see [1Corinthians 15:52,53](#), [1Thessalonians 4:16](#)]. The mortal body being “destroyed/dissolved” before it is enveloped in life also shows that this change does not occur at the point of death or while the body decays in the grave. We are certain that while we are at home in this mortal body we are away from the Lord (v.6). It is our desire that our mortal body will become immortal (v.4) which happens at the Lord's return. That's why we are certain we would prefer not to be living in this mortal body and be with the Lord (v.8).

Doesn't living in this mortal body or as the various translations of verse 8 say; absent from this [earthly] body; or away from this [earthly] body; or leave this [earthly] body; mean that at death some part of us detaches from the body and goes to live with the Lord? Is Paul saying here that believers desire to die and have their disembodied souls go to be with the Lord? Not at all. Our desire is for life, but not life in this earthly mortal body, but life in an immortal body made in heaven; and that happens when the Lord returns to be with us. When believers are resurrected from the dead this earthly mortal body is not discarded, it is transformed. Paul uses the description, to put on immortality, similar to how we put on clothes to cover our body. The mortal body is “enveloped” (the Greek word also means “swallowed up”) in life and is changed or transformed to a spiritual body. It is no longer the same body. So when Paul says we prefer to be absent from this [earthly mortal] body, it is not a desire for death, but a desire to no longer be in our mortal body; to have our mortal body transformed into a heavenly spiritual body and be with him. This happens after the Lord's return and our resurrection. These verses in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 are not at all suggesting the soul goes anywhere; in fact they don't even mention the soul.