

# Do We Actually Have Eternal Life Now?

The Berean Call: Gospel Truths

Q & A -----

**Question:** . . . . . I have a question. In the book of John, in many places it is recorded that Jesus says that we have eternal life now in the present, but elsewhere in the Scriptures, it seems to say that we have the hope of eternal life but don't actually possess it. Does the Bible mean that we actually have eternal life now and will just enter into it when we die? Or does it teach that we don't yet have eternal life, but we will obtain eternal life in the future?

**Response:** When a person honestly responds in faith to the gospel (see 1 Corinthians 15:1-4) recognizing that he is a lost sinner and that only Christ's sacrifice on the Cross can pay the penalty for his sin, he is "eternally secure." Acts 16:31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ..."

**What else does God's Word say?** The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 5:13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life ..." That knowing is present knowledge and that having is present possession. When anyone puts his faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, he receives the "gift of God." Which is "eternal life" (Romans 6:23, our emphasis). The gift is received immediately and lasts forever.

We must also understand that "eternal life" refers to more than quantity of life (i.e., "never ending"). It also refers to the quality of that life. Salvation in Scripture is discussed in the following manner:

**I. Positionally, we "are saved."** Consider the Savior's declarations throughout John (for just one example). John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (Our emphasis)

John 6:37: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"

John 6:30: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

John 6:40: "And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The clearest statement of the Savior's intent can be found in John 10:27-29. He makes eight declarative statements with absolutely no qualifications: 1) My sheep hear my voice. 2) I know them. 3) They follow me. 4) I give unto them eternal life. 5) They shall never perish. 6) Neither shall any man pluck them out of my Father's hand.

What this scripture doesn't tell us is how closely they follow, how far they straggle, or how dim the voice of the Shepherd may seem to them during their straggling, which brings us to the next aspect of salvation:

**II. We are "being saved."** That is, we come into this relationship with a lot of baggage, habits, behaviors, etc. We are "being saved" in that the Lord is daily working in us to conform us to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). Also, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). Consequently, we are being "saved" from our past lives. We are being changed.

**III. We "shall be saved"** –that is, when we leave this world and stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will not be condemned with the world, who will stand before the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15). And yet, there will be an accounting of how our life is spent: "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:14-15).

**Regarding the time when we finally step into eternity with our King, the Bible tells us:**  
\*"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). And 1 Corinthians 13:12 gives us a little more: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." **What a day that will be!**

[www.thebereanall.com](http://www.thebereanall.com) April 2013 Newsletter pg. 5

### **"THE HANDWRITING IS ON THE WALL AMERICA!"**

EXCERPTED FROM **"CHRISTIAN ACTIVISM: IS IT BIBLICAL?"** — by Dave Hunt

Increasing numbers of **Christians are engaging in social and political activism for the astonishing purpose of attempting to coerce an ungodly society into adopting Christian standards of conduct.** ... There are numerous cases of civil disobedience in Scripture, but it was never engaged in for the purpose of forcing an ungodly society to obey biblical principles. The Hebrew midwives, for example, disobeyed Pharaoh's edict and spared the lives of the male babies, even lying to cover up their "rescue operation" (Exodus 1:15-22). This was, however, a matter of individual conscience before God, not an organized attempt to pressure the pagan Egyptians by mass demonstrations into adopting Israel's God-given morals.

The same is true of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's refusal to obey the king's command to bow to an idol, and of Daniel's defiance of the royal decree against prayer. Though boldly witnessing for God even to kings, Daniel never used his high government position to attempt to pressure a pagan society to abandon its evil practices to begin a godly way of life. Nor did Joseph or Esther pressure the pagan societies in which they held high

positions to adopt biblical morals. So it was with Ezra and Nehemiah. They used their influence with kings to obtain permission to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple but make no attempt to change the practices of those societies, though they practiced abortion, homosexuality, and other evils.

**There are no biblical examples to support “Christian activism.”** Christ “suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps.” He sternly and repeatedly rebuked Israel’s false religious leaders, yet He never spoke out—not even once—against the injustices of Roman civil authority! Nor did He advocate, organize, or engage in any public protests to pressure Rome into changing its corrupt system or the society of His day its evil ways. He submitted to unjust authorities, as Romans 13 tells us we should do today: “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (Peter 2:21-25).

Yes, Paul told the centurion who was about to have him unlawfully scourged that he was a Roman citizen; and he told the local officials at Philippi to come and apologize for beating him and Silas without trial. That was not, however, political/social activism. He was not attempting thereby to change society. He was simply standing up for his personal rights under the law (as we also should do), and that includes voting. Paul was determined to obey God rather than men and never held back from preaching the gospel, though it meant his life....

**Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, offers neither example nor doctrinal teaching to support the idea that Christians ought to engage in political/social activism, lobbying, the takeover methods of [various evangelical organizations and “spiritual warfare” rallies]—or that Christians in public office could or should influence society to adopt biblical standards of conduct.** \*Don’t forget, any change would have to be effected through a corrupt political system involving an ungodly majority above and below. Romans 13 tells us to obey rulers, and 1 Timothy 2 to pray for them—not to attempt to change them by coercion. It is not only foolish but counterproductive to attempt to persuade the unsaved to live like Christians. They can’t do it—and if they could it would only ... bring them to a need for a Savior.

**\*Acts 19:23-41 tells how a large group of citizens in Ephesus staged a huge “demonstration” against Paul and the gospel he preached.** A crowd of probably several thousand persons tore their clothes, threw dust in the air and for two hours vociferously chanted their praise to the locally manufactured god that was their chief source of income. “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” they cried. **Should Paul have gathered a larger crowd of Christians to cry out yet more loudly and longer and thereby impose their will upon the local authorities? Of course not! Such un-Christian conduct is demeaning of our Lord and His gospel and would have been unthinkable for the early church. Yet that is basically what Christian activism involves today—the well-meaning but foolish attempt to force “Christian principles” upon a godless society through more effective lobbying, larger demonstrations, and greater social upheaval than the homosexuals, abortionists, or pornographers can produce.**

**Rather than pressure the ungodly to live like saints, we must win them to Christ that they might live wholly by God. Our personal lives must be lived in obedience to God’s laws even if that brings us into conflict with civil laws.** In addition to avoiding idolatry and immorality.

**Christians must preach the gospel to everyone everywhere, regardless of government edicts to the contrary.** In so doing, the apostles made that historic declaration: “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29)!

**Though forbidden by the authorities, the apostles persisted in preaching the gospel.** Like their Lord, however, they made no attempt to lobby in Rome for an end to prostitution and abortions; nor did they stage public demonstrations for a change in unjust laws. \*There is a danger of being so caught up in the social aspect of good causes that one forgets and neglects the chief Christian calling. **The Great Commission does not involve exerting a Christian influence upon society. \*We are not to “change society” but to “convert individuals.”** There is much talk today about “changing the world for Christ.” In fact there is no biblical teaching or example to support that popular slogan. **Rather than persuading sinners to live like saints, we must call them to heavenly citizenship through “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).**

We must not only rescue the unborn but the children in public schools, who are being perverted through the teaching of immorality, witchcraft, and occultism. We must identify psychology as the major vehicle of so much of this evil and root it out of our churches, seminaries and universities.

**We must denounce sin, call for national repentance, and preach the gospel in convicting power. Christians must call for repentance** not only for homosexuality, child abuse, pornography, and abortion but for more subtle forms of rebellion against God and rejection of Christ. The church must be indicted both for its lack of social concern and for its heresies and failure to preach the truth. **We must denounce the destructive false teachings that abound, it is hypocritical for the church to protest the world’s sins while tolerating and even honoring within its ranks those who preach a false gospel and are the enemies of the cross of Christ.**

**Instead of protesters, \*we need prophets to call the world to repentance:** Enochs who walk with God and warn of judgment (Hebrews 11:55; Jude:14-15); Noahs, preachers of righteousness (2 Peter 2:25), \***who warn of judgment to come and invite sinners into an ark of safety.** What if, instead of building the ark, Noah had tried to reform society! We need Daniels: “Mene, mene, tekel upharsin”—**the handwriting is on the wall, America!** You’ve been weighed in the balance and found wanting! Murdered babies, the abomination of homosexuality, and society’s flippant, deliberate rebellion against God have aroused His anger beyond any possibility of reprieve! We need Isaiahs and Jeremiahs!

**[But] “Christian activism” is not Christian. It represents a detour from the straight path the church is to walk before the world. It can confuse the real issues, lead to compromise and unholy alliances, and divert time and effort that would better be used in proclaiming the gospel. Weigh the demands upon your time and set priorities.**

**Be fully engaged in rescuing souls for eternity.**

Used with Permission. [www.thebereancall.org](http://www.thebereancall.org) September 2012 Newsletter pg. 12  
The Berean Call PO Box 7019 Bend OR 97708-7020

Presented by: Gary Westgerdes [www.thekeysofheaven.com](http://www.thekeysofheaven.com)