

What Saith the Scripture?

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Jesus Is Eternal Life

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Jesus the Son of God is Eternal Life. "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 11:25). This is fundamental to the Christianity of the Scriptures, and those, who by faith place their confidence in Jesus, have Eternal Life. "11 And this is the Record, that God hath given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath Life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life" (1John 5:11-12). Those outside of Christianity (the "natural man") must wonder at the value of such figurative speech; but sadly, even many who profess to know Christ, have a similar unfamiliarity with this Scriptural expression. "1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness... 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned" (1Corinthians 1:23; 2:14).

The Scriptural test of whether or not you actually have Eternal Life-- and consequently that you have the Son of God abiding in you-- is the classic evaluation that *True Faith always demonstrates itself in works, when given the opportunity*, as revealed in the Epistle of James. "14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? 17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:14-20). In verses 18 through 20, James is speaking of "faith" as an *intellect only* experience, which even the "devils" have. The Apostle John affirms the same concept of faith always manifesting itself in works, in that "we do know that we know Him, IF we keep His Commandments" (1John 2:3).

Eternal Life is a condition that exists *only* in God Himself, i.e., "For as the Father hath Life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have Life in Himself" (John 5:26); and, it is present in whomsoever God abides. "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" (1John 3:24). Natural Man desires to continue living ad infinitum, but as much as he may not like it, he is trapped in a continually decaying, dilapidated, and imperfect body of death-- a condition brought about because of the curse of man's first sin, i.e., "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). The emphasis placed upon physical health and longevity becomes ill-placed when it overrides the necessity of each one of us to seek God first. "31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"

(Matthew 6:31-33).

The quest for Eternal Life is as old as man himself. "22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us [the Triune God], to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken" (Genesis 3:22-23). Stories, fables, and legends are full of heroes and villains grasping for the much sought after Eternal Life; but, why should we be such strangers to the simplicity of the Truth that Jesus is the "Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6)? If we will only release our grasp upon the things of this world that we trust to care for ourselves-- which release is a picture of repentance-- then we may repose in confidence upon God. "Thou wilt keep him in Perfect Peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3). When we trust in God, we abide in God. "1 I am the True Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman... 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me... 7 If ye abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:1-7).

How can anyone receive the benefit of the Eternal Life which is in Christ Jesus, to possess the Life That Never Ends? The answer of faith in Christ, given by the treasurer of Ethiopia to Philip's preaching of Jesus, is exactly to the point for all who would lay hold on Eternal Life. "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest [i.e., be baptized]. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). From the beginning and throughout, Eternal Life residing in any human being is a matter of laying hold of Jesus Christ by faith, i.e., "lay hold on Eternal Life" (1Timothy 6:12, 19), *and* abiding in Him by the "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). "If ye keep My Commandments, ye shall abide in My Love; even as I have kept My Father's Commandments, and abide in His Love" (John 15:10). Recognizing that our vitality to lay hold and abide in Christ is an act of our own choosing, still we *must* place "no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3), and we *must* trust in Christ the True Vine to fill us with His Eternal Life and Holy Spirit to cause us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). The New Covenant is now fulfilled in us by virtue of the Spirit of Christ, as promised by Jehovah, "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). Thus, by faith, our laying hold and abiding in "Christ, Who is our Life" (Colossians 3:4), is to possess Eternal Life now and forever. "And this is Life Eternal, that they might know Thee the Only True God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Maranatha!

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