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Eternal and Everlasting in the Old and New Testament.

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Eternal and Everlasting in the Old and New Testament.

TOPICS (OLD TESTAMENT)

- The eternal God.
- You are an eternal excellence.
- Various Scriptures that use the word everlasting

TOPICS (NEW TESTAMENT)

- Eternal life, a rich man and the Kingdom of God.
- Eternal life and everlasting punishment.
- Eternal life and rewards.
- Whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- Water that will spring up into everlasting life.
- Those that sow and those that reap gathers fruit for eternal life.
- You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life.
- Jesus has the words of eternal life.
- I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish.
- He who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.
- This is eternal life that they may know God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- As many as were appointed to eternal life believed.
- The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Things seen are temporary, but the things not seen are eternal.
- We have a building from God, not made with hands eternal in the heavens.
- Those who sow to the Spirit will reap everlasting life.
- God accomplished his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.
- In hope of eternal life which God, promised before time began.
- By grace we become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
- Jesus is the giver of eternal life to all those who obey him.
- Let us go on to perfection and to eternal life.
- Christ has obtained eternal redemption with his own blood.
- God of all grace called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus.
- God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

ETERNAL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Eternal God.

- **Deuteronomy 33:27:** The *eternal* God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And he thrust out the enemy before you and said, Destroy.

Eternal in this verse comes from the Hebrew word *qedem* and means the absolute fore-part of place and time, before, ancient time and eternal and everlasting.

You are an Eternal Excellence.

- **Isaiah 60:15:** Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, So that no one went through *you*, I (God) will make you an *eternal excellence* a joy of many generations.

Eternal in this verse comes from the Hebrew word *`owlam* and means concealed, eternity; always continuance, forever-lasting, lasting a long time, perpetual, beginning of the world and world without end.

SUMMARY: these are the only two Scriptures in Old Testament that use the words eternal In the first verse Moses tells the people of Israel that God is eternal and in the second verse Isaiah tells us that God will make His Holy City Jerusalem (the city of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy one of Israel (Isaiah 60:14), her inhabitants and her King and Redeemer an eternal excellence.

EVERLASTING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The following are all the verses that use the word everlasting in the Old Testament. They not only show that there is a salvation, a covenant, a way, a Kingdom, a joy, kindness, light and a glory that will be everlasting and that the Most High God is from everlasting and has dominion forever, but also show that the Kingdom and dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ and those who belong to his Kingdom will be everlasting and that many who sleep in the dust of the earth will be resurrected, some to everlasting life some to everlasting contempt.

From the following verses we learn that everlasting means the same as eternal.

- Search me, O God, and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in *the way everlasting* (Psalm 139:23-24).
- The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with *everlasting joy* (Isaiah 35:10).
- Israel shall be saved by the LORD with an *everlasting salvation* you shall not be ashamed forever and ever (Isaiah 45:17).
- With *everlasting kindness* I will have mercy on you, Says the LORD, your Redeemer (Isaiah 54:8).
- Incline your ear, and come to me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an *everlasting covenant* with you (Isaiah 55:3).
- The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the LORD will be to you an *everlasting light* and your God your glory. ²⁰Your sun shall no longer go down, Nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For the LORD will be your *everlasting light*, And the days of your mourning shall be ended (Isaiah 60:19-22).
- How great are his signs, and how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an *everlasting Kingdom* and His dominion is from generation to generation. (Daniel 4:3).

- I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored him who lives forever For His dominion is an *everlasting dominion* and His kingdom is from generation to generation (Daniel 4:34).
- Then to him (One like the Son of Man) was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an *everlasting dominion* which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14).
- Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His Kingdom is an *everlasting kingdom* and all dominions shall serve and obey Him (Daniel 7:27).
- And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to *everlasting life* some to shame and *everlasting contempt*. ³Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars *forever and ever* (Daniel 12:2-3).
- Are you not *from everlasting*, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die (Habakkuk 1:12).

Everlasting: comes from the Hebrew word *qedem* and means the absolute fore-part of place and time, before, ancient time and eternal and everlasting and the Hebrew word *`owlam* which means concealed, eternity; always continuance, forever-lasting, lasting a long time, perpetual, beginning of the world and world without end. This is the end of all the verses using the word everlasting in the Old Testament, it is interesting to notice that everlasting and eternal mean the same thing and that there is no mention of heaven.

ETERNAL AND EVERLASTING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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Eternal: in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *aion* and means perpetual, eternal, forever, everlasting, it can be used of past time or future time, the beginning of the world without end or to the Messianic period (the present age or future age to come).

Everlasting: in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *aion* and means the same as eternal.

MATTHEW

ETERNAL LIFE, A RICH MAN AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- **Matthew 19:16:** Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have *eternal life*?”

Jesus tells the man to keep the commandments, the man says he has kept them all so Jesus tells him to sell all that he has and give to the poor so that he would have treasure in heaven (i.e. rewards), because the man was very rich he went away sorrowful and sad then Jesus said to his disciples, “A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven and that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. When the disciples heard it, they said, “Who then can be saved?” (Matt. 19:23-25).

These verses show that being saved to eternal life is the same as entering the Kingdom of God.

ETERNAL LIFE AND EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT

- **Matthew 25:44-46:** Then shall they also answer him, saying, “Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?” ⁴⁵Then shall he answer them (the wicked who only care about themselves), saying, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. ⁴⁶And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment*, but the righteous into *eternal life*.”

The righteous who will inherit eternal life in this context refers to those who have helped the poor, the stranger and the less fortunate when able and given them food, water and clothing, while those who are judged to everlasting punishment, meaning eternal death (i.e., total extinction) refers to those who live to themselves and deny the poor when they are fully able to help (Matt 25:35-46). For further information on everlasting punishment see the title:

- Hell in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

MARK

ETERNAL CONDEMNATION

- **Mark 3:29:** he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to *eternal condemnation*.

Those who deliberately and consciously deny and blaspheme Christ and turn against him as an enemy will be subject to eternal condemnation.

ETERNAL LIFE, A RICH MAN AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- **Mark 10:17:** Now as he was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit *eternal life*?”

Jesus tells the man to keep the commandments and the man says he has kept them all so Jesus tells him to sell all that he has and give to the poor so that he would have treasure in heaven (i.e. rewards). The man went away sorrowful and sad then, Jesus looked round about, and said to his disciples, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again, and said to them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God! The disciples then said, “Who then can be saved? (Mark 10:23-26).

These verses show that being saved to eternal life is the same as entering the Kingdom of God.

LUKE

WHAT SHALL I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?

- **Luke 10:25-28:** behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit *eternal life*? ²⁶He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” ²⁷So he answered and said, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. ²⁸And he said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live” (eternally).

There are a multitude of laws, statutes and rules in the Bible, but the following are the only two commandments we ever need to learn to know how to obey the Lord and to inherit eternal life.

1. Love God with every fiber of our being, our mind, heart, emotions, thoughts, actions and behaviour, naturally loving God embraces, loving the Lord Jesus Christ with the same love and the same passion.
2. Love our neighbour as ourself.

When Jesus was asked, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" He answered, "The most important is, "God is one and you shall love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength" The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" there is no other commandment greater than these two" (Mark 12:28-31) James refers to Jesus commandment, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" as the Royal law (James 2:8). The command, "Love your neighbour as yourself," means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, mentally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land.

- **Micah wrote:** "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- **Isaiah says:** "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- **Jeremiah said:** "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour.

JESUS FAMOUS SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This means living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing all we can do to protect people from harm and being dominated by the thought, "What action can I take or do that will help and encourage this person." It is all about doing right to others. This is the reason the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, "The Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians, but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt 5). A wicked person is primarily one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and does harm to other humans. For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see:

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

ETERNAL LIFE AND LITTLE CHILDREN

- **Luke 18:16-17:** Jesus called them (the disciples) to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the *Kingdom of God*.¹⁷ "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the *Kingdom of God* as a little child will by no means enter it."

The Kingdom of God refers to two Kingdoms:

1. The present invisible spiritual Kingdom of Christ in the mind and heart of every believer that is established by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The literal future eternal Kingdom that will be established when the Lord Jesus Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

For further information see the title:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).

ETERNAL LIFE, A RICH MAN AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- **Luke 18:18:** Now a certain ruler asked him, saying, "Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit *eternal life*?"

Jesus told the rich man to keep the commandments and the man says he has kept them all so Jesus tells him to sell all that he has and give to the poor so that he would have treasure in heaven (i.e. rewards). The man went away sorrowful because he was very rich. Then Jesus said to the disciples, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the *Kingdom of God*" (v25) and the disciples answered saying, "Who then can be saved?" (v26). These verses show that being saved to eternal life is the same as entering the Kingdom of God. Notice Matthew in the same story says the Kingdom of heaven while Mark and Luke say the Kingdom of God showing the Kingdom of heaven is the same as the Kingdom of God.

ETERNAL LIFE AND REWARDS

- **Luke 18:28-30:** Peter said, "See, we have left all and followed you." ²⁹So he said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the *Kingdom of God* ³⁰who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come *eternal life*."

Paul in his letter to the Corinthian brothers and sisters wrote, "No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:11-15). These verses clearly show that certain Christians though they suffer loss because they have no treasure (rewards) in heaven they will nevertheless be saved to eternal life.

ETERNAL AND EVERLASTING IN JOHN

WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

- **John 3:15-17:** whoever believes in him should not perish but have *eternal life*. ¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have *everlasting life*. ¹⁷"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him *might be saved*."

These verses show that eternal life is the same as everlasting life and that whoever (Jew or Gentile) believes in the Lord Jesus Christ will be resurrected to eternal life.

- **John 3:35-36:** The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand. ³⁶“He who believes in the Son has *everlasting life* and he who does not believe the Son shall *not see life* (eternal) but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Here we learn the following two things:

1. God the Father has given all power authority to His beloved Son the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Eternal life is in Christ the Son, this is why whoever belongs to the family of the Lord has eternal life.

The word wrath in the context of the following verse, “The wrath of God abides on whoever does not believe in Christ” refers to eternal death. The wrath of God that lies on us all is mortal death and upon those who deny Christ in the context of these verses is eternal death (i.e. total extinction).

THE GLORY, SPLENDOUR AND WONDER OF ETERNITY

The book of Revelation states; those who belong to the family of Christ are resurrected and reign with him during his glorious millennial reign as King of kings for Lord of lords, but the rest of the dead do not come to life until this glorious new age has ended. This is the first resurrection whoever shares in the first resurrection is blessed and the second death has no power over them (Rev. 20:4-6). Those who attain to the first resurrection will reign with the Lord as priests of God and of Christ during the new age to come of Christ’s glorious reign. When Christ’s millennial reign is ended there will be a final battle between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of men after Christ’s victory God descends to earth on a great White Throne and the sea, hades and death give up the dead who were in them.

The great and small stand before the throne of God and the Book of Life is opened whoever name is not found in the Book of Life is cast into the Lake of Fire (a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction) this is called the second death. (Revelation 20:4-15). Those whose names are written in the Book of Life are judged according to what is written in the other books and according to what they had done. Those who are judged unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire. After this judgment eternity begins in all its majestic and royal fullness. The Holy City, New Jerusalem descends to earth out of heaven and God dwells with those remaining on earth.

