

The Resurrection and Post-Resurrection Narratives

Chapter 10: The Purpose of John's Gospel

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And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (Jn. 20:30-31).

After the grand climax of Thomas' confession John inserts a very important parenthetical comment which explains the reason the gospel was written. These verses, along with 21:24-25, serve as a conclusion to the whole gospel. These verses are significant because, if we know the book's central purpose, we hold the key to understanding all the various parts of the gospel. As we examine the conclusion of John's gospel we will consider three areas: (1) the purpose; (2) the content of faith; and (3) the result of believing.

The Purpose of the Book

John tells his readers that he is not writing a biography or a complete life of Christ, but rather is writing in a very selective manner. If the beloved disciple had been writing to satisfy his own or even our curiosity he would obviously have written a much more traditional biography of Jesus. We are not told anything about the Savior's childhood or upbringing. There is nothing about what the Redeemer looked like: His eye color, height or color of hair. We are not even given the date on which our Lord was born. Obviously, thousands of interesting details and curious facts are omitted from John's narrative.

John also did not let his own personal feelings influence the record that he so faithfully penned. He repeatedly omits many historical instances where his special place of honor as part of the inner circle was noted in the other gospels. "He and James and Peter were frequently selected by the Master to be with him when others were excluded, but of these occasions he says nothing. At the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus it is said of the disciples, as well as of the relatives and the multitude, that the Lord put them all out, and only suffered the three to be with him. This was a singular honor, but John does not say a word about the raising of the daughter of Jairus.... Even more striking is the fact that the Master when he took with him the eleven to the garden, left the major part of them at the gate, but he led the three further into the garden, and bade them wait at about a stone's cast distance, where some of them heard his prayers, and observed the bloody sweat. John, who was one of them, says nothing about it. He leaves that out which would bring John into the front, in order that he may fill up the whole foreground of his canvas with the portrait of his Lord. Everything is submitted to the one grand end 'that ye should believe that Jesus is the Christ.'"¹

The beloved disciple even notes that he did not record all the signs that Jesus did. The statement does not simply mean that John did not record all the miracles found in the other

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, "The Main Matter," in *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim, 1973), 27:655-656.

gospels, for that point is obvious. John wrote after the synoptic gospels were completed and circulated and often chose to focus on areas and details omitted by the other evangelists. Moreover, the miracles or signs of which John speaks should not be restricted to the forty day post-resurrection period. A number of commentators interpret John's statement to mean that he only omitted many more proofs of the Savior's resurrection. John testifies that the disciples were witnesses of many signs throughout our Lord's ministry, but that he only recorded that which was sufficient to stimulate faith in the readers of the gospel. The term "signs" refers not only to the miracles, but also the teaching that the signs served to authenticate.

The gospel of John was not even written to set forth the ethical teachings of Jesus or reveal the Savior as the perfect example for mankind. Good works are important and are certainly given their proper place. However, they are secondary to the beloved disciple's main purpose which is to set forth a selective history so that people would believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

The very common teaching among modernist scholars that Jesus was really only concerned to set forth a new ethic of love or be an example to mankind is explicitly contradicted by John. Because Christian liberals reject biblical inerrancy and the supernatural nature of biblical revelation, they teach that Christ was a religious genius, or an ethical teacher, or a social reformer. They mold the Savior into an idol of their own making: the kind, antinomian socialist who came to endorse the welfare state and sodomite rights. Modernist assertions, however, obliterate the simple, clear and striking Christology of the gospels—that Jesus was the Messiah who came to die on the cross and that He was truly God's Son in a unique way. John states the purpose of his gospel in such explicit terms so that his readers in all subsequent generations would understand exactly who the Savior was and why He was and continues to be worthy of our trust.

There are a number of things to note regarding John's stated strategy, subject and purpose. First, it teaches us that signs or miracles serve a distinct purpose in the gospels. Their main purpose was not to serve mankind and alleviate pain and sickness, but to prove that Jesus was who He claimed to be. The signs authenticate the Messenger and His message. The reason that many signs were omitted from the gospels was not that they were unimportant or did not serve an important purpose when they occurred; but, that the Holy Spirit recorded only what was sufficient for the readers of the gospel to place their faith in Christ. Moreover, if everything that Jesus did was recorded and inscripturated, the Bible would be much too long and unmanageable for the masses. As John says, "even the world could not contain the books that would be written" (Jn. 21:25).

