

## Eternal Life - A New Perspective

by Cliff Canipe

"What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us" (1 John 1:1-2)

How many times have you spoken about eternal life, or heard someone else talk about it, as if it *something* to possess or have? Indeed the Bible speaks clearly about eternal life as a definite reality that we can experience and enjoy.

"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)

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life" (John 3:36a)

"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." (John 5:24)

But what we read in 1John 1:1-2 opens up something completely different. John makes it clear for us that eternal life is not *something* but *Someone*. Eternal life is Jesus Himself. This should not come as any surprise to us, but perhaps it will cause us to rethink our view of Jesus and exactly what He is to us in our Christian life. I feel that for many Christians their Christianity is based on a system of beliefs and convictions that, if adhered to faithfully, will result in them *having* eternal life one day. However, this is not the way we should think. Eternal Life is Jesus. *Knowing* Him. If you choose to opt for the "*having*", then be sure that you're *having* is Jesus! Eternal life is not something we attain to, rather it is a person we know. Jesus is to us Eternal Life! Remember His own words:

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the *life*; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6, emphasis added)

Jesus is Life. Life is not something that He gives to us to possess. We must come to the place where we know that He is our life. Apart from Him being our very life, we *have* nothing. We need to ask the Father to give us revelation and understanding to this fundamental truth. Jesus addressed the religious people of His day with these words:

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life." (John 5:39-40)

We need to stop trying to figure out how to *have* eternal life and start *knowing Eternal Life*. All that we are as Christians is connected directly to Jesus and His very life. We need to begin to understand the power and significance of Christ in us and us in Him. As this begins to settle upon our hearts, I believe we will come to a new place of identity in Him. We will begin to walk in the abundant confidence that comes from *knowing* and we will be set free from the performance tied to *having*.

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