They will be His people and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither will there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, because the former things have passed away and God who is seated on the throne makes all things new. There is no temple in the city because its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb so the city has no need of the sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is Christ so there will be no night there. By its light the nations walk, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and the honour of the nations into the Holy City, New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2-27).

NOTE: since it is certain that this is a very difficult concept for a mind that has been indoctrinated into the traditional idea that we all go to heaven and not that heaven comes down to us it should be mentioned that having an exact understanding of eternity is not important to being saved to eternal life. The Lord will not reject or cast out those who have been faithful to him simply because they did not understand where they would be in eternity. It is interesting to notice that after Christ’s death

and resurrection most New Testament writers simply state that those in Christ will be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life since the criteria to be saved is not dependent on understanding eternity but upon believing we will be resurrected to it and have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace.

WATER THAT WILL SPRING UP INTO EVERLASTING LIFE

- **John 4:10-14:** Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the *gift of god* and who it is who says to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you *living water*." ¹¹The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do you get that *living water*? ¹²"Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" ¹³Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴"but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him *will never thirst*. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water *springing up into everlasting life*."

Here we learn that eternal life is a gift of God, no-one can earn it by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or by keeping religious practises, customs and traditions. Eternal life is given as a pure and free gift to all who by faith belong to the family of the Lord Jesus Christ. The words, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst" (v14) means, whoever accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord will in this present world be filled with the love of God and the love of Christ which will spring up within them to eternal life.

THOSE THAT SOW AND THOSE THAT REAP GATHERS FRUIT FOR ETERNAL LIFE

- **John 4:30:** he who reaps receives wages, and *gathers fruit for eternal life*, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

Reaping wages and gathering fruit for eternal life does not mean that we can add to our eternal salvation that is complete in Christ. The Lord did not lay down his life so that we would be ninety-percent saved and then earn the other ten-percent ourselves. Wages and gathering fruit for eternal life in this context refers to eternal rewards, those who do-good to other people especially the poor and less fortunate and to their brothers and sisters in Christ are spoken of as storing up treasures in heaven. These treasures in heaven will be given as rewards to those who have them in their heavenly bank account. Paul in his letter to the Corinthian brothers and sisters wrote, "No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

These verses clearly show that certain Christians will receive heavenly and eternal rewards while others will suffer loss because they have not earned or received any wages in their heavenly vault.

THE SON WILL GIVE LIFE AT THE RESURRECTION

- **John 5:20-21:** For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all things that he himself does; and he will show him greater works than these, that you may marvel. ²¹"For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the *son gives life* (eternal) *to whom he will*. ²²"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.

Here we learn that God the Father is the source of all life and that prior to Jesus death and resurrection it was God's Spirit through the Lord that raised Lazarus and certain others from the dead to mortal life. But now that God has resurrected Christ to his right-hand side God has given the Lord the power to grant eternal life to whoever he wills. The words, "To whom he will" does not mean that Christ chooses who will be saved and who will be condemned. Jesus said to the people in Capernaum, "Whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:37) showing that those Jesus will to save to eternal life those who from their own free will come to him.

ETERNAL LIFE REQUIRES HEARING CHRIST'S WORDS AND BELIEVING GOD

- **John 5:24:** Most assuredly, I say to you, he who *hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life*, and shall *not come into judgment*, but has passed from death into life (eternal).

Whoever believes the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and believes that God sent him not only has everlasting life, but will not be judged to eternal death. This does not mean that those who belong to Christ's family will not be judged concerning rewards or suffering loss, but that they will not be judged and condemned to the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction). The words, "Has everlasting life" means that by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we have eternal life, but it will not be manifested until the resurrection of those who are sleeping in Christ and those who are alive are gathered together in glory to be with the Lord.

THE DEAD WILL HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD AND LIVE

- **John 5:24-30:** Truly, truly, I say to you an hour is coming, and is now here, when the *dead will hear the voice of the Son of God* and those who hear will live. ²⁶For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when *all who are in the tombs will hear his voice* ²⁹and come out, those who have done good to the *resurrection of life* and those who have done evil to the *resurrection of judgment*. ³⁰"I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

It is interesting to notice the words, "Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life." Jesus does not say whoever understands the Bible from Genesis to Revelation has eternal life, but whoever believes the words he has spoken therefore a person reading the Bible can be saved by simply reading the red print in the New Testament (i.e., Jesus words), applying them to their life and believing in God who sent him added to this they will not even be judged. This means that no one has to be a walking Bible encyclopaedia to be saved to eternal life. Jesus words, "An hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (v25) can be applied to that moment when Jesus on the cross cried out with a loud voice and yielded up his Spirit and many tombs were opened and the bodies of the faithful who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after the Lord's resurrection they went into the holy city Jerusalem and appeared to many (Matt. 27:50-53). But the ultimate application of Jesus words, "An hour is coming when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live and all who are in tombs will hear his voice and come out refers to Christ's glorious return as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. The words, "Those who have done good will rise to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment" can be understood in the following two ways:

1. In the one resurrection there will be two groups that are raised to stand before the Lord, those who have done-good and those who have done evil. The group that has done-good will be immediately welcomed into the eternal Kingdom of Christ without any judgment while those classed as evil will be raised to judgment. Those who rise to the resurrection of Judgement no-doubt refer to the false prophets and religious leaders, who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves that use their privileged position for their own selfish gain and ambition. Jesus, with these prideful, hypocritical teachers in mind said:

- Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness' (Matt. 7:15-23).

Doing the words of Christ is summed up in the following two commandments of God and of Christ, firstly, "Love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind (Matt. 22:37-38) and secondly, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Matt. 22:39). For an amplified view of the Lord's command, "Love your neighbour as yourself" see the notes following the title: "What shall I do to inherit Eternal Life?" (Luke 10:25-28) (above).

2. The words, "All who are in the graves will hear his voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28-29) could refer to the first resurrection, and the second death since it could be reasoned that only the faithful who have endured in their faith and are sleeping in Christ will hear the voice of the Lord and therefore only those who belong to Christ would be resurrected in the first resurrection to eternal life. The book of Revelations says, "The faithful who have died in Christ come to life and reign with the Lord for a thousand years. The rest of the dead do not come to life until the thousand years are ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with him for a thousand years (Rev 20:5-6). The resurrection to life eternal refers to the first resurrection, only those who belong to Jesus and hear his voice will be resurrected to eternal life, while those who do not hear the voice of Christ do not come to life until Jesus reign on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords has ended.

At the end of Christ's reign: the book of Revelations says that God descends on a Great White Throne and the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead and the great and small, stand before the throne of God. Then the Book of Life is opened and some other books. Whoever name is not found in the Book of Life is cast into the Lake of Fire (a symbol of eternal death, meaning total extinction). If a person's name is found in the Book of Life then the other books are opened and the dead who remain standing before the throne of God are judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done (Rev. 20:11-15). Whoever attains to the first resurrection the second death will have no power over. The second death is also called the Lake of Fire which means that the resurrection of condemnation refers to the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction) (Rev. 20:4-6) Rev. 20:11-15). The first resurrection, takes place when the Lord Jesus Christ returns and the second resurrection takes place at the end of Jesus millennial reign on earth which means there is at least a thousand-year gap between the resurrection to life and the resurrection to condemnation.

NOTE: though it may be exciting and spiritually rewarding for some to reason together in a spirit of peace concerning which of these two scenarios' might be the one that applies it should always be kept in mind that it is not important to our salvation to have an exact understanding. Since both these scenario's clearly show that the faithful will be welcomed

into God's eternal glory while the prideful and hypocritical who have used the Gospel for their own selfish gain will be judged to condemnation. Therefore, to argue or even worse to divide over which of the two scenarios is correct could only be judged as an exercise of vanity and pride.

YOU SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES, FOR IN THEM YOU THINK YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE

- **John 5:39-40:** You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have *eternal life* and these are they which testify of me. ⁴⁰“But you are not willing to come to me that you may *have life* (eternal).

These verses show that it is not intellectual knowledge that saves us to everlasting life, but accepting and trusting by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The primary purpose of the Scriptures is to lead us to Christ because it is being in Christ that we are united with God the Father in love and it is being in Christ that we have eternal life. The purpose of all other Scriptures is to teach us how to live a life that honours God and brings a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and inform us about the character of God, his plans, purposes and promises, the history of Israel, life after death and such like things. The Jewish chief priests, the Pharisees and the scribes who Jesus is talking to had enormous knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, but they rejected the Lord and lacked love, mercy and compassion and therefore their knowledge counted for nothing.

LABOUR FOR EVERLASTING LIFE WHICH THE SON OF MAN WILL GIVE YOU

- **John 6:26-27:** Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to *everlasting life* which the *son of man* will give you, because God the Father has set his seal on him.

The food which perishes refers to the riches, wealth, pleasures and luxuries of this world which will all pass away. Labouring for eternal life does not mean that we can earn our salvation by adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or by keeping religious customs and traditions, but rather it carries the idea of enduring in the faith until Christ returns especially in the face of persecution, troubles and hardships. It means avoiding the things that have the potential to put our faith in danger or temptations that might cause us to forsake our faith.

I WILL RAISE HIM UP TO EVERLASTING LIFE AT THE LAST DAY

- **John 6:40:** this is the will of him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have *everlasting life*; and I will raise him up at the last day.

The last day in this context refers to the last day of this present age which will be that glorious day when the Lord returns as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies

and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME HAS EVERLASTING LIFE

- **John 6:47-50:** Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me has *everlasting life*.
48“I am the bread of life. 49“Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.
50“*This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.*

In the last four-hundred years the word, believe has undergone a radical change of meaning, so that the modern meaning is very different from its pre-modern meanings. For most modern Christians believing means a set of claims, a set of statements: Believing that God exists ,that the Bible is the word of God, that Jesus is the Son of God born of the Virgin Mary, that he died for our sins, that he rose from the dead, that he is the only way to salvation. That he will come again and so on and so forth.

This is, believing as affirming a set of beliefs to be true, but, prior to about the year 1600s the word “believe” had a very different meaning in Christianity as well as popular usage. It did not mean believing statements to be true the object of belief was always a person, not a statement. This is the difference between believing that and believing in. To believe in a person is quite different to believing a series of statements about that person. In pre-modern Christianity believing meant believing in and thus a relationship of trust, loyalty, and love (i.e. to most to believe meant to believe). Until about four centuries ago, believing in God and Jesus did not mean I believe that the following statements about God and Jesus are true rather to believe in God and Jesus had the following two primary meanings:

1. To trust in God and Jesus and not in statements about God and Jesus for this would be believing that, but to trust in God as known in Jesus
2. To commit one's allegiance, loyalty and love to God and Jesus.

This is believing faith, fidelity, loyalty, allegiance and commitment to God as known in Jesus in contrast to believing statements about God and Jesus. The two are very different, the first leads to an emphasis on believing right statements, the second leads to a transformed life.