Second, understanding the purpose of John's gospel helps us to understand the selection process of the material used (i.e. John writing under divine inspiration exalts Jesus in His messianic office and deity) and is very useful in interpreting the different parts of the book. With this in mind, note how John's record repeatedly exalts Christ and points to the necessity to believe in Him.

(1) In the beginning of the gospel Jesus is immediately identified as God the Word who always existed with God the Father (1:1). He is "the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth" (1:14). After our Lord demonstrated His omniscience Nathanel testified, "You are the Son of God [deity]! You are the King of Israel [i.e. the Messiah]" (1:49).

(2) Chapter two contains the first sign (water is changed into wine) and the statement "and His disciples believed in Him" (2:11). It also contains the first prediction of the resurrection

and the statement: “His disciples remembered that He had said this to them and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said” (2:22).

(3) Chapter three contains the interaction with Nicodemus and the statement that God sent Jesus into the world to save it (see 3:16-17). Men are bidden to believe in Christ in 3:16, 17, 36: “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life” (3:36).

(4) Chapter four contains our Lord’s witness to the Samaritan woman. After demonstrating His omniscience the Savior identified Himself as the Messiah (4:26) with the result that many “Samaritans...believed in Him because of the word of the woman...” (4:39).

(5) In chapter five Jesus publicly healed a crippled man (5:11); claimed equality with God the Father (5:17) and in a lengthy discourse proved His deity and Messianic kingship by an appeal to many witnesses: Himself (5:31), His own works or signs (5:36); John the Baptist (5:33); God the Father (5:37-38); and, Scripture (5:39). The discourse ends with a stinging rebuke toward those who refused to believe in Him (5:40-47).

(6) Chapter six contains the miracle of feeding the multitude (6:10-14) and walking on water (6:19). After declaring to the multitude that the Son of Man gives everlasting life Jesus said, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent” (6:29). In the bread of life discourse our Lord identified Himself as the bread from heaven (6:30, 32, 41, 50, 51, 58) and spoke repeatedly of coming to Him (6:44, 45), believing in Him (6:29, 47) or figuratively of eating His flesh (6:50, 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58) which means appropriating the Redeemer through faith.

(7) Chapter seven contains a prediction of the ascension (7:33-34) and the great discourse on living water. “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (7:37-38).

(8) In chapter eight Jesus is the light of the world (8:12). He once again speaks of His origin in heaven (8:14, 22, 23) of His proceeding forth from God (8:42) and His eternal existence (8:58). He warns men that if they do not believe in Him they will die in their sins (8:24). He tells the Jews that if they keep His word (i.e. believe and obey) they will never see death (8:36, 46, 51).

(9) Chapter nine contains the healing of the man born blind and Jesus’ affirmation of His deity: “Do you believe in the Son of God?” (9:35). After believing in Christ, the healed man, who was blind, worshipped the Savior (9:38).

(10) Chapter ten contains the discourse about the Good Shepherd. Here Jesus said, He lays down His life for the sheep (10:11); “The works that I do...bear witness of Me” (10:25); and, “I and My Father are one” (10:30). Then, again, our Lord appealed to His works (i.e. the signs) “that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him” (10:38).

(11) In chapter eleven Lazarus is raised from the dead after he had been in the grave four days (11:44). Before this amazing sign Christ said to Martha, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” (11:40). Many of the Jews who saw what Jesus did, believed in Him (11:45).

(12) Chapter twelve notes that when the Savior entered Jerusalem the people praised Him as “The King of Israel” (12:13). In this chapter our Lord predicted His death and resurrection (12:23-24) and once again pointed to His unity with the Father: “He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me” (12:44; cf. 45, 49, 50).

(13) In the upper room discourses and the high priestly prayer Christ said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me” (14:6). “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”

(17:3). Although these chapters contain no miracles they do contain a number of explicit prophecies that were fulfilled perfectly and thus qualify as authenticating signs.

