

# WHEN DO THE RIGHTEOUS ACTUALLY POSSESS THE REALITY OF ETERNAL LIFE?

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**NOTE:** - All Bible texts are taken from the King James Version; and the compilers have supplied all emphasise.

## TEXT: -

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand.” – John 10:27 & 28.

Nearly all Evangelical Christians believe, that when they first believe in Christ, at that point, they possess the reality of eternal life. But a careful study of the Scriptures reveals that this is **not** what the Bible truly teaches concerning this vital subject. In this study document we shall examine from the Scriptures the following points: -

1. When do the righteous come into the actual possession of eternal life?
2. In looking at point No. 1 above, we will touch on some plain Biblical counsel regarding, What the Word of God requires of us to be eligible to receive eternal life. And,
3. We shall examine the passages in the apostle John's writings that are wrested to “prove” that a person possesses the reality of eternal life, the moment they believe in Christ.

## 1.) WHEN DO THE RIGHTEOUS COME INTO THE ACTUAL POSSESSION OF ETERNAL LIFE?

Jesus taught that the straight gate and narrow way or path that his followers are to enter into, **leads** to eternal life.

Matthew 7:14: - “Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, **which leadeth unto life**, and few there be that find it.”

Jesus taught that to enter into eternal life, one must keep the 10 Commandments.

Matthew 19:16 - 19: - “And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, **that I may have eternal life?** And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [there is] none good but one, [that is], God: **but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.** He saith unto him, Which? **Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and [thy] mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**”

Jesus stated plainly that those who have followed him would inherit or receive eternal life **in the regeneration**, when he sits upon the throne of his glory, **in the world to come.**

Matthew 19:28, 29: - “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, **in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory**, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, **and shall inherit everlasting life.**”

Mark 10:29, 30: - “And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but **he shall receive** an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; **and in the world to come eternal life.**”

Jesus will sit upon the throne of his glory **after** his 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, and at that time the righteous will go away into life eternal.

Matthew 25:31, 46: - “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, **then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:** ... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: **but the righteous into life eternal.**”

The apostle John has defined a righteous person as someone who does righteousness.

1 John 3:7: - "Little children, let no man deceive you: **he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.**"

## THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD IS ESSENTIAL TO RECEIVING ETERNAL LIFE: -

The prophet Daniel stated that the dead in Christ would awake from their sleep in the dust of the earth, to receive eternal life.

Daniel 12:2: - "**And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame [and] everlasting contempt.**"

Jesus plainly stated that the Son of God would resurrect from the grave all people through the two resurrections; those who have done good unto the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (i. e. condemnation).

John 5:25 - 29: - "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: **for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**"

Jesus stated that those who believe on him unto eternal life, he will raise them from the dead at the last day.

John 6:40: - "And this is the will of him that sent me, **that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.**"

## 2.) WHAT THE WORD OF GOD REQUIRES OF US, TO BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE: -

**NOTE:** - Some of the Scriptures which we have already shared with the reader have enlightened us on this vital point already – such as Matthew 19:16 - 19; Matthew 19:28, 29; John 5:29 & 6:40. The following Scriptures complement these passages and answer this question very clearly.

We must love God supremely and our neighbours as ourself.

Luke 10:25 - 28: - "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, **Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?** He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. **And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.**"

In the Day of Judgment, God will render to every person according to his or her works. And to those who patiently continue in good works, he will reward them with immortality and eternal life.

Romans 2:6, 7: - "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: **To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.**"

After being set free from sin (at the point of experiencing justification) and becoming the servants of God, we are to have the fruit of holiness or sanctification manifested in our lives, and the end will be eternal life as a free gift through Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:22, 23: - "**But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.** For the wages of sin [is] death; **but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**"

Whatever a person sows, they shall also reap. If we sow of the Spirit, we shall reap everlasting life. So we should not become weary in good works, because we shall reap in due season if we do not faint in our Christian walk.

Galatians 6:7 - 9: - "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; **but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**"

NOTE: - And the time of reaping our eternal reward is at the harvest, which Jesus said is at the end of the world – Matthew 13:39.

