

Eternal Life Victory

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:9).

John was a prisoner on the isle of Patmos. Church history records that his situation there was far more terrible than most of us can imagine. But notice what he said: “...in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, [I] was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God....” There were no lengthy accounts of the deplorable conditions and unbelievable torture that he miraculously endured. Furthermore, every introductory phrase in Revelation chapter 1 revealed an attitude of overwhelming victory. How could this be?

Every Blood-bought child of God desires to live this way—a faithful and resilient overcomer in the face of any adversity. Then “reality” hits.

Like Job, we may start out trusting God, “bearing up” under pressure, until external forces cause us to struggle. Though we try to muster up the strength, peace, and confidence we know about so well, these have not yet become our experience. But there is a provision. The message in this booklet will shed light on our situations so we may take hold of the eternal life victory that is ours.

Chapter One

THE TESTIMONY OF A DISCIPLE

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

“(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3).

Let’s look at verse 1: “That which was from the beginning, which we have *heard*, which we have *seen* with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have *handled*, of the Word of life.” The apostle said three things: We have heard with our own ears; we’ve witnessed it

with our own eyes—we've looked and gazed upon Him; and, our hands have handled of the Word of life.

By now, possibly 106 years of age, the apostle John really knows how to express these things. In this passage, he says so beautifully, "Remember: This isn't Buddha—and it isn't Mohammed. I have seen Him, personally. I've walked with Him. I've talked with Him. I've prayed with Him. I've won souls with Him. I've touched Him. I've handled Him. *This* is Jesus Christ."

If he were speaking to us today, John would say, "I would never lie to you. This isn't, as the pseudo-intellectual know-it-alls say, a series of lies manufactured by a group of Jewish men who want to defend their experience. That's *not* what I'm about."

"Furthermore," John might add, "I want to establish this as fact: I'm over 100 years old. In 96 A.D., I was delivered from the isle of Patmos. And, I want you to realize one thing—I will reemphasize this because it is so crucial to the authenticity, inspired validity, and absolute accuracy of the Word of God: I heard Him with my own ears!" (cf. Revelation 1:9-10).

This apostle described his experience as

Jesus' disciple in 1 John 1:1. "We have seen Him with our own eyes and we've looked upon Him; that is, we gazed upon Him on many, many occasions. Our hands have handled of the Word of life."

What makes this passage so unique is that John calls Him 'the Word of life'. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory...)" (John 1:1 and 1:14a).

"For the life was manifested..."(1 John 1:2). Buddha cannot say that. Mohammed cannot say that. Yet this life was manifested visibly.

"We have seen it..."—he's going to be repetitious. "We have seen it, and bear witness." In other words, "We're going to give a testimony of exactly what we have witnessed, to show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us."

That is a magnificent, consistent, ever-expanding revelation of the practical and fundamental meaning of discipleship: I go to God; He answers my prayer; I fellowship with Him in the midst of darkness; and I find Him, hidden in the treasures of darkness.

A Vision Comes

I talked with Him four decades ago, and four decades later, our ministry is in all the world. I wasn't a pastor—not even a Sunday School teacher—that day at Worthly Pond. A vision comes. The love of God floods into the car. I stop. Get out of the car? I can't. I'm overwhelmed. For over an hour I am unable to speak. And the Holy Spirit pours out a vision to my heart.

First He says, “I want to use you for others, and I'll give you a gift in preaching. I'll give you a gift in teaching, and I'll give you a gift in discipling men. And if you honor Me and obey Me, I will raise up churches.”

I had no idea what He meant, because I was not even a pastor.

Number two: “I'll raise up ministries to go into all the world.” Please understand, I hadn't heard the Great Commission taught more than three times in my life. (And when I did, it was dry.)

Number three: “You'll have Christian colleges” (plural!).

It sounds like a pipe dream.

Number four: “You'll have Christian schools,

multiplied throughout the world.”

Number five: “You’ll have talk radio.” As it was in those days, there wasn’t one Christian talk show—not one. When it happened, we were the second in the world and the first overseas.

Number six: “You’ll broadcast on TV.”

Number seven: “You will be persecuted heavily.”

Number eight: “You’ll be anointed for your ministry.” (Every Christian is anointed, cf: 1 John 2:20, 27a).

And number nine: “Your ministry will endure permanently.”

And the Holy Spirit comes. I don’t know why. He did it because He chooses the least—the base things of the world, the things that are not (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). He did it so that no man could glory in his flesh, that no man could glory about his personal education. Every man must glory in Christ, and Christ alone, becoming established in what the Lord said in John 15:5b, “without me ye can do nothing.”

The Manifestation of Life

John said, “For the life was manifested, and we...shew unto you that eternal life.” He said,

We're making known and making visible through our mortal bodies what we have witnessed and received, and now we're going to show it to you! We're going to show you what we've learned."