(14) After the resurrection, which is the ultimate sign, there were the appearances to Mary, all the disciples and then Thomas which led to his climactic confession: “My Lord and my God” (20:28).

The whole gospel centers on Jesus Christ in such a way as to prove beyond question that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. The whole gospel weaves together miracles, teaching and stories which are intended to lead men to believe not only that Jesus is the Savior who died for the sins of His people, but also the exalted King and God Himself, the second Person of the trinity.

Third, by way of application note that John’s purpose is essentially the purpose of the whole Bible. “John’s Gospel, and the other three Gospels, and the whole Bible, New Testament and Old, have this for their purpose, to produce in men’s hearts the faith in Jesus as the Christ and as the Son of God. Christ, the Son of God, is the centre of Scripture; and the book—whatever may be the historical facts about its origin, its authorship and the date of the several portions of which it is composed—the Book is a unity, because there is driven right through it, like a cord of gold, either in the way of history and grateful retrospect, the reference to the one ‘Name that is above every Name,’ the Name of the Christ the Son of God.”²

The purpose of John’s gospel and the whole Bible is not simply to know something, but to believe something. Scripture requires of its readers and hearers a commitment to Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. If we treat the Bible as nothing more than interesting mythology, history or religious literature and do not find the Messiah—God’s only begotten Son—within its pages, then all of our reading has been in vain. If we do not study the whole Bible Christologically, then we can never truly understand its message. Moreover, if a theologian, or preacher, or book, or philosophy, or religion does not teach that Jesus of Nazareth was truly God who became man and died for His people; who was the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures, then that person or point of view is not of God but is from the devil. All Scripture has one central purpose which is to produce faith in Christ and cause men to bow the knee to Him. If you cannot, with Thomas, worship Jesus and say to Him, “My Lord and My God,” then God’s precious, inspired Word has not affected your heart of stone and you are still in your sins. Pray that God would give you a heart of flesh and cause you to believe in and worship the resurrected Mediator.

The Content of Faith

When John describes the object of faith he focuses on two things: that Jesus is the Christ or Messiah and that He is the Son of God (Jn. 20:31). Because a faith without the proper content or object is worthless, harmful and even deadly, it is important that we understand what John means by these terms. Therefore, we will carefully consider the biblical meaning of each expression.

The word Christ (*Christos*) which is the Greek word for Messiah means “the anointed one.” In order for a person to be a Christian, he must believe that Jesus was the long awaited Anointed One sent from God: “the One who as Mediator was set apart or ordained by the Father and anointed with the Holy Spirit, to be his people’s chief Prophet (Deut. 18:15, 18; Isa. 50:4;

² A. MacLaren, “Christ in the Heart” in W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Sermon Outline Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 8:313.

Luke 24:19; Acts 3:22, 7:37); only High-priest (Ps. 110:4; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 6:20; 7:24; 9:24); and eternal King (Ps. 2:6; Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5; 28:18; Luke 1:33; John 10:28; Eph. 1:2-23; Rev. 11:15; 12:10, 11; 17:14; 19:6).”³ The term “anointed one” developed out of the Old Testament ritual where the high priest (Aaron and his descendants) were set apart to their special service by the pouring of the special holy anointing oil over the high priests’ head and body (cf. Ex. 30:30ff.). A similar rite of consecration by anointing with oil was also applied to many of Israel’s kings (e.g., Saul, David, Solomon, Joash, etc). The phrase “the anointed of the Lord” (cf. 1 Sam. 12:3, 5) was even used as a synonym for the King. The anointing with oil represented a special gift of the Holy Spirit which enabled the high priest or king to carry out their designated functions.

The Old Testament concept of the Messiah as the exalted eschatological Prophet, Priest and King is rich and varied. The teaching of the Old Testament regarding a single eschatological deliverer begins in obscurity and comes into detail and into focus as divine revelation proceeds. Even as early as Genesis 3:15 God reveals that, through the seed of the woman, the head of the serpent would be crushed. In Genesis 49:10 Jacob prophesied, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.” In Deuteronomy 18:5-19 we learn of the great Prophet to come who exceeds all other prophets. The New Testament applies this promise directly to Jesus (cf. Jn. 1:21, 45; 6:14; Ac. 3:22-23; 7:37).

