



## John 17:6-8

# How to Receive Eternal Life

In His great High Priestly prayer Jesus said, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). Then as He began praying for His disciples in verse six Jesus gave a sequence of events that takes place in the experience of everyone who comes to Him for salvation.

Eternal life is to enter into the intimacy of heart, mind and soul in true love with God. To know Him is to have an intimate personal relationship with Him. It is impossible to have such a fellowship with God without Jesus Christ. To know God in Jesus Christ is to be in the most intimate personal friendship with Him.

The foundation and basis of such knowledge of God is the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

Eternal life is God's quality of life. William Barclay said, "to possess it, to enter into it, is to experience here and now something of the splendor, and the majesty, the joy, the peace and the holiness which are characteristic of the life of God."

Eternal life is God's kind of life and it begins for us when we are born again, or born spiritually through regeneration by the Holy Spirit of God. We who were dead in trespasses and sins have been made alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:5-6).

Eternal life, then, consists in the knowledge of God mediated and revealed through the revealer whom God has sent, Jesus Christ. The knowledge of the revealer is one with the knowledge of the God who is revealed, and therefore impossible to know one without the other. To know the Son is to know the Father through the mystery of a personal relationship of divine love with Him.

Faith in Jesus Christ is the condition of receiving eternal life. Jesus said, "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:40).

## THE DISCIPLES BELONG TO THE FATHER

Jesus prayed to the Father, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word."

Jesus acknowledged to the Father that the disciples were Yours. They were the Father's unique possession. His prayer is echoed in the words of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:4, "Just as He chose us in Him before the

His prayer is echoed in the words of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:4, "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. "

### ***All believers are God's possession***

We belong to God the Father and He can do with us whatever He likes regardless of what we think. He is sovereign over His universe. He made it and He can do with it as He pleases. Man is not sovereign over creation; the Creator is. It is His possession; we are only stewards of it. It was His plan to give His elect to the Son, and through the preaching of the Gospel the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to receive Him.

Modern man is not the center of the universe; the LORD God is. Everything centers in Him.

Jesus reveals to us that the disciples originally belonged to the Father. They were Yours, Jesus says. They belonged to the Father. They were Yours and You gave them to Me. That was His sovereign choice.

Newman and Nida explain, *They belonged to you and you gave them to me* simply expands the thought of the previous statement, *those you gave me out of the world*. Then they add, "The disciples who remained in the world were not in a sense of the world" (*Translation Handbook on John*). Their disposition has changed. They no longer bought into the world system which is opposed to God's will.

God made a choice in His election of a holy people whom He set apart for Himself. They were of His own choosing. Jesus acknowledges this in His prayer. They belonged to the Father, the Father gave them to the Son, and they have kept His word. His prayer reminds us of Romans 8:29-30. These chosen ones are those You gave Me out of the world. "God chose us for His great purpose and possession. C. K. Barrett observes, "The disciples belonged to God from the beginning, because from the beginning He had predestined them as His children. "

### ***Security for the believer***

This truth from God's Word should give every true believer great assurance of eternal life. Chosen of God, not by the will of man, or heredity, or our choosing (John 1:12-13). God did it. God chose me. How do I know that to be true? The next three events prove it. The Holy Spirit applied the truth of Jesus Christ to my heart and I believed. Our salvation is no haphazard, whim of the moment. It is a miracle of God, just like the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Puritan reformer Thomas Manton said, "Your election will be known by your interests in Christ, and your interest in Christ by the regeneration in the Spirit. All God's flock are put in Christ's hands, and He leaves them in the care of the Spirit (1 Pet. 1:2). "

leaves them in the care of the Spirit (1 Pet. 1:2). ”

Have you ever stopped and poured your heart and soul out to God in thanksgiving for His saving grace and the wonderful fact that He chose you for eternal life? There is nothing so exciting than a grateful heart in utter praise to a great Savior.

## **THE FATHER GAVE THE DISCIPLES TO THE SON**

I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Jesus said, They were Yours and You gave them to Me. ” These are the men whom You gave Me out of the world. ”

By a sovereign act God the Father gave the believers to Jesus. God the Father gave His elect to the Son, and they also became His possession. Not only do we belong to the Father, but we also belong to the Son. That is double security. Speaking of the believers Jesus said, I give eternal life to them, and they shall never (double negative meaning, not perish, never ); and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. . . and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father s hand. I and the Father are one (John 10:28-30, author s emphasis).

In John 17:2 Jesus has already said, to all whom You have given Him (the Son), He may give eternal life. ” Jesus used the third person in this verse referring to Himself. He is saying, You gave them to Me, and I will give them eternal life.

Believers are the Father s love-gift to the Son (vv. 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24). The idea dominates the entire prayer. The sum total of all believers are those the Father has given to Jesus (John 6:37-39).

Plummer notes, Sometimes the Father is said to give or draw men to Christ (v. 24; 6:37, 44, 65; 10:29; 18:9); sometimes Christ is said to choose them. There is the wooing of the Holy Spirit bringing the elect to repentance and faith. I am convinced there is not going to be any of the elect missing in heaven.