NOTE: this does not mean that it is wrong to believe in statements about God, Jesus and the Bible, but believing in statements will not save a person rather the statements are to lead a person to Christ who is the only one who can save anyone to eternal life, it is trusting in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ that saves a person not trusting in statements about him.

WHOEVER HAS ETERNAL LIFE, CHRIST WILL RAISE UP AT THE LAST DAY

- **John 6:54:** Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has *eternal life* and I will raise him up at the last day

Eating the flesh of Christ and drinking the Lord's blood means surrendering our life our mind our heart and our love to Christ and living in a manner that brings honour to his heavenly Father and a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

JESUS HAS THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE

- **John 6:68:** Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of *eternal life*."

Jesus words of eternal life refer to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, because this is the only Gospel that leads to eternal salvation. The Gospel begins with the universal law of Sin and Death which states, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) meaning whoever sins is already judged and condemned to eternal death and since not one of us is without sin we all stand guilty before this universal Law, whereas the Good News of the Gospel states:

- All who trust in Christ have been granted the free gift of God which is, "Eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:23), because, "The law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2).

This means that the Gospel states that the universal law of Sin and Death has no power over those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him they like Christ will be raised to eternal life and everlasting glory. The, focus of the Gospel is salvation from eternal death to eternal life by faith and grace it, is about believing in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and recognising that one falls short of God's Glory and absolute Holiness. It is about repentance, baptism and abiding in the faith. Throughout the entire history of mankind there has only been one man who has ever been able to attain to God's perfect standard. The Gospel is about recognising this reality, repenting before God and accepting His foreordained plan of salvation.

The Gospel is about trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for one's own righteousness, looking forward to his return and being raised to eternal glory. The majestic Good News of the Gospel states that whoever comes to God through repentance and faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ is not only approved of and accepted by God the Father but all their sins are forgiven, not because they are deserving of it, by any self-effort or religious good works, but because through faith in Christ righteousness is

imputed from God to them as a pure and free gift, but this is not the end of the Gospel since God's promise also states that the faithful in Christ will be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life. Can there be any better news than this? This is the reason it is called the Good News of the Gospel.

Consider: if our world's top scientist and medical practitioners could invent a pill that would give people eternal life, the billionaires of this world would write out a cheque no matter what the cost to buy them for all their family and friends, and almost all people of the world would sell everything they had to purchase one. This is the high value Paul placed on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. To Paul and the faithful brothers and sisters who supported him there was nothing in this world more valuable for any man or woman to possess than the gift of eternal life. How sad it is that in some modern churches today this high value of eternal life has been lost and replaced by a Gospel that focuses on a blessed, prosperous and successful life now in this mortal and corrupt world and messages that appeal to self, ego and pride. Especially when one considers what it cost God the Father and the high price his Son paid to purchase this gift of eternal life for all who would humbly accept by faith the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I GIVE MY SHEEP ETERNAL LIFE, AND THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

- **John 10:27-28:** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸“And I give them *eternal life*, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand.

These are some of the most comforting words of the Bible for those who faithfully follow the Lord Jesus Christ because they show that despite the sinful dysfunctions and aberration that dwell in our corrupted fallen body that we have inherited from our earthly father Adam, the Lord will keep us saved to eternal life. This is because our salvation is not dependent on our righteous, but on the Lord's righteousness and on God's grace which means whoever faithfully endures in faith Christ will save to eternal life and everlasting glory.

14

HE WHO HATES HIS LIFE IN THIS WORLD WILL KEEP IT FOR ETERNAL LIFE

- **John 12:24-26:** Truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for *eternal life*. ²⁶If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honour him.

Jesus words, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit," Refer to the Lord himself, he is the grain of wheat who after laying down his life rose again to bear much fruit (v24). The words, "Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life," Means whoever loves their life and this world so much that they refuse to accept Christ will eternally die, but whoever is prepared to humble themselves forsake this world and follow Christ will eternally save their life (v25). Jesus words, "If anyone serves me, he must follow me," Means they must follow his example (i.e., they must be prepared to put others before themselves and lay down their life for Christ if called to do so). Christ will be with whoever serves him in this way and God his heavenly Father will honour them.

THIS IS ETERNAL LIFE THAT THEY MAY KNOW GOD, AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

- **John 17:1-3:** When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,² as you have given him authority over all flesh, that he should give *eternal life* to as many as you have given him.³ "And this is *eternal life* that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

For those who believe that Jesus is God this is a very confusing verse since Jesus himself clearly tells us that eternal life is knowing both God the Father the only true God, and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Words of comfort and encouragement: since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states:

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God the Son will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim:

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life.

Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God 'and' Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

For further information see the title:

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity).
- In Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

ACTS

SINCE YOU REJECT EVERLASTING LIFE BEHOLD, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES

- **Acts 13:46:** Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you (the Jews) first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of *everlasting life* behold, we turn to the Gentiles.

The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life was taken to the Jew first, but they rejected Christ so the apostles took the Gospel of eternal life to the Gentiles. The words, "You judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life" Does not mean that the Jews viewed themselves as being unworthy to be accepted by God, but that they were so full of pride and self-righteousness that they already considered themselves right with God and therefore believed they had no need of accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

THE GENTILES THAT BELIEVED THE WORD ARE APPOINTED TO ETERNAL LIFE

- **Acts 13:48:** Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to *eternal life* believed.

When the Gentiles heard Paul and Barnabas were turning from the Jews to the Gentiles (v46) they rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord which spread throughout the entire region of Antioch, but Jewish men and women in positions of authority drove Paul and Barnabas out of their district. The words, "As many as were appointed to eternal life believed" (v48) does not mean that God has predestined some to believe and some to wrath we know this because then mankind would not have free will. Following are two ways that this statement can be explained:

1. God in his foreknowledge knows who is going to believe and who is not. This is the reason Paul is able to say those appointed to eternal life believed.
2. Whoever does believe is appointed to eternal life.

God's foreknowledge is a stunning mystery to the human mind, but majestically manifests the wisdom of God who has given mankind free will. By foreknowledge God is able to allow us to do as we please and come what may our free will is still mysteriously working within God's Sovereign will and bringing about His eternal plan that He set in motion before the beginning of time such is the beauty and wonder of God's foreknowledge and His eternal wisdom. God through the prophet Isaiah said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

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ROMANS

ETERNAL LIFE IS GRANTED ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

- **Romans 2:6-8:** God will render to each one according to his deeds ⁷*eternal life* to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and *immortality* ⁸but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath.

Since all the world is held accountable to the law which states "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 3:19) (Rom 3:23) (Rom 6:23) and that everyone (Jews and Gentiles) who transgresses the law, wrath is being stored up especially for those who are self-seeking, unrepentant and blatantly deny God in the context of these verses wrath refers to judgment to eternal death (i.e., total extinction). Whereas in contrast to wrath, glory, honour, peace and eternal life is being kept in heaven for both Jews and Gentiles who are patient in well-doing and seeking after glory, honour and immortality. God at this present time is patient and longsuffering allowing mankind a space of time to repent, but when the cup of iniquity is overflowing God will once again intervene in human history as he did in the days of Noah and Sodom and Gomorrah. It should be noted that the reference to the truth in the context of the following verse: -

- Those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness (v8).

Does not mean, "Those who do not understand all the doctrines of the Bible and have them neatly wrapped up with a coloured ribbon" Rather the truth in this context is about doctrines that teach right behaviour while unrighteousness is referring to wrong behaviour. Right behaviour before God can be summed up in Jesus command to, "Love our neighbour as

ourselves" (Matt. 22:37-39) (Mark 12:28-31) while wrong behaviour (unrighteousness) refers to all behaviour that is contrary to the law of love. The truth in the context of this chapter refers to those doctrines that speak about doing right, it is about fulfilling the royal law, love your neighbour as yourself (James 2:8) which means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others. For further information concerning Jesus command, "Love your neighbour as yourself," see the notes following the title, "What shall I do to inherit Eternal Life?" (After Luke 10:25-28) (above).

MANY WILL BE MADE RIGHTEOUS TO ETERNAL LIFE

- **Romans 5:21:** so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to *eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prior to this verse Paul said that the law entered that sin might abound, but where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. This means that the law made us all very aware of sin and in this sense, it abounded, but no-matter how much sin abounds God grace abounds much more. This means that there is no sin that cannot be forgiven if there is honest and true repentance. Man, maybe able to deceive us by pretending or faking repentance, honest and true repentance but God's eyes perceive the heart and motives of our actions so no-one can deceive God no-matter how many tears of deception or falsehood they may cry.

THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD

- **Romans 6:22-23:** But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, *everlasting life* ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the *gift of god is eternal life* in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Prior to conversion the Roman brothers were indifferent to God and therefore living to honour God was not even a consideration so of course they lived to please themselves in impurity and lawlessness (v19), but since the wages of sin is death not only was their life going to end in eternal death they now are also ashamed of the way they lived. This is because now that they know God they desire to honour him with their life and in this sense they are slaves to God, but the reward of this lifestyle is God's approval, the free gift of righteousness and eternal life in Christ Jesus the Lord and so it is likewise with every repent sinner who comes to know the saving grace of God and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS

THINGS SEEN ARE TEMPORARY, BUT THE THINGS NOT SEEN ARE ETERNAL

- **2 Cor. 4:17-18:** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and *eternal weight of glory*, ¹⁸while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are *not seen are eternal*.

Paul's statement, "We look not to the things that are seen, but to things that are unseen" has in some circles of religion been grossly taken out of context and used as a spiritual cliché to call through affirmations, confession and visualisation into one's own life things they want but can't

see. This false teaching states that by faith we can call the things unseen into this seen world, meaning, if a Christian visualises and confesses something enough it will mystically come to them. Though there is a truth and there are mental benefits in the principle of affirmations and visualisation these religious teachers have taken the power affirmations and visualisation techniques far beyond what they are able to bring to pass. There is, no-doubt affirmations and visualisation practises that will help keep our dreams alive and motivate us to make the sacrifices in life and do the work needed to achieve the goal, but without sacrifices and hard work affirmations and visualisations will produce nothing.

Paul's words, "We look not to the things that are seen, but to things that are unseen" have absolutely nothing to do with affirmations or visualisation, but rather faith in the resurrection thus, "looking to the things unseen" refers to dead bodies that have decayed and are none existent, but will be raised not only to immortality but also to everlasting life and eternal glory meaning to a heavenly world of perfect joy and perfect peace with the, Prince of Peace being the King. We know this is what Paul has in focus because prior to Paul saying, "We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen" (v18) he made the statement, "For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (v17). Obviously referring to eternal life added to this are the following powerful and comforting words, "For the things that are seen are transient, (meaning fleeting, passing, temporary and short-lived) but the things that are unseen are eternal" (v17).

