

What Does the Bible Say About Eternal Life?

For all the Bible says about death, judgment, and hell, it was driving the whole time toward something better. It holds out eternal life, the greatest promise ever made to man. But we should be clear about what it is, for it is far more than living a long time. It is life with God, of a kind this world has never seen, and it is offered to you. Let the Scriptures describe it.

It Is the Gift of God Through Christ

Eternal life is not earned and cannot be bought. It is a gift, and it comes through one person. *"the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* ([Romans 6:23](#)). God so loved the world that He gave His Son, that whoever believes *"should not perish, but have everlasting life"* ([John 3:16](#)). And John says where this life is found. *"God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"* ([1 John 5:11](#)). Outside of Christ there is no eternal life. In Him it is freely given.

What Eternal Life Is

Eternal life is not mainly about length, but about who we are with. Jesus defined it Himself: *"this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent"* ([John 17:3](#)). It is to know God and to be with Him, where *"there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying"* ([Revelation 21:4](#)). Endless time without God would be no blessing at all. Eternal life is endless life in the presence of the God who made us and loves us.

Worth More Than All the World

If we could see it, we would count everything else cheap beside it. Paul, who had suffered the loss of all things, wrote that *"the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"* ([Romans 8:18](#)), and that no one has yet taken its measure, for *"eye hath not seen, nor ear heard... the things which God hath prepared for them that love him"* ([1 Corinthians 2:9](#)). This is why Jesus told us to stop piling up treasure on earth, where moth and rust ruin it, and to *"lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"* ([Matthew 6:20](#)). A man who trades eternal life for anything this world offers has made the worst bargain possible. There is nothing here worth missing it for.

A Present Hope and a Future Home

The Christian does not have to wait until he dies to have any of this. He has it now in promise and in hope, and he will have it in fullness at the last day. John wrote so that believers *"may know that ye have eternal life"* ([1 John 5:13](#)), and called it *"the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life"* ([1 John 2:25](#)). Yet its fullness lies ahead, *"in the world to come eternal life"* ([Mark 10:30](#)), the *"hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised"* ([Titus 1:2](#)). We hold the promise now, and we will hold the prize then.

It Is for the Faithful

The gift is free, but it is held by faith and kept by faithfulness. It is promised *"to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality"* ([Romans 2:7](#)), and *"he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"* ([Galatians 6:8](#)). The Lord said, *"be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"* ([Revelation 2:10](#)). This is no contradiction of grace. A gift must be received and not thrown away, and the hand that holds eternal life is a faith that endures to the end.

How to Lay Hold of It

Since eternal life is in Christ, a person lays hold of it by coming to Christ on His terms and living for Him. Paul charged Timothy to *"lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called"* ([1 Timothy 6:12](#)). Jesus *"became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* ([Hebrews 5:9](#)). The way in is the gospel, believed and obeyed, and the way on is a life of faithful following. It is within reach of anyone willing to take it.

So here is the choice the whole Bible sets before you. On one hand, death and judgment and a punishment that never ends. On the other, life with God that never ends. The same Christ who warns of the one offers the other, and He paid for it with His blood. Do not turn from such a gift. Lay hold of eternal life, hold it fast, and live now as one who means to spend forever with God.

Every Scripture reference in this study links to the King James Version. Open it and read for yourself.