The apostle James taught that if we endure temptation, we shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12: - "**Blessed [is] the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life,** which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

And Paul and Peter have plainly stated that at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ we shall receive this crown.

2 Timothy 4:1, 8: - "I charge [thee] therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead **at his appearing and his kingdom; ... Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.**"

1 Peter 5:4: - "And **when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory** that fadeth not away."

### THE HOPE AND PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE: -

Paul plainly taught that God has promised us the **hope of eternal life**. The apostle John stated that God has promised believers eternal life.

Titus 1:1, 2: - "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; **In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.**"

Titus 3:7, 8: - "That being justified by his grace, **we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.** [This is] a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, **that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.** These things are good and profitable unto men."

1 John 2:25: - "And this is the promise that **he hath promised us, [even] eternal life.**"

☞ It is quite clear, that a true believer in Christ has the hope of eternal life, based upon God's promise when they truly believe in Christ; but they don't actually come into possession of the reality of eternal life until the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus Christ, in the world to come. Until then, the counsel of the apostle Paul in Titus 3:8 is very applicable – that they should be careful to maintain good works after they have believed in God.

### 3.) AN EXAMINATION OF THE PASSAGES IN THE APOSTLE JOHN'S WRITINGS THAT ARE WRESTED TO "PROVE" THAT A PERSON POSSESSES ETERNAL LIFE, THE MOMENT THEY BELIEVE IN CHRIST: -

The following passages from John's gospel are all commonly understood by Evangelical Christians as "proving" beyond any doubt, that the moment a person believes in Christ they possess the reality of eternal life.

John 3:15, 16: - "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:36: - "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

John 5:24: - "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

John 6:47: - “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

John 6:54: - “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

**NOTE**: - Eating Christ’s flesh and drinking his blood yields the same result as believing on him – having eternal life. And this is explained for us in the following verse: -

John 6:56: - “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”

On the surface it “appears” to be a sound conclusion to draw from the above texts. But upon closer examination of each passage we see that this is **not** the case.

In each of the above texts the verbs which are translated in the KJV with the suffix “eth”, such as “believeth”; “heareth”; “eateth”; “drinketh” and “dwelleth” – the suffix “eth” is the old English form of the **present continuous tense of these verbs**. And this is an accurate translation of the Greek **Present, Active Tense** of each of these verbs used in these passages. In other words, the believer has to **continue** to believe on the Son of God; he has to **continue** to hear the words of Christ and to **continue to** believe on the Father who sent him in John 5:24; he has to **continue** to eat Christ’s flesh and to **continue** to drink his blood, which is explained to mean to **continue** to dwell or abide in Christ and he in the believer in John 6:54 & 56. And the apostle John has plainly explained what it means to abide in Christ, in the following passages.

1 John 2:6: - “He that saith he abideth in **him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.**”

**NOTE**: - How did Christ walk or live? He was obedient to his Father’s Commandments – “even as I have kept my Father’s commandments” – John 15:10. And that is why Jesus had no sin in him.

1 John 3:4 - 6: - “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: **for sin is the transgression of the law**. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; **and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not**: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”

1 John 3:24: - “**And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him**. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

The following passage from the 1<sup>st</sup> epistle of John is the last passage we need to examine.

1 John 5:11, 12: - “**And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son**. He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

**NOTE**: - If we have – **continue** to have the Son of God we have eternal life. But VS. 11 is very important to understand – that our eternal life is found **in** Jesus Christ, because he **is** eternal life. So if we **continue** to have him, we continue to have God’s **promise of the hope of eternal life**.


John 11:25: - “Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.**”

John 14:6: - “Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life**: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Colossians 3:4: - “When **Christ, [who is] our life**, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”

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, of **the Word of life**; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen [it], and bear witness, **and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;**)”

1 John 5:20: - “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, [even] **in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.**”

 What John is teaching in the above texts under examination which is completely consistent with all the previous Bible passages that we have already examined in this study document, is if we continue to truly believe and abide in Christ, we have God's promise of the hope of eternal life that will become a reality at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus Christ.