A personal note: it stuns me that the entire focus of Jesus, the apostles and Paul was not how to have a better life here and now, but rather on eternal life. They knew everyone (Christian or secular) is going to suffer troubles in this mortal, temporary, passing and troubled world so they made their dominant message one of encouragement and comfort (i.e., divine forgiveness of sins and the glory of eternal life). No-where do they appeal to self, pride and ego or what we all would like in this life, rather to overcome the troubles that come our way their advice is not to focus on this present temporary world, but on the glory and royal majesty of the return of the King of Peace and on the promised hope of the eternal and heavenly world of everlasting joy and peace to come.

It seems (to me at least) that the excess of worldly materialism in this world today has subtly managed to influence some religious teachers to such an extent that they have almost totally reversed the spiritual, heavenly and eternal Gospel message proclaimed by Christ and the apostles to a message that is focused on materialism and what self-desires in this world rather than on spirituality. Tragically the message that should be the absolute least materialistic message of all faiths has in much of modern Christianity become one of the most materialistic messages so much so that some congregations are told to spend all large amounts of time in prayer, visualisation and affirmations claiming what they want from God.

From my personal observations (and I realise they are limited) it seems that the underlying current of much of modern (modern being the key word) religious teaching is, "What can God do for me." Whereas the underlying thought in the messages of Christ and of the apostles is, "What can I do for God and for others?" The modern Gospel seems to be focused of what is best for self, how can self-enhance its own life, whereas underpinning the teachings of Christ and the apostles is the thought, "What can I do to extend the Kingdom of God and enhance the life of others?"

WE HAVE A BUILDING FROM GOD, NOT MADE WITH HANDS ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS

- **2 Corinthians. 5:1-4:** For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, *eternal in the heavens*. ²For in

this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,³ if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life (eternal).

Tent: refers to our mortal human body, notice Paul sees himself as a spiritual being living within a body, meaning that he is not the body, but he needs the body to dwell in to remain alive, without the body he perishes, until the majestic and glorious day of the resurrection. In these verses we see the highest expression of great faith, Paul and those ministering with him are not concerned about their life or existence in this temporal world, since their faith was so powerful death was not something they feared but rather a birth that would not only deliver them into a far better world made by God, but they would also be clothed with an immortal and eternal body. The thought of their mind and attitude of their heart that outshined all others was one of longing to be delivered from their mortal body and this temporal world to receive a new immortal body and everlasting life in eternal glory with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The statement: "We may not be found naked" (v3) is contrasting the Greek theory that when the spirit left the mortal body it remained without a body whereas Paul is saying that those in Christ will be clothed with a body and not remain as a naked spirit (i.e., as a ghost like creature), but rather be clothed with a majestic royal immortal, eternal and heavenly body. This is the reason for Paul's words, "In this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling (v2). It is an expression which implies his earnest desire to be clothed with such a body and clearly shows that in that future state, the spirit will not be naked; that is, destitute of anybody or any covering, but will be clothed in some form; with an angelic and heavenly body.

GALATIANS

THOSE WHO SOW TO THE SPIRIT WILL REAP EVERLASTING LIFE

- **Galatians 6:8-9:** For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap *everlasting life*. ⁹And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Sowing to the flesh is living a totally selfish lifestyle and living to gratify self, ego, pride, lust and greed etc., while sowing to the spirit in this context is not only doing what is right and doing-good to others especially our brothers and sisters in Christ, but also living a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

EPHESIANS

GOD ACCOMPLISHED HIS ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST JESUS

- **Ephesians 3:11-12:** according to the *eternal purpose* which he (God) accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in him.

In this context God's eternal purpose was that the Gentiles are fellow heirs (with the Jews) and members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (Ephes. 3:6). It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew).

The following verses of Ephesians chapter two show that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ. The apostle Paul said:

- Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS of PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world.

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The practical application of what this means to us today: all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to all who belong to Christ. The book of Revelation states:

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

1 TIMOTHY

THE PATTERN FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE ON THE LORD FOR EVERLASTING LIFE

- **1 Timothy 1:15-16:** This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I (Paul) am chief. ¹⁶However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for *everlasting life*.

These verses show the following two things:

1. Those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life should not expect that life will be free of persecutions, troubles and hardships.

2. Paul says he was the chief of sinners. Luke in Acts eight tells us that, "Saul ravaged the church and entered house after house dragging men and women out and committing them to prison" (Acts 8:3). Ravaged carries the idea that he not only spoke evil of those who confessed the Lord Jesus Christ but also aggressively set about assaulting and abusing whoever believed in the Lord violently doing whatever he could to destroy and break up the church. Then in the next chapter Luke writes:
 - Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound in chains to Jerusalem (Acts 9:1-2).

Saul wanted the high priest to give him letters that when he presented them to the priests at Damascus they would give him permission to drag men and women confessing Christ out of the their synagogues so that he could take them captive to Jerusalem to be punished and even put to death (Acts 22:5) (Acts 26:10).

Paul's power and authority: since there was no-one in the Jewish priesthood higher in authority than the high priest Paul's authority and power was enormous. To be given letters from the high priest (Acts 9:1-2) that allowed him to destroy whoever was opposed to the Jewish teaching gave him legal authority to use not only Jewish, but also Roman officers and soldiers throughout the land of Israel to do whatever Paul instructed them to do to destroy the opposing faith. This is exactly what Paul was doing until the Lord miraculously turned his life around. We know Paul was causing wide spread chaos and mayhem throughout the region because Luke tells us when Paul left Jerusalem for Tarsus, "The church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied (Acts 9:31). Clearly showing the widespread havoc and destruction Paul was causing to the Church prior to his conversion.

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Paul's enormous, terror and destructive power: Paul states prior to his conversion he was advancing in Judaism beyond many his own age among the Jews and because he was so extremely zealous for the traditions of his fathers he violently persecuted the church of God trying to destroy it (Gal. 1:13-14) and pursued those who confessed Christ to death, binding and imprisoning both men and women (Acts 22:4) being convinced that he should do whatever he could to oppose the name of Jesus. After being given authority by the high priest he not only locked up many of the saints in prison at Jerusalem, but when they were put to death he cast his vote against them and punished them in all the synagogues trying to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them persecuted them even in foreign cities (Acts 26:10-11).

Paul's motivation: it was not that Paul was motivated by jealousy, pride and selfish ambition as many of the Jews were or from an evil heart. Rather Paul's motivation was from his zeal for God and what he believed was the right way to protect the religious laws and faith of the Nation of Israel. Paul had been taught by Gamaliel (a Pharisee and eminent doctor of the law) in the strictest laws of Moses (Acts 22:3) and was therefore so legalistic that he believed those who were confessing Christ were blasphemers to the laws and customs God had given to Moses and to the Covenant the LORD had establish with Israel thus the power and horror of wrong belief especially when it is infused with a legalistic heart that lacks, mercy, grace and compassion which in Paul's case had been generated by attending a religious school that gave him a wrong understanding of God, His laws and what is important to God's heart.

The worst sinners of all: throughout the years I have heard people state that they are the worst sinner of all and therefore believe God could not save them, all they have to do is look at the life of Paul prior to his conversion and ask themselves, "Have I broken up Christian families and put innocent men and women into prison and agreed as Paul did, to them being put to death simply because they were devoted to Christ? And then

look at what God was able to do with Paul's life. But there is another great lesson we can learn from Paul's life, it is obvious Paul was fully conscious of the hurt and harm he had done to brothers and sisters in Christ prior to his conversion, but he did not allow the horrors of it to rob his mind from the peace and love of Christ nor hinder him in any way from proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel. The following encouraging words of Paul show us all how he and by extension how we all should all overcome the mental horrors of our past life, Paul wrote: -

- I do not consider that I am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own, the one thing I do is to forget what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philip. 3:12-14).

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH, LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE

- **1 Timothy 6:12:** Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on *eternal life* to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

There are three interesting things to notice in Paul's words, "Fight the good fight of the faith" (v12).

1. It is called a good fight, this is because this fight is not fought with fists and weapons of war, but with love compassion, kindness, forgiveness grace and mercy thus the reason it is called, "The good fight."
2. It implies that living the Christian life is not about living a charmed life, but enduring through persecution, hardship and troubles.
3. The fight is about eternal life, not obtaining worldly wealth and riches.

The good confession: (v12) Timothy made was most likely that he would commit his life to teaching the Scriptures and the many witnesses would refer to the council of elders who laid their hands on him. Since Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice had acquainted him with Scriptures from childhood (2 Tim 1:5) and he no-doubt did his own research he was greatly qualified to be a teacher of the Gospel and an evangelist, (2 Tim. 3:15). Added to this Timothy was a man of integrity and good conscience so it is certain these elders who laid hands on him ordained him and gave him the authority to teach the word of God to the churches.

NOTE: earlier in this letter to Timothy Paul told him not to neglect the gift, which was given to him by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on him (1 Tim. 4:14). This gift Timothy had, refers to the authority he was given by these elders to proclaim the Gospel to the churches. The gift cannot refer to his knowledge of the Scriptures since no matter how gifted men of God maybe no-one can instantly gain full knowledge of them by having others laying hands on them.

JESUS WILL DISPLAY GOD AT THE PROPER TIME

- **1 Timothy 6:15-16:** which he (Jesus) will display (God) at the proper time — he (God) who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen.

Paul tells Timothy that Jesus at the proper time will display God, we know the title "King of kings and Lord of lords" (v15) in these verses are referring to God because it says:

- He alone is immortal meaning he cannot die, whereas Jesus did.
- He dwells in unapproachable light whereas Jesus was approachable by all.

- No-one has ever seen him, whereas Jesus was seen by all.

The title King does not always refer to Jesus, many times in the Old Testament God the Father is called the King.

The following verses show that God the Father is often called the King.

- The LORD (Y^ehovah) sits enthroned over the flood; *as king forever* (Psalm 29:10).
- Thou art *my King*, O God: command deliverances for Jacob (Psalm 44:4).
- For the LORD is a great *God, and a great King* above all gods (Psalm 95:3).
- I (David) will extol thee, my *God, O king* (Psalm 145).
- The LORD (Y^ehovah) the Most High a *great king over all* the earth (Psalm 47:2).
- Yet *God my King* is from of old, working salvation in the earth (Psalm 74:12).
- To the LORD (Y^ehovah) our *king to the Holy One* of Israel (Psalm 89:18).
- I (David) will extol you, *my God and King* (Psalm 145:1).
- Mine (Isaiah's) eyes have seen the *King, the LORD* of hosts (Isaiah 6:5).
- I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, *your King* (Isaiah 43:15).
- The LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an *everlasting king* (Jer. 10:10).

Paul in his words to Timothy is not implying that Jesus the Son is actually God the Father as some religious teachers proclaim. Paul starts his message in (v11) thanking God the Father for His plan of salvation and ends in (v17) with thanking the Father again giving Him the full title, "The only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see," a title that only belongs to the one true Almighty God, "Who gives life to all things" (v13) meaning God the Father is the source of all life.

The following three major Bible versions show this title in this context belongs to the Father and not the Son

American Standard Bible says:

- Which in its own times he (Christ) shall show, who is (God) the blessed and only Potentate, the king of kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim. 6:15).

New American Standard Bible says:

- Which he (Christ) will bring about (or reveal) at the proper time he (God) who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim 6:15).