It's like a young teacher, just coming out of college and going to teach school. She's finally got her degrees, and she goes into a classroom as a teacher for a certain grade. She's "showing her stuff."

That's exactly what Christianity is all about. Christianity isn't being saved for fifteen years and then withdrawing into a shell. Christianity isn't withdrawing into your sickness, or withdrawing into your 'self' or your needs. Christianity is showing, manifesting—day in and day out—what you have seen and received, what you have understood and known, and what you have experienced.

The apostle said, "We shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father [who planned it], and was manifested unto us." He kept using that word *manifested*. "That which we have seen..." (repetition) "...and heard..." (repetition) "...declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus

Christ" (1 John 1:2-3).

We're All in the Same Boat

What we've seen and what we've heard, we are declaring, and the purpose of our declaration (of what we've seen and heard) is that you may have fellowship with us.

The word *fellowship* speaks of drawing near. John said, "that you may draw near..." near the things that we've heard, the things that we've seen, and the things that we have to say. "That you may draw near..." that you will put yourself out and do whatever it takes to draw near to a corporate fellowship.

You know, you can have it any way that you want it. If you want to be indifferent, go right ahead! But there are consequences for those who want to be reactionary or passive, always expecting everyone to do for them what only God can do.

John was saying, "I want you to know that the whole purpose of this is that you may have fellowship with us." Fellow-ship: Two people in the same boat! Five people, ten people, fifty people in the same room. A fellowship. A fellowship with *love*, a fellowship with *life*, and a fellowship not only with love and life, but also with *light*.

So, our fellowship is based upon the three “L’s”: love, life, and light.

And that's an interesting thought this morning. In God, there is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). That means that I could be in the darkest situation in my life and there would be no darkness at all because of my faith in the Light, in love.

Chapter Two
LIFE: EVERLASTING
OR ETERNAL?

If I'm hated, rejected, resisted, and lied about, my fellowship is in the boat of love and light. And no matter what I am challenged with, I'm not fellowshiping with a life that has a beginning and an ending; but it is life that has *no* beginning and *no* ending.

Now, the average Christian cannot comprehend this—they don't even begin to. They understand very well the life that *has* a beginning and *no* ending. It's called *everlasting life*. They give and take counsel around that life. They talk about it. They enjoy it—a life that has a beginning and no ending.

A life that has a beginning and no ending will always give you a reference point to the process of things as they go on in time, since time began. But, *eternal life* has *no* beginning and *no* ending.

Billions of years ago in the Eternal Convention of heaven, God ordained eternal life, knowing that some would accept Christ. That is the life that God gives us. "These things have I written unto you that you may have eternal life, and the life is in the Son. And I give you eternal life, and no man shall pluck you out of my hand" (John 10:28). It's a life that has no beginning and no ending.

The unsaved person has a life that has a beginning but no ending; and, the carnal Christian, though he is saved, experiences a life that has a beginning but no ending: everlasting life. But, the true Spirit-filled believer who is occupied with Christ, having the love of God shed abroad in his heart; the one who keeps on receiving the abundant life, walking in the light as Christ is in the light—*that* Christian has a life with no beginning and no ending: eternal life.

The Quality of Eternal Life

Somebody came to me for counseling recently, and I began the session by saying, "I have a question to ask you. I will let you express yourself to me so that you have the privilege of being loved and heard. You can express yourself and vent anything you want to. But," I said, "do

you want me to counsel you in everlasting life or do you want me to counsel you in eternal life?"

This person replied, "I don't understand what you mean."

I said, "Well, do you want me to counsel you in a life that has a beginning and no ending, and use Scriptures for that, which will do no good at all? Or, do you want me to counsel you in a life that has no beginning and no ending?"

"I still don't know what you mean!" They couldn't grasp it.

"For as the Father hath *life* in himself; so hath he given to the Son" (John 5:26a). This life, *zoe* in the Greek, speaks of the timeless, eternal life God desires for every Christian (John 10:10). *Zoe* life flows like a river. But, since Genesis 3, men have been alienated from this life and live in *bios* life, with its entanglements and limitations, originating in the Fall.

I watch people in every ministry I've ever been in. The drug addict who goes back to his life that has a beginning never gets thoroughly delivered. The alcoholic who goes back to a life that has a beginning and no ending goes back to his alcohol. The promiscuous person goes back to his promiscuity because he was born in the Fall, and that fallen life had a beginning in him.

But the people who achieve through grace, attain through mercy, and grow through love, experience a life that has no beginning and no ending. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall [set] you free" (John 8:31-32), and, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). He was talking about eternal life, a life that has no beginning and no ending.

When Ephesians 1:4 says, "According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," that's speaking of a life that has no beginning and no ending.