It is from the time of King David that Messianic prophecy comes into sharp focus. In 2 Samuel 7:16 we learn for the first time that the Messiah would be a direct descendant of David. In Psalm 2 we learn that Messiah is God’s Son, who will rule all the nations with a rod of iron. The New Testament repeatedly cites the Psalms in connection with the purpose and ministry of the Christ. The Psalms teach the Messiah’s divinity (Ps. 45:6; 110:1), his eternal sonship (Ps. 2:7), His incarnation (Ps. 8:5; 40:7-9), His mediatorial offices as Prophet (Ps. 40:9-10), Priest (Ps. 110:4), and King (Ps. 2:7-12; 22:28; 45:6; 72; 110:1). The Psalms tell us about the Messiah’s betrayal (Ps. 41:9); agony in the garden (Ps. 22:2); trial (Ps. 35:11); rejection (Ps. 22:14-18; 118:22), crucifixion (Ps. 22:69), burial and resurrection (Ps. 16:9-11), ascension (Ps. 24:7-10; 47:5; 68:18) and second coming and judgment (Ps. 50:3-4; 98:6-9).

The prophets call the Messiah the branch of the LORD (Isa. 4:2) who is born of a virgin yet is Emmanuel—God with us (Isa. 7:14). The Christ will come from Galilee and will bring the people great light (Isa. 9:1-2). He is the Son who is born, yet is one with God the Father (Isa. 9:5-6). His kingdom will last forever (Isa. 9:7). He will rule with perfect righteousness (Isa. 32:1-8) and will give a perfect spiritual satisfaction (Isa. 55:1-5). His coming is the coming of Jehovah Himself (Isa. 40:3-5). Jeremiah calls Him “the LORD our righteousness” (23:5-6; 33:16), who will “execute judgment and righteousness in the earth” (33:15). He establishes the new covenant (Jer. 31:31ff.), an everlasting covenant (Isa. 55:3). Upon His ascension He is given all power authority by God the Father over every nation and His authority will never come to an end (Dan. 7:13-14). He suffers and dies for His people (Isa. 53), “to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness” (Dan. 9:24).

Passages could be multiplied, but the point has been established that the biblical definition of the term “Messiah” contains a full-orbed concept of the person of the Christ as well as His mission. Therefore, to have faith in Jesus as the Messiah is essentially to believe the gospel. The content of our Christology must never be lower than that of Thomas’ confession,

³ William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 643.

which at that time was under-girded by the whole Old Testament and Jesus' own teachings. It is our duty to believe and embrace everything that the Bible says about Jesus as the Messiah.

The expression "Son of God" in the context of John 20:31 is used not merely as a synonym for the Messianic title but is also used in a Trinitarian sense. Jesus is God's Son who existed in eternity before the world was with God the Father. The Jews believed that the Messiah would be God's Son in an adoptionist sense. But the gospels and the whole New Testament make it clear that Christ is the Son not by adoption but by nature. "The combination of terms indicates the very highest view of the Person of Jesus, and it must be taken in conjunction with the fact that John had just recorded the confession of Thomas which hails Jesus as 'My Lord and my God.' There cannot be any doubt but that John conceived of Jesus as the very incarnation of God."⁴ Vos notes that our Lord's divine Sonship was intimately related to the carrying out of the Savior's Messianic office:

The Messiahship appears in the reception on Jesus' part of the commission to reveal all things. But the sonship underlies this as the only basis on which it could happen, and on which it can be understood. And the sonship of this Messianic Person altogether transcends his historic appearance. It exists, as it were, in a timeless present, where He knows the Father and the Father knows Him. Just as little as "the Father" and "Lord of heaven and earth" are titles derived from the soteric situation, just as little is "the Son" a designation of Jesus ultimately derived from that. He is called "the Son" not simply because of his being the Messiah, but because his Messiahship is determined by an anterior sonship lying back of it.⁵