New King James Bible says:

- Which he (Christ) will manifest in his own time, he (God) who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim. 6:15).

The title, "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of Lords" cannot be referring to Jesus because the verse goes onto to say, "Who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto whom no man hath seen, nor can see." Clearly people have approached and seen Christ even after his resurrection he appeared to many and they testify that they saw and handled him, yet verse sixteen says no man has ever seen him or can even approach him, evidencing that this title belongs to Almighty God and Father of all who belong to Christ.

Certainly: Jesus is returning as the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16) and certainly he is the King of kings and Lord of lords over the Kingdom of God, the church and all principalities, powers rulers in heaven and on earth, but that does not mean that God his heavenly Father who is the source of all life (1 Tim 6:13) stops being the King of kings and Lord of lords over all creation.

The principle: could be likened to a man who establishes a very successful global company and is therefore given the title C.E.O. meaning chief executive officer who has total control over all aspects of that company. Over time the man's son proves he is fully capable and trustworthy to run the company so his father passes the title C.E.O. over to his son. Now the Son has all the power and authority his father had, but that does not mean that the son has actually become the father nor does it mean that the father became the son.

For further information: concerning Jesus and his heavenly Father see the notes following the title, "This is Eternal Life that they may know God, and the Lord Jesus Christ," (John 17:1-3) (above).

LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE

- **1 Timothy 6:17-19:** Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may *lay hold on eternal life*.

These verses clearly show that it is not a sin to enjoy what God provides us with and that those who are rich should enjoy the wealth they have and the non-sinful joys of the world that being wealthy makes available. There is not only enormous beauty in creation that God has made for us to enjoy, but also people (saved and unsaved) that He has abundantly blessed with musical gifts, voices and other talents that can truly lift the heart and mind into places of pure joy. These are gifts that God has created for all to enjoy, sadly because the god of this world is mammon (money) only the rich can afford to do so (at least for the world's best), but it will not be this way in the Kingdom of God when the Lord returns and the god of this world is flicked off the throne and replaced with the King of kings and Lord of lords and their is justice and fairness for all, regardless of worldly wealth.

NOTE: riches only become wrong when people trust in them or become proud and arrogant because of their wealth, but if the rich enjoy their riches, do-good with the money and are generous then there is nothing wrong with riches. Added to this Paul says, if the rich do-good with their riches, are generous with their money and share their wealth they are storing up treasures in heaven.

2 TIMOTHY

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST JESUS WITH ETERNAL GLORY

- **2 Timothy 2:10:** Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with *eternal glory*.

The elect (v10) in this context refers to the Jews, most of Paul's suffering is a result of proclaiming Christ to the Jews, yet he is still prepared to endure suffering at their hands so that some may be saved. Here is the true heart of a shepherd Paul has more than enough knowledge for salvation and is saved to eternal life so he could sit back and take it easy, but because of his love for the Lord and those outside the Kingdom of God he not only chooses to live a life of denying himself of worldly pleasures

and luxuries, but is also prepared to suffer so that brothers and sisters would mature in the love of Christ and the grace of God and others would be added to the family of Christ. This is the true heart of a shepherd; Paul is not suffering for himself, but for others. It is interesting to notice the words, "They also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (v10) because this is the language most New Testament writers use after Christ resurrection. They don't give any indication where eternal glory will be except to say that it will be with the Lord. Whereas prior to the death and resurrection of Christ the primary focus is on the Kingdom of God. This is because prior to Christ resurrection no-one not even the apostles fully understood that God's plan of salvation would be in the promised seed of Abraham, the promised seed of David, Israel's Messiah the Christ to come and the Son of God. Certainly they believed a King was coming who would conquer nations and set Israel up as the head nation of the world this is why the focus is on the Kingdom prior to his death, but since Jesus resurrection the focus of all New Testament writers is Christ this is because he is the royal path and door to the Kingdom whereas the Kingdom is the inheritance of those who are in Christ by faith, love and God's grace.

TITUS

IN HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE' WHICH GOD, PROMISED BEFORE TIME BEGAN.

- **Titus 1:1-2:** Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,² in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

The words, "Their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness" (v1) means that the truth of God's word is in accord with living a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. It means as people read and study the Scriptures with a right heart attitude the knowledge they learn will not only guide them to God, the Lord Jesus Christ and eternal life, but also call them to live lifestyle of doing what is right and good and living in the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., love, compassion, kindness, mercy, grace and forgiveness etc.), against which there is no law.

The knowledge of the truth in this context does not refer to every aspect of the Bible, (i.e., many of the laws recorded in the book of Leviticus are irrelevant for us today and no-one needs to understand the detail of Israel's history or the family tree of their kings to be saved to eternal life). The primary focus of the truth in this context is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which leads to salvation and the Lord Jesus Christ himself who said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6) so the truth Paul has in mind are those teachings concerning Christ.

Jesus himself said to religious Jews who believed in God, read the Old Testament Scriptures daily and held fast to keeping every religious rite, law and tradition:

- You do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life (John 5:38-40)

These words of Jesus clearly show that the purpose of the Scriptures is to bring us to Christ. When we all stand before the Lord's judgment seat Christ will not sit us down to do a written doctrinal exam, but he will examine our lives to see if our religious actions stemmed from a devoted and loving heart toward him and his Father or from self, ego, and pride and will measure us against the royal law, "Love your neighbour as yourself," meaning did we treat others with love, kindness, compassion, grace, mercy and forgiveness especially our brothers and sisters in Christ.

NOTE: this does not mean that studying the Scriptures is of no value, quite the contrary, since the more we understand the Bible the stronger our faith and our hope grows and the more we learn of the nature, character will and the heart of the one we love.

To give a simple example: a young man may meet a girl that he is attracted to, so he takes her out on a few dates and finds she has a pleasant personality and caring nature, now, he knows this girl, no-one can say anything against her that he would believe because he knows her nature and her character, but if he never takes her for another date, it won't be long before that relationship will dissipate and other things will take its place. So, it is with the Scriptures they are our date with Christ and through them we gain eternal and heavenly insights into treasures of God that touch our hearts in a manner that nothing in this world can.

NOTE: when salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie (Rom. 8:24). The apostle Paul wrote; "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2). The Christian hopes to be resurrected from the grave to be raised up to eternal life and everlasting glory to be made perfectly free from sin; to be everlastingly happy, but it is faith that gives these things a mental reality in the mind and it is under this influence of faith that those in Christ allow these unseen and yet future events to control their mind as if they were a reality now.

Faith and hope: the difference between faith and hope is that by faith alone we are sure of eternal salvation it is certain and guaranteed by faith whereas by hope we look forward with confidence that we will be raised to eternal life. All Christian hope stands on faith since it is faith that secures and guarantees the promise of God. In this way faith and hope go together they are partners that complement each other since the same things that are the focus of our hope are the same things that our faith is trusting in. Faith secures while hope looks forward to what is secured by faith. A person who is full of faith is a person who has examined the evidence and is fully convinced that what they have examined proves itself to be true. The pillars of faith are conviction, assurance and confidence without these three there is no faith.

BY GRACE WE BECOME HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

- **Titus 3:5-7:** not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he *saved us*, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, ⁷that having been justified by his grace we should become heirs according to *the hope of eternal life*.

The words "Not because of works done by us in righteousness" (v5) refer to ceremonial rites, holy days, religious customs and traditions etc. Paul is saying it does not matter how ridged a person has been in legalistically keeping ceremonial rites, holy days, Sabbaths, religious customs and traditions not one of these things has any power to save us to eternal life. There is only one power under all of heaven that has the power to save anyone to eternal life and it has nothing to do with the religious things we do, but rather is totally dependent on faith in the Lord and God's love and grace in Christ.

God's did not base His eternal plan on human self-effort or good works, nor are our good works the cause of our salvation. Consider the following:

- If people could have been saved by their own self-effort and good works, there would have been no need of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ.

- If our own deeds were the basis of our title to eternal life, the work of Christ would be equally unnecessary.
- If anyone of us could attain to the perfect state the law demands Christ died for nothing.

It is a great and fundamental principle of the Gospel is that self-effort and good works come in for no share in our justification. They are in no sense a consideration on account of which God pardons a person and receives them to favour. The only basis of justification is the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the matter of justification before God for all mankind everyone is on the same level because salvation to eternal life: -

- Is according to God's mercy.
- Has its origin in God's mercy.
- Is by God's mercy and compassion, and not by works.
- Is an expression of God's great mercy.
- Is conferred, awarded and granted only by God's mercy.

Whatever we have done or can do, when we come to receive salvation from the hand of God, there is no other element which enters into it but mercy. It is not because our deeds deserve it; it is not because we have by repentance and faith wrought ourselves into such a state of mind that we can claim it; but, after all our tears, and sighs, and prayers, and good deeds, it is a pure favour and gift of God. Here is the wonder, splendour and spectacular glory of the message of salvation, our justification and our redemption is not in our works or our own self-righteousness, but in the kindness and love of God who accepts us through the excellences and virtues of Christ alone and not from any desert in us, but according to his own mercy and by his grace and his free unmerited goodness. This is one of the glorious reasons the Christian message of salvation is called the, Good News.

Regeneration and renewal: in this context carry the idea of a spiritual rebirth (the state or the act), referring to a spiritual renovation, restoration or renewing. In order to gain a correct understanding of the words, "The washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (v5) it is necessary to determine whether it is referring to water baptism (as some believe) or whether it refers to something quite different. The context that the verse is seated in is of being saved to eternal life not by works of righteousness but by God's mercy (v5). If the words washing of regeneration are referring to that outward washing of water baptism it would mean that people are saved by being water baptised. Certainly, water baptism is one of the ordinances connected with salvation as Jesus himself clearly stated, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), but it is not affirmed in these words of Jesus that water baptism is the actual means of salvation. In fact his following words, "But he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16) point to the fact that the actual means of salvation is in believing and not the actual outward act of water baptism which is in harmony with all teaching regarding salvation (i.e., we are saved by faith and god's grace in Christ and not by our own religious works of which Paul has just gloriously stated in the previous verse (v5) of this letter to Titus).

A new life in Christ: The Gospel message proclaims a new life in Christ and the words regeneration and renewal carry the idea of a new birth, reproduction or renewal. When used spiritually they apply to a person who has found new life or in some way new life has begun or commenced in them so that they may be said to be newly alive which is the state of those who are born again into Christ therefore the words washing of regeneration are referring to the new life in Christ that begins in all who the Father, delivers from the domain of darkness and transfers into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom they have redemption and the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:12-14).

The following are five reasons why the words, "The washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (v5) cannot be referring to water baptism.