It's difficult to be depressed inside of that kind of life. I've never yet seen a person become depressed when eternal life is reigning. A person who understands this message will not have a poor self-image—not once! There are homes where Satan has been domesticated. But, I've never seen a problem when a home becomes filled with the life that has no beginning and no ending.

The greatest way to have victory is not by talking over the sin or discussing the defeat, but by entering into the law of the Spirit of life that

has overcome the law of sin and death, and by receiving this life which is from above. The life which comes from above has no beginning and no ending. That is why Jesus said, "If ye then be risen [and you are], seek those things which are above...and set your [mind] on things above" (Colossians 3:1-2).

Paul said, "Our conversation is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20). He's talking about a life that has no beginning and no ending. This life is *practical*, yet it has supernatural potential. It is unfathomable in its scope, immeasurable in its quality of being. This life is absolutely fascinating in practical observation. It is so realistic in its eternal value! This life, that has no beginning and no ending.

The woman who is around the house, frustrated and screaming at the children, is not living in eternal life. The one who confesses, "I'm worried about my job, and I can't even. . . ."—that's not eternal life.

Eternal life is very accountable, very responsible, but very supernatural. And what is impossible with man's everlasting life is always possible with eternal life.

Chapter Three
THE OPERATION OF
ETERNAL LIFE

In Job 42, Job was going through all measure of trials. You know the story: This man who started out with such a positive response to God—worshipping God in spite of his affliction—could not handle the accusations and implications of his friends.

It's quite interesting. Job could stand being very sick, being very ill with boils all over his body. He lost his seven sons, and three daughters, and oxen, and sheep, and all of his wealth. (By the way, I suggest to you that there were no insurance policies in those days!)

After he lost all of these things, he became extremely quiet. Quietness and confidence became his strength (Isaiah 30:15 and 32:17). Job inhabited *sure* resting places; everything was fine, and he blessed God.

Job came through for God. He was focused

though he was in a trial—an angelic conflict—and didn't know it! But he did a wonderful job.

To add to all of those heavy things happening to him, when his three friends (and later on, another friend) came down on him, he could not handle it. He argued and reacted and wished that he were never born; he went through a tremendous struggle, battling the conflict within.

Satan always knows the very thing that we as Christians cannot deal with individually. Consider this: Job could *not* handle finding out that his friends were not true friends. They were “acquaintances” and could not be trusted. At best, they were companions; but they were not friends. This was a conditional relationship on their part, but it was an *unconditional* relationship on his part.

Reaction or Action

Job wanted an umpire between himself and God. This man, who was so unique, was going through something known as *pathos*, passively experiencing something from without, evoking emotions of pity. He allowed the things from without to control that which was within. I'll say that again: Job allowed that which was without

to control that which was within, and he was deeply affected with what he might have called a “bad situation”! Job did not act in faith; he did not act in grace; he did not act in love. Instead, he reacted to his friends.

The only way a Christian will ever overcome his or her potential to react is by acting in God's grace, in God's Word, and in God's love.

The Greek word, *poieo*, means to continually act properly; to make a solid once-and-for-all decision. But Job did not act in God; he was acted upon by the world and by Satan.

The most dangerous thing in the world happens when our souls are empty and we allow external forces to control the soul within.

Over these many years, I've seen people do this. You can barely talk with them, because they are so controlled by external desires, external forces, external initiations, and with significant supernatural communication from Satan.

We must be careful that we do not allow that which outside forces would have us experience. Those external forces want to waste our lives so that we become losers, inadequate and unable to establish a good value system with divine virtue and divine understanding of God's purpose for our lives.

A Divine Reversal

After arguing philosophical debates, completely misunderstanding the sympathetic nature of God and the glorious, majestic attributes of Christ's love toward him, Job finally had a beautiful divine reversal. "And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends" (Job 42:10a). Relaxed, he now prayed for the very friends he had previously allowed to affect him. As he prayed, Job realized how he had totally misunderstood God, and he made this statement in verses 5 and 6: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

He said, "I've heard you, Lord, with the hearing of my ear, but my soul never saw you." This means that his soul never understood, by personal experience, the things that he heard. Job was a very bright and affluent man, highly intellectual, but his soul never saw truth.

It is so crucial that we understand that truth must be located *inside* of our souls. If truth is not located inside of our souls, we will never *see* it, which means we will never experience it. Pathos will become our experience, and those outside

forces will begin to infect us, as they did Job.

The Word of God says, “And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before” (Job 42:10).

Chapter Four
VICTORY THROUGH
BROKENNESS

At this point, Job's soul was governed by *pantokrator*, the Almighty Giver, a description of God that is seldom used. Job came under the Almighty Giver, who filled him with *kratos*, the power of this mighty Giver. As he came under this power, Job began to take hold of it, and he became possessed by it, free to act in the life of the Word of God. As a result, job had a tremendous, divine reversal.