Faith in Jesus as the Son of God in the highest sense (as the only begotten Son of the Father who is eternally and indissolubly one with Him) is crucial for salvation because Christ had to be God to reveal Him. "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father" (Jn. 10:15). "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak" (Jn. 12:48-50). "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him" (Mt. 11:27). "All things are put into the Mediator's hands; fit hands towards God and towards man; for he alone knows both to perfection. Jesus reveals the Father to the babes whom He has chosen. Only the Father can fill the Son with benediction, and only through the Son can that benediction flow to any one of the race of men. Know Christ, and you know the Father, and know that the Father himself loveth you."⁶

Belief in Christ as God's Son in the Trinitarian sense is also necessary because the Savior had to be truly God of very God to render a sacrifice of infinite value to the Father. In order to save a vast multitude of every tribe, tongue and nation, the Messiah could not be a mere man but had to be both God and man in one person. Consequently the Savior's atoning death was sufficient to save the whole world (Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 2:2). Further, the Mediator had to be God in order to intercede as a high priest and apply the fruits of His accomplished work to the millions of people throughout history who received Him by faith. This task not only involves omniscience, but also the sending of the Holy Spirit into the elect's hearts (a task obviously

⁴ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 586-587.

⁵ Geerhardus Vos, *The Self-Disclosure of Jesus* (New York: George H. Doran, 1926), 150-151.

⁶ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1987), 143.

beyond a mere mortal). Moreover, divinity is necessary for the Messiah's role as an all-powerful King. A mere man could not rule by changing His people's hearts and by overthrowing His enemies. If Jesus "had not been a divine person, endued with the power of God and entitled to the glory of God, he had not been qualified for, the undertaking—not fit either to do the Redeemer's work or to wear the Redeemer's crown."⁷

Trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is a crucial part of believing the gospel, for God the Son after His incarnation reveals the Father; propitiates God's wrath against sin; mediates between man and God and applies all the benefits of redemption to the elect. This doctrine ought to greatly stimulate our trust in Christ's ability to save His people. Since our precious Savior is God, we can trust Him and pray to Him to change our stubborn sinful hearts. Because the Mediator is God, we can rest assured that He will overcome all our enemies by His almighty power and wisdom. "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1 Jn. 4:15). "Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 Jn. 5:5). "He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son" (1 Jn. 5:10). Rest upon Jesus as your Savior, your Messiah, your Lord and, yes, even your God. Bow to Him and give Him the worship that He deserves. "The faith which receives Christ as he is revealed as the Messiah, and as the Son of God, is the faith which hath eternal life, and the Scriptures are written that you may have this faith."⁸

The Result of Believing

John says that faith in Christ is the means of bringing men to life: "That believing you may have life in His name" (Jn. 20:31). The terms "life," "eternal life," or "life everlasting" are common in John's gospel and epistles. The term "life" when used of salvation refers to spiritual life and all that it entails. It includes the importation of new spiritual life in the new birth (Jn. 3; 1 Cor. 12:13), when a person is translated from death to life (Eph. 2:1ff). A person who is regenerated is in immediate possession of the kingdom of God (Col. 1:3) and is already a citizen of heaven (Heb. 12:22). Faith in Christ brings an immediate title to life everlasting. The person who grasps the Redeemer by faith has all the blessings that He has obtained. "[W]e must not fail to observe that eternal life is not a future but a *present possession* of the believer...we must try and escape from the narrow and imperfect conception of eternity as a thing [wholly] future.... Eternal life may, nay *must* be obtained here, if it is to be obtained at all."⁹

The term "life" includes the declaration that a person has been pardoned and declared righteous on the basis of the merits of Jesus Christ. Faith appropriates the sacrificial death of the Savior where a believer's sin, guilt and liability of punishment are forever removed. Our Lord

⁷ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 5:1224.

⁸ Charles H. Spurgeon, "The Main Matter," 27:660. "[I]ndeed, he who after having received those striking proofs, which are to be found in the Gospel, does not perceive Christ to be God, does not deserve to look even at the sun and the earth, for he is blind amidst the brightness of noonday" (John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, 2:282).