1. Without faith on the part of the person being water baptised, baptism no-matter how high the religious standing of those doing the actual baptism it is no different to taking a bath and will certainly not bring about any change in the life of the person being baptised. For this reason it is to be understood that the words, "The regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (v5) refer to the grace and love of God that inwardly renews and changes the heart and mind to a new way of living which are a result of faith not works, while the act of water baptism beautifully testifies outwardly that this regeneration and renewal of God's grace by the Holy Spirit upon the heart and mind has been effected inwardly. Water baptism is a rite commanded by Christ himself clearly showing that all who confess to believe in the Lord should enter the waters of baptism. No-doubt one of the reasons Paul immediately links the new birth to water baptism is because water baptism is a visible sign which outwardly evidences that the inward cleansing, purifying influences of the Holy Spirit have transformed and converted the heart to a new way of living and it is only natural and should always be expected that the thing that is used to signify something is linked to the thing it is symbolizing.
2. Another strong reason that the words, "The washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (v5) cannot be referring to water baptism is the fact that if a person who lacks faith is being water baptised there will be no spiritual benefit, without belief it is no different to simply taking a dip in some cold water. The power lies in the person's faith not in the outward act. It is upon this faith that God by his Holy Spirit makes the outward act of water baptism an outstanding, wonderful and magnificent spiritual moment for the one being baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is God's Spirit of love, mercy and grace working on the inner man that cleanses and purifies, without believing faith water baptism changes nothing inwardly. This is why infant water baptism is not biblical, but simply a church tradition that has been passed down through the generations, mostly I expect because it's a nice thing to do and gives parents some sense of spiritual security for the new born child whether they themselves are committed to Christ or not.
3. Sinners should be regenerated before they are water baptised (though some may be baptized and not regenerated) therefore it is clear that, "The washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (v5) does not refer to the ordinance of water baptism, but to new life which is cause by the Spirit of God acting on the heart prior to a person being water baptised.
4. If a person was saved by water baptism that would contradict Paul's statement that no-one can be saved by works of righteousness (v5), which means that the expression, "The washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (v5) means by the regenerating of God's grace on the heart and refers to being born of the Spirit (also called being born again) which carries the idea that a new life has begun. It is naturally linked or compared with washing of water because of waters purity and cleansing virtue since those who are regenerated and sanctified are said to be washed and cleansed, having their hearts purified by faith, and their consciences purged from sin by the blood of Christ.
5. The expression, "The washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (v5) not only refers to a sinner under the influencing effect of the Holy Spirit being converted to newness of life, but also to the gradual increase and progress of the work of grace renewing day by day the spirit of the mind and wooing those who have entered into this new life to greater depths of God's love and his service as they grow in the Lord.

It is through this "Washing of regeneration" that the new creature, the new man, the new heart, and new spirit is formed in the inner most being. A sinners first step toward salvation is the discovery of the love God has toward them, without this regenerating and renewing there is no entrance into eternal life since it is the foundation of all grace and the only means by which brothers and sisters in Christ are heirs of the heavenly inheritance.

Christ and the working of His Spirit: God the Father is the fountain from which the Holy Spirit flows, to teach, regenerate, and save his fallen creatures; and this blessing comes to mankind through Christ God's beloved Son. The spring and rise of this fountain is the kindness and love of God to mankind. Love and grace have, through the Spirit, great power to change and turn the heart of a person to God whereas the outward act of water baptism will avail nothing, thus washing of regeneration refers to that which is inward and spiritual it is the work of the Spirit of God on the inner man, while the act of water baptism is the outward sign that this regeneration of the Spirit on the inner man has been effected.

Circumcision and water baptism: in the Old Testament the LORD said to Abraham, "This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you as (Gen. 17:10-14) (Gen. 17:23-27). This was God's covenant with the people of Israel, but it was not the way by which they were saved to eternal life but a sign of their lives being committed to God. Water baptism has in this sense replace the covenant of circumcision and in the same way is an outward sign that a person life is now going to be committed from here on to living with Christ seated on the throne of their minds and hearts influencing their choices, speech, actions and behaviour toward what is decent, right, good and loving.

Water baptism and marriage: water baptism is very much like what a marriage is to a courting couple, the influence of love in the heart has taken place long before the couple enter into the act of marriage. The marriage is that final comment to their partner that they are surrendering the rest of their life to live for the one they love. This is why when a man proposes to a girl she is over the moon with joy, because is not only the ultimate evidence of his love for her, but also the ultimate evidence to the rest of the world that he is not available to any other lovers nor does he desire them. His wife to be is the only woman he desires to sit on the throne of his mind and his heart. Likewise, water baptism is the ultimate act of our love toward Christ and symbolises in the same manner that the one being baptised has no desire for any other Lord or King to sit on the throne of their heart. For further information see the title:

- Water Baptism (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Heirs according to the hope of eternal life: (v7) these words, do not mean it might or might not happen. When salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and He cannot lie. The apostle Paul wrote in his letter to Titus; "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2).

HEBREWS

JESUS IS THE GIVER OF ETERNAL LIFE TO ALL THOSE WHO OBEY HIM

- **Hebrews 5:8-9:** though he was a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. ⁹And having been perfected, he (Jesus) became the author of *eternal salvation* to all who obey him.

Though Jesus kept his exalted rank as the Son of God and was conscious of it, yet he was willing to learn experimentally what is meant by obedience in the midst of sufferings. It cannot be supposed that he did not know what obedience was or that he was indisposed to obey God before he suffered or that he had, as we have, perversities of nature leading to rebellion which were required to be subdued by suffering nor that this obedience refers to his obedience to his parents, civil magistrates or to the precepts of the law. Rather the words "Jesus learned obedience" (v8) means he learned it practically, it means he was willing to test the power of obedience in sufferings; to become personally and practically acquainted with the nature of such obedience in the midst of many sorrows which he did even unto death.

The purpose here is, to show how well suited the Lord Jesus is to be a Saviour for mankind, he has set us an example and has shown that even in the deepest sorrows of the body and the heart obedience to God may still be manifested.

Following are three lessons we can learn from Christ's suffering:

- 1 We, learn that suffering and affliction will test our will to obey when troubles and hardships come and destroy our plans our dreams and our aspirations well we turn bitter against God and turn away from our cross to take an easier path or remain faithful in the face of suffering, adversities and troubles (these moments are the tests of our faith).
- 2 Great faith and great love is often tested in the furnace of affliction, here some of the most valuable lessons of life are learned. Peter in his letter wrote, "There may be times that we are grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of our faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7). It is easy to glorify God when life is charmed, even the secular world at some level will praise God for good things, it is when life goes against us that faith is revealed to be genuine or one of self-deception and pretence.
- 3 We should not expect to be exempted from sufferings on account of being a faithful brother or sister in Christ and an adopted son of God nor should we conclude that we are not sons and daughters of God because we suffer. Jesus when talking to the scribes and the Pharisees said, "I always do the things that are pleasing to him" (John 8:29) clearly showing that he did not have to learn to obey, he did not need to be disciplined out of any inclination within him to rebel or act in disobedience toward God his heavenly Father. The idea of Jesus learning obedience is that he would experience what it meant to remain faithful even under extreme suffering.

One of the most important qualifications for the office of high priest was the ability to show compassion and to sympathize with those who are suffering troubles, trials and hardships. Even those in the secular world teach that the ideal person to comfort, counsel and empathize with a person who is under great sorrow and suffering is another person who has also experienced what it is to suffer. Jesus in his office as a High Priest is not simply a comforter and mediator because he has learned the concepts of counselling from a text book, but because he has experienced and been personally tested in every respect as we are, it is from his own personal experience that he is able to empathize with and understand human obedience under extreme suffering and from the heart act in true compassion in contrast to acting simply from intellectual head knowledge.

Prior to this chapter the author of Hebrews wrote:

- Jesus had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people so we do not have a *High Priest* who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 2:17) (Hebrews 4:15).

- **Hebrews 6:1-2:** Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ²of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment.

The word, 'Therefore' links us immediately back to the previous chapter in which the author told the Hebrews that they should be teachers of the Gospel, but instead needed someone to teach them, "The basic principles of the oracles of God because they were dull of hearing and infants in Christ who could only be fed with milk and not solid food (Heb. 5:11-14). These Hebrews not only had the Old Testament Scriptures for over four-thousand years which echoed, foreshadowed and through the prophets foretold of the coming Messiah the Christ, but had also been taught the fundamental doctrines pertaining to the beginning of Christian life and those doctrines that save a sinner to eternal salvation and everlasting glory. They had been taught that set of doctrines which make up the foundation of the Christian faith this is why the author said in the previous chapter, "By this time they should have been teachers" (Heb. 5:12).

Maturity (perfection in KJV): means the complete ideal it carries the idea of making one complete, mature or perfect, but being complete, mature and perfect in this context does not mean being without sin, but rather refers to the following two things:

1. To having complete faith in Christ and total trust in God's grace to save us to eternal life and to having such strong faith in the Lord that it will endure even when tested in times of troubles, hardships and sorrow.
2. To behaviour (i.e., being a good testimony to God and the Lord Jesus Christ).

In the Old Testament it is written:

- Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation (Gen. 6:9) (Gen. 7:1)
- Job was blameless, upright, feared God and turned away from evil (Job 1:1).

God Himself confirms Job's righteousness, by saying, "There is none like Job a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" And even after Job had been tested and suffered greatly the LORD said, "Job even continues to hold fast his integrity even though I the LORD have almost destroyed him without reason" (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3). Being perfect, mature and complete in regards to behaviour carries the same idea as the words blameless and righteousness do in these verses. Being righteous and blameless does not mean that Noah or Job were without sin before God it simply means that they were decent men, who only did-good to others and not harm. No human could accuse them of any wrongdoing. Being complete, mature perfect, righteous or blamelessness as used in this context is about being blameless before mankind. It's about helping the less fortunate and doing what is right before God and not about being without sin. Today we don't refer to people as being complete, mature, perfect, righteous or blameless, but would simply say, they were a very good person, meaning they were kind, decent and treated others with respect, fairness, kindness and justice. No brother or sister in Christ should ever be content to rest as babes and infants in Christ acting only in human ways (1 Cor. 3:1-4), but passionately desire to grow in the fruits of the Spirit until their hearts are overflowing with them and their outward behaviour clearly evidences it. There has only ever been one man who walked on earth without sin before God and his name was not Noah or Job, but the Lord Jesus Christ. The author is speaking to the Hebrews who had been taught for over four-thousand years to believe in God, as the God of Israel, believing in God was not their problem. The stumbling block to their faith was not God, but believing that their Messiah the Christ had arrived and that he is the sole

source of salvation and that there is no-need to retain the Levitical priesthood. The entire focus of this letter is to prove to the Hebrews that Jesus is the Christ apart from religious works. The author is about to shift the focus from the elementary (basic and fundamental) teachings of Christ to Abraham since he clearly understands that all Hebrews not only esteemed Abraham as a great man of God but also believed in God's promise that his seed would inherit the world. So, in these verses he is basically saying:

- Let's leave the elementary teachings and go onto God's promise to Abraham (which he does in verses 13-17) and come back to these foundational things at a later time if God permits (meaning if he has the time).

The call to higher knowledge: throughout history some religious teachers have thought the words, "Let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity" mean that the author was calling the Hebrews to leave the fundamental teachings of Christ and go onto higher knowledge, in a certain sense they are right, but, this raises the following enormous question, "What knowledge can be more advanced than the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ that leads to salvation and the resurrection of the dead to eternal life and everlasting glory?" How can there be any higher or more perfect knowledge than this? The answer of course is that there is no higher knowledge than the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Gospel is the only knowledge that has the power to save a sinner to eternal life, there is no other Gospel or teaching that has such power and majestic glory.

