

“ABSENT” AND /OR “PRESENT”

Thanksgiving, a time when many loved ones are present, and some, because of circumstances are absent. Anyone with reasoning abilities understands the situation. It is a common occurrence experienced by everyone in some situation or other many times in life. However, when it comes to spiritual matters many hearts and minds become thoroughly confused and the understanding seems to become unclear.

On Wednesday, just before Thanksgiving this year (2009), we had a dear friend depart from a family and from a church, both of which loved her dearly, to spend the holiday with another friend and family. She is not now here with us, she is in heaven with the Lord and others she had known down here.

There was weeping and a sense of loss down here, while there was rejoicing and a sense of gain in Heaven. While we all know that our lives will be different now, we are sure that hers will be even more so. We are left here to continue to serve the Lord Jesus Christ to the best of our abilities, experience the reality of the exasperations and demands of this physical life. She, on the other hand has gone to enjoy all the splendors of Heaven, rejoicing in the presence of the Lord and to serve Him in an even greater capacity.

She had lived a full life this side of Heaven, having placed her faith in Christ some years earlier, having a husband who was saved and shared in a spiritual walk with her. Her life was one of faithfulness and of a positive witness for her family and friends. She saw her son and his wife, along with her Grand-Children saved and serving the Lord energetically in a good Bible Church.

The Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, “*We are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.*” (*underlining is mine*)

There are two words in these verses that we all understand and have no problem with until they are used in conjunction with or in reference to Spiritual matters. Many in various religions will say that death is a termination, that there is nothing afterward, it means annihilation. How sad an outlook is that? Others will say that there are many phases of death, that one must pass through many various reincarnations. And, who knows still be unsure about where one goes after all that. Some offer ‘another planet or world’ where one can be King or Queen of their existence and rule as they wish. Of course all of these fantasies are completely foreign to the Bible. There are only two destinies for those who are ‘absent from the body’. They are clearly set out for everyone in the Scripture, namely Heaven or Hell. The soul does not ‘sleep’, it rises immediately to be present with the Lord, or descends immediately to be present in hell with the Devil and his angels and all others who have chosen that destination. The presence or absence of anyone in either of these places rest on one simple matter - their acceptance or their rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

EKDEMEO - is the Greek word meaning to go, or to depart. Man is a tripartite person, body, soul and spirit. At death, the soul of man departs from the body.

ENDEMEO - is the Greek word meaning “to be present,” or to “be at home,” or “to be beside”

Our good friend had decided in this life to *endemeo* (be at home beside) the Lord. She is there today. Her soul has *ekdemeo* -departed, gone to be in the presence of the Lord. We miss her. Her family has decided to *Ekdemeo* to be with her one day. To reunite their fellowship and eternal life with her.

All who knew Mrs. Retha Fenn will miss her, and will remember her testimony