Those who believed on Jesus were given to Him by the Father and would remain with Him forever in glory. This is the main thrust of His high priestly prayer before He goes to the cross to die for them. Jesus knew from the beginning that they had been given to Him and this was steadily before Him as He neared the cross. Jesus said earlier in His ministry, No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day (John 6:44). Jesus conducted His ministry looking for those whom the Father had given Him and expecting them to come to Him. He was always looking about Him watching to see where God the Father was at work. He was working with the Father in what He was doing.

God is at work all about us. We know He is at work when we see people coming to Him for salvation. Our responsibility is to faithfully preach the Gospel, and invite all to put their trust in His saving grace. The Holy Spirit works in the heart to cause them to believe on Christ. Just like Christ did not give up on the eternal purpose of God, neither should we. It is our responsibility to be faithful and share His Word to a lost world. Those who come are God s gift to the Son. They are trophies of His grace.

God the Father has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. It was the kind intention of His will, and to the praise of the glory of His grace which He bestowed on us. God the Father chose us, and gave us to the Son so that He could reveal the Father to us.

## **JESUS REVEALED THE FATHER TO THE DISCIPLES**

I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ”

The Father chose them, and gave them to the Son, and the Son manifested the Father's name to them. The responsibility of Jesus was to reveal the character of the heavenly Father.

### *The Father's name*

What was Jesus busy doing while He ministered on the earth? He was revealing the Father. He was busy doing the Father's will (John 5:17-29). All that we see in Jesus is of God. Our attention is focused on the eternal God.

The word manifest in the original language means to reveal, make known, show, to make visible and clear. Jesus was teaching, revealing and making clear the character of His Father.

Literally, Jesus was making known the Father's name to them. I manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world (v. 6). The name stands for the whole revealed character of the LORD God. To refer to the name of God is another way to refer to God Himself. The name is representative of the Godhead and says this is what God is really like. It reveals the whole nature, character of the person in as much as it can be known. Jesus had been entrusted with the revelation of God as He is (Hebrews 1:1-3).

God . . . spoke to us in His Son . . . And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature . . . Jesus Christ reveals the essential nature of God to men, not in an indiscriminate manner, but to those whom God gave to Jesus (Jn. 6:37). These disciples were the elect of the Father who gave them to the Son to reveal to them the essential character of the Father.

The Son came to reveal to us what the Father is like. We know what God the Father is like when we look at the Son. The Son resembles the Father. Do you want to know what the Father is like? Examine closely the detailed character and attributes of Jesus Christ. Jesus told Thomas, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me (14:6). Then He immediately responded to a question by Thomas saying, He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, show us the Father? Do You not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me (vv. 9-11a).

Jesus prayed, Father. He taught the disciples to pray, Our Father. We come to Him praying, Father, ”  
Abba Father, ”Our heavenly Father. ”

Not until Jesus came did believers call God directly my Father. Jesus always called God Father, ”My Father in all of His prayers (Jn. 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24-25; 11:41; 12:27-28; cf. Matt. 11:25; 26:39, 42; Mk. 14:36; Lk. 23:34). The one exception is when Jesus was being made sin and dying as our substitute on the cross (Matt. 27:46). There He cried out, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me. ”

Spiritual knowledge is the fruit of receiving, and truly understanding that Jesus Christ came from the Father. It is by believing on Him we have eternal life (cf. Jn. 20:31).

In John 17:8 Jesus says, the words which You gave Me I have given to them. Jesus Christ is the final and complete revelation of God to men. The Holy Spirit takes the words of Jesus and cuts through the hardness of our hearts to bring conviction of sin and spiritual life (Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:23). In John 5:24 Jesus said, Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Jesus was simply doing what the Father was doing (v. 19). He was revealing the Giver of eternal life. This new life He gives is a miracle. The apostle Paul described it as raising the dead (2 Cor. 5:17). All things become new. Lost sinners are saved by the application of God's Word to the individual by the Holy Spirit. It is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16-17; 10:8-10, 17).

The Holy Spirit uses the words of Jesus to convict us of sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:12-15).

The words Jesus is referring to in 17:8 is the God-given message He proclaimed. He was the embodiment of the message itself. He is the word He proclaimed. The stress is on the divine revelation. The essential is the words which You gave Me and the response to it.

The disciples received, truly understood, believed and in verse six, kept the word. The religious leaders rejected the revelation of God in Christ. On the other hand, the disciples, come to know, and to know of a certainty, that Jesus was the divine origin, that He came forth from God (Morris, *NIC, John*, p. 724). The disciples accepted the fact that Jesus came from the Father and believed that You did send Me. That is the essential message He proclaimed. This is what the Father is like. They have come to believe that the Father sent Christ. ”

John brings His gospel to a grand climax with these words in John 20:27-31. Then He said to Thomas, Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing. Thomas answered and said to Him, My Lord and my God! Jesus said to him, Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed. Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. ”

## **THE ELECT HAVE BELIEVED THE SON**

They have kept Your word, is the declaration of Jesus. The disciples proved to truly belong to the Father by believing on Christ.