But those who believed that the author was calling his audience to higher knowledge were not totally wrong providing they were thinking of the higher knowledge not as being better knowledge, but being the best knowledge suited to the audience. If a minister has a church full of brothers and sisters who are still living as babes and infants in Christ and acting in merely human ways (1 Cor. 3:1-4) the focus of his teaching (as Paul's was) would need to be on the fruits of the Spirit and such like topics, whereas if his church is full of brothers and sisters whose lifestyles are a good reflection of Christ he can focus on other subjects. Likewise, the author of this letter is writing to Hebrews who have been taught the fundamental elements of Christ, but still seem to be in doubt, so he is about to take them onto the following two topics that they had been taught for over four-thousand years:

1. God's promise to Abraham that his seed would inherit the world.
2. To the priest that was prophesied to come after the order of Melchizedek which at the end of this chapter the author brilliantly ties both of these into the New Testament Gospel message to prove Jesus is who he claimed to be.

The higher knowledge in this context is that knowledge that best suits the audience (or the individual) find eternal salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Added to these the author in the following chapters brilliantly shows his doubtful and confused Hebrew readers that the tabernacle of Moses, the Holy Place the Most Holy Place the high priest, the Levitical priesthood and the blood sacrifices for sin were all imperfect types shadows and patterns of better things to come and how they were to give place to a far more perfect system. He uses these which they clearly understood to prove to them that Christ is the true tabernacle of God, the true High Priest and the true sacrificial Lamb without blemish who gave himself as an offering once for all.

The words, "Leaving the elementary things behind" in the context of this chapter refer to the author in the following chapters masterfully showing his Hebrew readers how the old relates to the new because they regarded the ordinances of the tabernacle and the whole service of the Levitical priesthood as of divine appointment, and of perpetual obligation so of course the author uses what they understood to prove that Christ is the sole source of salvation totally apart from all forms of religious works and human priests.

Repentance from dead works: the phrase, "Repentance from dead works" (v1) does not refer to the evangelical Gospel message of repentance that calls a sinner to eternal salvation in Christ, for the following two reasons:

1. The Gospel of Christ commands that everyone repent. Repentance is essential in laying the foundation of Christian faith because repentance changes the will. The rebellious will becomes a will that desires to serve the Lord. Only repentance before God can change the heart in such a manner. Repentance is the foundation of the work of God in the heart because by repentance the heart turns to God to find mercy, surrenders to Christ as redeemer and Saviour and with a heartfelt passion desires to forsake sin and live to honour both God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 The Lord Jesus Christ himself said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17) and told us to go into all the world and proclaim this message of repentance over and over again. Rather the dead works the author has in focus refer to religious works believers do and trust in to be saved, because these works are as vain to save as though they were dead, thus the reason they are called dead works.

This is one of the greatest problems Paul had within the churches he had established. Certain Jews believed Jesus was their Messiah and the Christ but did not believe the message of grace and therefore by their established influence and authority and their knowledge of the Scriptures and skill in oratory and speech making were leading brothers and sisters (especially new converts) in Christ back under the law to be saved. This letter is directed to the Hebrews who for over four-thousand years held fast to Moses Laws of purification to earn righteousness by strictly adhering to religious rites. The dead works in the context of these verses refer to adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to be saved to eternal life. Even today when formalists are converted to Christ one of their greatest dangers is to return back under the law and trust in religious works to earn righteousness. The Old Testament Levitical law required the Hebrew to continually offer for a sin offering slain animals over which they confessed their iniquities for the forgiveness of sin and freedom from guilt. Whereas now, under the Gospel of Christ no Hebrew (or Gentile) needs to signify repentance in this way; since Christ unlike the animal sacrifices died once for all, no-one has to continually ask for forgiveness to be saved and accepted by God since all who are in Christ are loved by God and saved to eternal life.

NOTE: This is not about repenting and feeling sorrow over offenses we many have done while in Christ that is another topic altogether. Here the focus is repentance that leads to eternal life in Christ it is that repentance that, "Delivers a sinner from the domain of darkness and transfers them into the kingdom of God's beloved Son" (Col 1:13). Once a sinner is transferred into this Kingdom, they do not need to continually repent to get back into it, unless they have consciously and deliberately turned away from the faith and against Christ. The idea is that the Hebrews were not to make it necessary to continually lay down again and again the very cornerstones, and the foundations of the Gospel because these were already laid rather, they were to rest in their faith and trust in God's grace and go on to build upon the foundation. If the foundation is laid right it does not need to be continually laid again and again should any builder do so those watching on would consider him foolish in the extreme. The illustrative idea that the author is presenting to the Hebrews is that no building is completed if the labours linger at the foundation likewise Christian maturity cannot be attained by lingering at its earliest stages, but rather by moving forward and building upon them.

Faith toward God: all Christians know that no-one can be saved without faith but here the author states faith in God yet Paul told the elders of the church that "Both Jews and Greeks are saved by repentance toward God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21) added to this the Gospel

and many other Scriptures clearly teach that it is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that saves to eternal life whereas here faith in God is referred to, but there is no essential difference since it is faith in God in regard to God being the source of all life and to his eternal plan of salvation that He purposed in his eternal mind before the world began which of course includes faith in his Son. Without God's pre-ordained plan no-one could be saved, but without Christ God's eternal plan of salvation is left bankrupt, so it is naturally assumed by biblical writers that their readers will know that to believe in God also embraces the idea of believing in Christ since one cannot be separated from the other in regards to eternal salvation. No-one can believe in the true God who does not believe in His Son (John 5:23) (John 17:3). This is a foundational and fundamental principle, without this faith it is not only impossible to please God, but also impossible for anyone to be saved even Jesus said, "This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3).

CHRIST HAS OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION WITH HIS OWN BLOOD

- **Hebrews 9:11-12:** Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹²Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood he entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

God is building a tent (i.e., a tabernacle and temple) that in contrast to Moses tabernacle and Solomon's and Herod's temple is being built without human hands. This temple refers to God's global church which is made up of people of all nations and languages worldwide who belong to God's Kingdom and the family of Christ. This is the temple God is building; every faithful brother and sister in Christ is the temple of God since God's Spirit dwells within each faithful believer and collectively they form the global temple that is being made without hands. It is a spiritual temple of which Christ is the foundation and the Head and every brother and sister of the Lord are the bricks and stones while the mortar is love this is the cement that hold this spiritual temple made without hands together.

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Sanctifies: means to bless and purify, in this context it carries the idea of making an unclean person holy and sacred and thereby accepted and approved of by God. The two examples mentioned in these verses, "The blood of bulls and goats" and "The ashes of a heifer" cover the entire legal provision for making one clean and especially to the annual Day of Atonement for the purification of the people as a nation (Lev. 16) (Num. 29:7-11) whether the uncleanness was by sin or by contact with a dead body and such like things that declared the people of Israel unclean.

Here we see the beauty of types and shadows: The Old Testament sacrifices were a foreshadow of God's ultimate and acceptable sacrifice to come God's very own Son the Lord Jesus Christ who laid down his life once for all. Just as God accepts the death of Christ (the innocent Lamb without blemish) in place of the death of the sinner (the penalty of sin) the LORD under the Levitical priesthood accepted the sacrifices of an innocent animal without blemish in place of the death of the people of Israel and in this, the sacrifices were a shadow of good things to come (Hebrews 10:1).

THOSE WHO ARE CALLED MAY RECEIVE THE PROMISE OF THE ETERNAL INHERITANCE

- **Hebrews 9:15:** And for this reason, he is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Here the author is telling his Hebrew audience that Christ is the mediator of a New Covenant and that his death redeems them from any religious ceremonial law, they have committed or transgressed under the Old Covenant (i.e., Moses laws of purification, the Levitical laws and the Levitical priesthood etc.). Following is the stunning glory, wonder and splendour of God's eternal message kept for us in the Cannon of the Bible. The promised eternal inheritance that all those in Christ (Jews and Gentiles) will share in together refers to the oath the LORD God made to Abraham thousands of years ago. God promised Abraham that He would make of him a great nation and that he would be the father of a multitude of nations. God swore by an oath that Abraham's offspring would be as the dust of the earth and the stars of heaven so that they could not be numbered and that God Himself would be their God. The LORD God confirmed this promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their offspring after them throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant promising Abraham that in his offspring all the nations of the earth would be blessed and that his seed (being Christ) would inherit the world.

(Gen. 12:1-3) (Gen. 13:14-17) (Gen. 15:4-7) (Gen. 17:1-8)
(Gen. 22:15-18) (Deut. 9:5)

Now the majestic wonder, glory and beauty of God's promised eternal inheritance is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul wrote that the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. that is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all Abrahams offspring—not only to the adherents of the law (referring to the Jews), but also to the ones who shares the faith of Abraham (referring to the Gentiles), who is the father of us all (Jews and Gentiles) as it is written:

- I have made you (Abraham) the father of many nations (i.e., not just Jews) in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead (the resurrection) and calls into existence the things that do not exist (creation) (Rom. 4:17).

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In hope Abraham believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." Paul tells us that "The twelve tribes of Israel earnestly worshipped night and day hoping to attain to this promise (Acts 26:7). And then gloriously points out that the Scripture does not say, "And to offspring's," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to Abraham's offspring, who is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). Some may think the promised eternal inheritance made to Abraham was for the Jews only, but Paul magnificently explains in the book of Ephesians that the promises of God have been extended to all nations through being baptised into the Lord Jesus Christ and clearly shows that the promised eternal inheritance made to Abraham and to his seed the Lord Jesus Christ are not limited to the Jews only, but embraces whoever will come to God through faith in Christ (Rom. 4:13) (Rom. 4:16-18) (Gal. 3:16) (Gal. 3:27). God's promised eternal inheritance to Abraham will be fulfilled when the seed of Abraham the Lord Jesus Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and

those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information concerning Jews and Gentiles becoming one nation, see the notes under the title, "God accomplished His Eternal Purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord following (Ephesians 3:11-12) (above). For further information concerning God's Kingdom, see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

1 PETER

GOD OF ALL GRACE CALLED US TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS

- **1 Peter 5:10:** But may the God of all grace, who called us to *his eternal glory* by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

The words, "After you have suffered a little while" refer to our mortal life on earth, after this little while (our lifespan) God will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish us. God will accomplish this promise when the Lord Jesus Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. This is why to find peace and calm of mind our whole life and all our concerns and burdens need to be fully surrendered to God because while we will live this "little while" on earth in our mortal bodies we will never be fully free of troubles and sorrows.

NOTE: This does not mean that we don't plan goals and work to provide a comfortable life for our families or pursue our dreams, but that our highest passion, thought and dream is God, it means that no-matter what we are doing Christ is always seated on the throne of our hearts and that we always remain surrendered to God's will.