How does this happen? I believe that a Christian can have many divine reversals—even in the worst situation, by sight. When we pray and mean it with all of our hearts, praying for the very thing that's troubling us, praying with faith, with love, with brokenness, and in meekness, it will happen. And I believe with all my heart that when we respond with prayer in brokenness (and Job was broken, and in broken-

ness, Job repented), we *will* have a series of divine reversals.

Job had a series of divine reversals. In his situation, he not only got back his wealth and his health, but he also got his family back. And, according to isagogics, he got his friends back. God answered prayer in ancient history; and today, this great principle is for our instruction and edification.

There are many believers today who need a divine reversal. But listen, it doesn't do any good to pray for a divine reversal unless we repent of what we should repent of, unless we are broken, and unless we are relaxed as we pray for the situation. And that's exactly what the Hebrew text reveals in Job 42.

Job was very relaxed after he repented; in fact, he became extremely relaxed. With fervency, quietness, and confidence, he prayed about the problem. And the Almighty Giver, *pantokrator*, filled him with *kratos*. At last, Job—full of power as he gave the problem to God—became free to act in behalf of his friends, and God reversed every situation.

His Righteousness, Our Blessings

Do you understand that when you were

saved, you were given a gift of imputed righteousness? That righteousness was not yours nor mine, but it is God's righteousness. And with that gift of righteousness, derived from Christ and imputed to our account, come what we call *relative absolute blessings*. What is a relative absolute blessing? it is the kind of blessing given to every person who has received this gift of imputed righteousness.

It means that because of the integrity of God in my life and in your life, we receive these relative absolute blessings from God. In other words, if I walk uprightly, God's integrity blesses me, because it's His life in me. He is blessing a life that I've *derived*. And God has to bless His derived life because of His justice, because of integrity—because of the nature of His essence. he blesses people. So, when a person is broken, that person becomes the recipient and a partaker of God's nature through the promises. God, in a relative situation, in an absolute way, has to bless that one who is filled with the Spirit.

You say, "But what about sickness? Or, what if something bad happens?"

When God allows adversity, then, without you realizing it, you are being promoted for all

eternity—*while* you are in that situation! That's what happens. And if I'm walking in the light, I can know, biblically, that I am being promoted. Any temporal loss incurred while I'm walking in the light will prove to be an eternal gain. But I can also know that God will indeed reverse my situation.

God may allow us to experience His character of patience, after we've done the will of God and after we've claimed a promise (Hebrews 10:35-36). We are told not to cast away our confidence because we have need of the character of God to permeate and possess us, controlling us so that pathos and the outside influences cannot have their way in us.

Targets for God's Blessing

I want you to think how God—Who is so unique, and so precious, and so ready to bless us—can now begin to move in us in a way that is pleasing to Him. He takes a hold of our lives and possesses the target of His blessing. For example, when I have the character of patience, that's a target for God to bless me with His absolute relative righteousness in the integrity of His justice. If I forgive others, and I have a forgiving spirit, then the relative absolute equity of

divine justice—without reservation or without limitation—forgives me.

And in brokenness, when I know I have a human weakness—a drug addiction, a habit of lying, stealing to get drugs, or whatever I would do—and I’m experiencing the weakness, then I come to God in the bankruptcy of my need. In the brokenness of my heart, the Holy Spirit comes in and makes my integrity of brokenness the target for the relative absolute blessing of God’s diving equity.

Justice and integrity have to bless whatever is operating in me that has its source in God. Meanwhile, God may work in me a certain fruit of the Holy Spirit. He does this to possess my ‘inner man’ so external forces cannot control my capacity for that situation. For example, He’ll work patience in my life. Therefore, God will “procrastinate” in His answer for only one reason: to work the character of God within me and to conform me to His image in that specific detail of life.

CONCLUSION

Many Christians, for some unknown reason, teach something entirely false about the character and nature of God. By the same token, they often touch a part of the truth, but they don't know the truth that I'm speaking about.

When I'm filled with the Spirit, unless I'm getting eternally promoted in the front line of warfare in the angelic conflict, then the absolute righteousness and integrity of God's justice, by reason of reality, has to bless that part of Jesus Christ that's operating in me. It has to!

The righteousness of God cannot forsake the righteousness of Christ. The integrity of God cannot forsake the integrity of God's life in me. Therefore, the wisdom of God cannot retaliate against the wisdom of God in me.

So the Christian who walks in wisdom, filled with the Spirit, becomes the recipient of a brand-new life, wholesome joy, and wholesome happiness. He will prosper in business and pros-

per in health, unless God has another purpose. (Then, he will prosper in the adventure of the need—and God will supply the provision!) All of these things happen because the integrity of divine justice cannot forsake the integrity of God's righteousness in the believer. Let God permeate and penetrate your human soul with this truth.