⁹ John James Lias, *An Exposition of the First Epistle of John* (Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock, [1887] 1982), 393-394. Note the words of Jesus in 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 to life." The verb "has passed" (*metabebeken*), a perfect active indicative, is significant. It means that a person who believes in Jesus has passed from one state (that of spiritual death) into another (eternal life); and that person *remains* in that new state of spiritual life that continues into eternal blessedness (cf. Rom. 5:1-2).

endured the penalty for sin; paid the price in full; propitiated God's wrath against sin and thus reconciled us to God. The Mediator removed the curse of the law (Gal. 3:23) or judicial and spiritual death by suffering the penalty in our place. The Redeemer also secured the title or right to eternal life by His perfect obedience to the moral law and the covenant of works (see Ac. 13:38; 26:18; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 5:1; Mt. 3:15; etc). By faith we appropriate Jesus' victory over sin, Satan and death. Through faith we grasp the righteousness of Christ and are immediately declared just in God's sight. When we believe in the Savior we are clothed with His perfect righteousness and thus must live in spiritual blessedness forever. Because He lives, we live also. "This is the central message of the Fourth Gospel, that belief in Jesus Christ is the path to life. See 3:15, 16, 36; 1 Jn. 5:13. 'In Him was life' is proclaimed in the Prologue (1:4), and the purpose of His coming was that men might have life; cf. 5:40; 6:53, 10:10."¹⁰ Without Christ you are dead in the fullest, most terrifying meaning of that word, but if you trust in Jesus you will receive life or eternal salvation.

The word "life" includes the baptism with the Holy Spirit and a believer's progressive sanctification. The Spirit of God works in the believer causing him to put off the old man and the habitual sin patterns of life and to replace them with godly living and service to Christ. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). "Christ came to give life and *perisson ti*—*something more*, *something better*, life with advantage; that in Christ we might not only live, but live comfortably, live plentifully, live and rejoice. Life in abundance is *eternal life*, life without death or fear of death, life and *much more*..."¹¹ (e.g., a life without bondage to sin and slavery to savage lusts). Believers live with a peace and satisfaction unknown and unknowable to unbelievers. Because of our faith in the Savior our life has meaning and fulfillment in service unto God. The unbeliever, however, walks in darkness and lives in total vanity, meaninglessness and despair.

The word "life" also includes our eschatological or future life. There is the blessing of having our souls go immediately to be with Christ at death (2 Cor. 5:1, 6, 8; 1 Th. 4:14). We can look forward to the resurrection of our bodies which will be glorified, perfect and immortal (Job 19:26; 1 Cor 15:43). Also, there is the everlasting kingdom of glorified life with Jesus in the eternal state. This is what many people think of when they think of the life of salvation. The New Testament contains some wonderful imagery of the heavenly scenes of paradise. Christ said, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn. 14:1-2). Paul wrote, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Th. 4:16-18). "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away'" (Rev. 21:3-4). While the wicked enter their final doom, which is the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14) and the second death (Rev. 21:8), the righteous enter into life beholding the face of God and worshipping Christ the King. These saints will have eternal access to the river of the water of life and the tree of life (Rev. 22:1-2, 14).

¹⁰ J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, 2:686.

¹¹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 5:1031.

This brief examination of the life that Christ gives to those who believe in Him raises some important questions. Are you in possession of this glorious never ending life; or, are you still in the realm of death and darkness? Have you placed your faith, trust and confidence in Jesus Christ and His redemption work for your salvation from sin, guilt and death? When you approach God through prayer, do you do so only through the divine-human Mediator and His sinless blood? When you worship, do you worship Jesus Christ as your Lord and God? When you do good works, do you do them to please Christ and show your gratitude for His sacrificial death in your place? John has written his gospel so that you will believe in Jesus as the Messiah—the Son of God and have eternal life. “[T]he one thing, the main thing, the only thing is that we do hold on to Jesus Christ, through thick and thin, through foul and fair, uphill and down dale, in the night and in the day, in life and in death, in time and in eternity; that we do steadfastly believe that Jesus of Nazareth who died upon the cross is the Messiah of God, yea, the Son of God, sent to cleanse away iniquity and bring in perfect righteousness. Whether we see him on his cross or on his throne, all our hope, all our trust must be fixed on him, and so we shall live when time shall be no more. Verily, I say into you, those which thus trust him shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hands, for he hath said, ‘I give unto my sheep eternal life.’”¹²

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¹² Charles H. Spurgeon, “The Main Matter,” 27:664.