2 PETER

A RICH ENTRANCE INTO THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

- **Peter 1:11:** For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the *eternal kingdom* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The words, "For in this way" refer to the previous verses in which Peter told those who follow him to add the fruits of the spirit to their faith. Now he is telling them if we do this, we will be most welcomed into the eternal kingdom of God.

Paul in his letter to the Corinthian brothers and sisters wrote:

- If anyone builds on the foundation (Jesus Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Cor. 3:11-14).

The gold, silver and precious stones Paul has in mind are the same things that Peter is telling us in this chapter to add to our faith.

ETERNAL LIFE WAS MANIFESTED IN CHRIST AFTER THE RESURRECTION

- **1 John 1:1-2:** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the word of life—² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that *eternal life* which was with the Father and *was manifested to us*.

Some use the words, "That which was from the beginning," to support the mistaken theory that Jesus was with God from the beginning of creation, but the focus of John is, "The eternal life which was with the Father" (v2). Certainly, Jesus was in the eternal mind of God from before the foundations of the world and the centre of God's eternal plans, purposes and promises to be the Saviour of all mankind. Much like parents who mindfully plan the birth of their child long before their baby is born and even makes the necessary changes to prepare their home for the arrival of their new born child and decorating a room while the child is still growing in the womb. In the same way Jesus was in God's eternal mind and his eternal plan for mankind's salvation long before Mary gave birth to him. It is in this sense that Jesus was with God in the beginning. Sadly many of those who believe Jesus is God, teach that those who only claim him to be the most glorified and beloved Son of God are not Christians yet there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states people must believe that Jesus is God to be saved, but there are literally multitudes of verses that state "Whoever believes that *Jesus is the Son of God* will be saved." Added to this there is not one verse that says, "Whoever believes that Jesus is *God the Son* will be saved." Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God, Christ would have told the apostles at least once in his discourses with them and in his messages of salvation, but all we find in the Scriptures is Jesus and the apostles proclaiming that people must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved, even Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

For further information see the title:

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity).
- In Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THAT WHICH WAS FROM THE BEGINNING

That which was from the beginning (v1), refers to eternal life it was eternal life that was with God at the beginning not Jesus as many teach. Jesus was resurrected to eternal life from the dead and John and the apostles heard him talk, saw him with their own eyes, touched him with their own hands, and even ate with him. They saw the promised eternal life in Christ's resurrected immortal and eternal body. The words, "Concerning the word of life" (v1) refers to God's promise of eternal life from the beginning which Peter and the apostles have seen in Jesus resurrected body. It is this eternal life that Peter says was made manifest to him and the apostles and it this eternal life that was with God from the beginning that they have seen and testify of.

Consider: the entire glory of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the promise of eternal life which was with God from before the foundations of the world. The message Jesus, the apostles and Peter proclaim to us is that we through faith and God's grace can be partakers in the eternal life which was with the Father from the beginning and was made manifest in Christ to Peter and the apostles in the resurrected body of the Lord Jesus Christ. The words, "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also

to you" (v3), refers to the resurrected eternal body of the Lord Jesus Christ. This eternal life is the Spirit of God and clearly was with God from the beginning. God the Father is the source of all life he is eternal life and gave that life to the Lord Jesus Christ who gives it to all who belong to his family. Peter and the apostles proclaim the message of eternal life that was with God in the beginning and that was manifested to them in the resurrected body of the Lord Jesus Christ so that whoever believes in Christ may also have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

IF TRUTH ABIDES IN A BELIEVER, THEY ARE PROMISED ETERNAL LIFE

- **1 John 2:24-25:** Therefore let that (teaching) abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵*And this is the promise that he has promised us—eternal life.*

Though John has new converts in focus his message applies to all of us, the words, "Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you" (v24) refers to the words of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the apostles. It is that message of the Gospel that was preached at the beginning of the New Covenant in contrast to the distorted and twisted teaching of the antichrists and the false teachers. John is basically saying that there are no new doctrines, messages, prophecies revelations, teachings or messages than those that we have been given in the beginning of the Christian faith, therefore abide in the apostles teaching and don't go seeking after new prophetic messages or revelations no matter who is speaking them (i.e., even if they are a coming from a man who has a global religious empire) if he is giving out new prophetic revelations and prophecies do not follow after him since they are not coming from the Spirit of God or the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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NOTICE: John says "Whoever abides in the Son and in the Father" (v24) has eternal life. This shows that eternal life is not about abiding in intellectual knowledge, but in the love of God and the love of the lord Jesus Christ. The words of Christ and the messages of the apostles are to bring us into this love relationship with God through faith in Christ. Then from this love we are to live our lives toward God, toward Christ, toward our brothers and sisters in Christ and toward those who do not know the love of God.

NO MURDERER HAS ETERNAL LIFE ABIDING IN THEM

- **1 John 3:14-15:** We know that we have passed out of death into life (eternal) because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that *no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

Hate in this context carries the idea of extreme jealousy, the deep desire to see another hurt as Cain in his heart despised his brother Able with such loathing that he murdered him. Hate is the spirit of the devil while love is the Spirit of Christ thus the reason John says, "No-one with hate in their heart has eternal life abiding in them."

GOD HAS GIVEN US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON

- **1 John 5:11-13:** And this is the testimony: that God has given us *eternal life* and this life is in His Son. ¹²He who has the Son has life (eternal) he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have *eternal life* and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

The testimony of God has the following two aspects:

1. In God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ is eternal life and whoever by faith is in Christ has eternal life.
2. Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have eternal life.

John is saying that believing in God the Father alone is not enough to be given eternal life to receive eternal life a person must believe in the Father and the Son. Those who believe in the God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ have eternal life. This is the glorious message of the Christian faith and the wonder of God's eternal plan of salvation eternal life is in God's Son and whoever has God's Son has eternal life. There is no-doubt many who John spoke to were Jews who had converted to Christ, but were still being influenced by the religious leaders of Israel who proclaimed no-one could enter the Kingdom of God except by keeping Moses laws of purification, ceremonial rites and the Jewish religious customs and traditions. John to oppose these teachings of religious works is telling those who have been born again in Christ that eternal life is in God's Son and whoever has Christ has eternal life so that they can be confident that they have eternal life not by their own self-effort, but by faith. No-one can be saved to eternal life by works or by performing ceremonial rites and keeping religious customs and traditions, we all must believe in the Father and the Son to be saved to eternal life. Preventing new Jewish converts from going back under the law was one of the greatest struggles Paul had in his ministry when visiting the Galatians, he said:

- I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting God who called you in the *grace* of Christ and are turning to a different gospel, not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-7).

And in chapter three Paul in stunned surprise said:

- O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified, did you receive salvation by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by faith, you are you now believing you can be made righteous by self-effort and religious works of the law? (Gal. 3:1-29).

Trusting in self-effort and religious works to be saved does not only apply to the Jewish converts, it is one of the greatest dangers for all Christians. Even today going to a regular church every Sunday, faithfully serving God, singing in a church choir, teaching Sunday school, preaching the word of God, being the head oversight of a global religious organisation and such like things though all good in themselves have absolutely no power to save anyone to eternal life, yet many consciously or unconsciously trust in these things. This is what John and Paul were struggling against (i.e., believers trusting in religious works).

There is only one path to eternal life and it is not by self-effort, works of the law or religious works, but by faith this is the message John is teaching, to be born again and saved to eternal life comes solely by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God.

NOTE: believing in the Son of God supposes the following:

- Jesus is God's Son.
- Jesus came in the flesh (meaning he was born of a woman).
- Jesus died and rose again.
- The words Jesus spoke are truth.
- Eternal life is in the Lord Jesus Christ God's Son.
- The teachings of the apostles are the messages of God.
- Those who are born again love those in Christ's family.

- **1 John 5:20-21:** And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and *eternal life*.²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

John is saying that the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ has come into the whole world that lies in sin to give us understanding of the true God and eternal life. John's focus in these verses is that Jesus the Son of God came so that believers may know God the Father is the one true God. Knowing God, the Father is the focus of these verses. John is saying that Jesus came so that those who believe in him would know the true God and have eternal life. To magnify this majestic and glorious truth John repeats his statement, "God the Father is the true God and eternal life."

NOTE: John is not teaching (as many believe) that Jesus is God rather John is saying that by being in the Lord Jesus Christ God's Son believers are in the Father who is the true God and eternal life. The whole purpose of God the Father sending His Son was so that whoever believed in Christ would by faith and God's grace be united in love with God. It is only through faith in God's Son that believers are able to stand before God the Father and receive His divine favour. It should be observed that John in, verse twenty, shows that the theme of these Scriptures is not that believers may know that Jesus is the true God, but that the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ came so that believers through faith in him may know God the Father who is the true God. This is not only in total harmony with the entire teaching of the Bible, but also in harmony with the following words of the Lord Jesus Christ who said:

- This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, And Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3).

Jesus with these words shines a brilliant floodlight on the truth that Jesus is not God, but as the entire Bible teaches from Genesis to Revelation the most beloved Son of God the promised Messiah, the Christ and Saviour of the world. The whole purpose of God the Father sending His Son was that we once again would have a right standing before the Almighty Holy Father God. It is only through faith in His Son that we are able to stand before God and receive His divine Favour

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KEEP YOURSELVES IN GOD'S LOVE AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST UNTO ETERNAL LIFE

- **Jude 1:25:** keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto *eternal life*.

This verse clearly shows that the Christian faith is far more than adhering to a set of doctrines, church creeds and intellectual knowledge. Paul in his letter to the Ephesian brothers and sisters prayed that:

- They would, know the *love* of Christ that surpasses knowledge so that they would be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephes. 3:19).

The fullness of God in this context is love John in his letter states:

- Anyone who does not *love* does not know God, because God is *love* (1 John 4:8) and goes on to say that "God is *love* and whoever abides in *love* abides in God, and God abides in him by *love* (1 John 4:16).

It is this love of God and love of Christ Jude is encouraging all brothers and sisters to keep themselves in until Jesus returns and we are all resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory.

The following terms all mean saved to eternal life:

- Entering the Kingdom of God and being saved.
- Eternal life and everlasting life.
- You shall live, seeing life and the gift of God.

It should be noted: The Kingdom of God is not the path to salvation but the inheritance of it. The royal path to salvation is to surrender by faith our hearts, minds and lives to the Lord Jesus Christ he is the golden door to salvation while the Kingdom of God is the inheritance of those who have been saved. The global spiritual Kingdom of God exist in this present age by faith it is an invisible worldwide Kingdom dwelling in the hearts of all those who have made the Lord Jesus Christ King of their heart, mind and lives. This spiritual Kingdom of God is presently manifested outwardly through the lives of all who believe in Christ and collectively through the global worldwide church. The Kingdom parables (Matt. 13:36-43) (Matt. 13:47-50) teach that within the present spiritual global Kingdom of God there are good servants and foolish servants (Matt. 13:24-30) and that when Christ returns as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) he will sort out of his Kingdom the good sheep from the bad sheep (Matt. 13:36-43) (Matt. 13:47-50).

Then Christ will rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. The dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, Joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth, or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power.

The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and

those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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