### ***They kept Jesus' word***

In John 17:8 Jesus says not only did He give the words to the disciples, but they have received them, and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me. They accepted God's Word believing that Jesus Christ is God's only beloved Son.

When we obey God's Word we listen to it preached, receive it into our hearts, know it to be from God, and we believe on Christ personally.

In the parable of the sower Jesus makes it clear that some will hear only words, and it will pass over the heads and fall to the ground. The message must be received into our mind, and become a part of our thinking, and settle down into our personal being. God communicates to us through His preached word that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and He has come from the Father to give eternal life to all who will believe on Him.

Specifically Jesus said, Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You for the words You gave to Me I have given to them; and they have received them, and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You did send Me (v. 8).

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Emphatically Jesus says they recognized the source of His message as being in God.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Lamb of God and the Suffering Servant of God who came to die as our substitute. They believed You have sent Me. Based upon what they have learned they have made a personal commitment of themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ.

How do you know you are of the elect of God? You are if you hâve kept Thy word (v. 6).

The word for obey òr kèpt means to literally pây attention to òr observe. They kept the word in their hearts and obeyed it. We do this when we observe the traffic light at the intersection or the stòp sîgn. We hear the Word of God, understand it and believe it to the point it changes our behavior. The Holy Spirit takes the spoken word and applies it to our hearts. This is the miracle of the new birth when we are born spiritually. We kèep His Word because of this change in our hearts. Jesus said of those who were elected of the Father, given to the Son, heard His Word and bèlieved that tthey kept Your word. ”

Have you believed God as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ? Have you committed your life to Him?

Have you seen the Father? Has the living Word of God come alive in your heart? Is it giving evidence in your life that you are a child of God?

You can know that you are a Christian. The evidence is in the fact that you have believed the truth about Jesus Christ and are continually acting upon it. His Word will bear fruit in your life if you trust Him. If you are of the elect you will believe and continue to believe in obedience to His Word.

### ***Is God your Father?***

In a lesser sense than that uniqueness of Jesus to the Father, we can call God òur Father. He was the Son of God in a unique one of a kind sense. He is our Father because of our adoption into His family when we believed on Christ (Rom. 8:15-17). He is the father of all who believe on Christ. The disciples have persevered in keeping the wòrd òf God.

I like the application James Boice makes, You need not fear that the great God of the universe, the One who owns and controls all things, will let you down, that He will disappoint you or turn His back on you. This God clothes the lily of the field and the grass. Will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (Matt. 6:30).

Is God your Father? If He is, He will preserve you to the end and will permit nothing to change your relationship to Him. You may disgrace Him. You may be unworthy of your high calling. You may run away from Him, as Jonah did. But He will still be your Father (Boice, *John*, vol. iv, p. 1274).

In John 17:8 Jesus presents the salvation experience from the believer s perspective. He focuses on His ministry of teaching the disciples, and their believing on Him as sent from the Father. He has revealed to the disciples the words the Father gave Him, and they have received them as coming from God. On the basis of His teaching the disciples know He has come from the Father, and they have believed on Him as the One God sent. That is the same challenge He gives to us.

Jesus said, If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether I* speak from Myself (John 7:17). When we recognize that Jesus tèachings come from God, we also recognize

speak from Myself (John 7:17). When we recognize that Jesus' teachings come from God, we also recognize that He came from God. Jesus' response will still be the same to us as it was to those believers, "Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You" (17:7). They have arrived at a settled conclusion that Jesus is an accurate revelation of God. Everything He taught came from the Father and revealed Him.

## **SOME ABIDING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS**

### ***Our salvation is as secure as the integrity of our Savior.***

Our salvation is a gift of the Trinity: those whom the Father chose, the Son redeemed, and the Holy Spirit quickens and gives life.

If a single one of God's elect were to perish, the glory of the perfect Servant would be tarnished for all eternity. How absolute, then, is our security! said A. W. Pink.

### ***Our salvation is not in what you know, but in Whom you trust.***

Yes, it is true that there are some essential things we must know accurately. But there is great comfort and encouragement in this passage for us weary pilgrims. It is evident that the Lord sees far more in His believing people than they see in themselves, or than others see in them. The least degree of faith is very precious in His sight.

Our heavenly Father is pleased: that we should know Him in love, know Him as the Father, know Him according to the words of Him who has come out from His bosom. . . It is not the graces that adorn us, or the services that we render, but simply that we *know the Father*. It is this which distinguishes the saint from the world and gives him his standing, as here, in the presence of the Father (J. G. Bellett). Do you know the Father?

So perfectly did Christ complete the work the Father gave Him to do that He could say, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Have you seen the Father?

When our great High Priest entered the presence of the Father, *He* bore our names on His heart before the Father like the Aaron did for Israel (Ex. 28:29). He intercedes for you and me right now before the Father's throne.

### ***Our salvation is appropriated by faith in Jesus Christ.***

God's offer of eternal life is for all who will call upon His name today. Will you respond to His effectual call right now? For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12-13).

Have you come to know for certain and clearly understood that Jesus Christ came from the Father and that believing in His name you can have eternal life? Take a few moments right now and confess to Him your sin and believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord. The Bible says, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (Romans

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person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (Romans 10:9-10).

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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