

Eternal Life Today, Tomorrow, Forever

www.john2031.com/cc/zoe.html

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 nasb

I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. John 10:10b nasb

Christians often use the term “eternal life” in a way that distorts the actual meaning of the two words. We focus on “eternal” and miss the awesomeness of the “life” that is ours in Christ.

This Present Darkness

When we are born again we are “rescued from the dominion of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of God’s beloved Son.” [Col. 1:13](#), [Acts 26:18](#)

That’s incredible, but the fact remains that we continue to live in this dark world which is ruled by Satan, and we often feel overcome by it. Many Americans feel helpless as they see darkness overtaking our nation and they fear what it means for them and their families. True?

Zoe-Life

John 1:4 says of Jesus, “In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.”

The English word “life” there, and in the verses at the top of this page, is from the Greek “zoe,” [Strong’s G2222](#). Zoe speaks of *quality* of life, that is, abundant, rich, full, and overflowing. Zoe-life begins when we are born again, and it is eternal, but we err when we think of eternal life more in terms of eternal *existence* than of *fullness* of life.

Zoe-life is the fullness of [John 10:10](#); the joy of [John 17:13](#); the righteousness, peace and joy of [Rom. 14:17](#); the Spirit fruit of [Gal. 5:22-23](#); the contentment of [Philip. 4:11-13](#); the unity and the witness it empowers of [John 17:20-21](#); the “rest” of [Mt. 11:28-30](#); the love of [John 13:35](#); the peace of [John 14:27](#), [16:33](#), and [Philip. 4:4-7](#), and that’s only the beginning!

Zoe-life speaks of the wholeness that we have when the “Who am I?” question deep inside of us is met through Jesus (¹[Two Kingdoms](#)), and it includes the spiritual intimacy of [John 14:20-23](#). (²[Jesus is Calling](#)) It impacts every aspect of our lives, even in the hard times!

Pseudo-Life

The “church” in America has little knowledge of zoe-life. In fact, we sometimes present “eternal life” as a strategy to escape hell and go to heaven when we die. “Fire insurance,” as we might say.

That isn’t authentic and it doesn’t give real “life,” so we devise ways to get around it. For example, we might define “a good Christian” as one who goes to church, tithes, becomes a member, serves, abstains from certain sins, and/or buys into a specific dogmatic belief system.

Some of those can be expressions of faith but none are its source, nor can they sustain us in hard times. All have the potential to give false hope and draw us away from true life. When we take God’s precious gift and rob it of its glory by making it to be of man, we cheat His people out of the zoe-life that could be theirs through a relationship with Christ in which He is Lord.

The Kingdom of God

Through Christ, God established a spiritual kingdom on this earth. It has its own government with Christ as head and zoe-life as its culture. It is the spirit realm that we abide in when we are reconnected to and realigned with Creator God.

It primarily affects the spiritual aspects of our life, i.e. the part that is eternal, and as long as we’re here we’ll still have snakes and thistles!

We become kingdom citizens by believing in Jesus ([John 1:12](#)), but to believe means more than mental assent. It implies to entrust oneself to the object of belief in a way that leads to action.

A “Christian” is one who has not only “believed in Jesus” enough to escape hell when he dies, but has literally switched kingdom loyalties and given himself to a different lord. It means that we believe that the most rewarding way to fulfill any spiritual, emotional or physical appetite or need is to satisfy it in the way that shows obedience to God instead of doing things our own way.

However, the Kingdom of God is entered through the narrow gate of [Mt. 7:13-14](#). And it is like the hidden treasure and the fine pearls of [Mt. 13:44-46](#), which both involved sacrifice but compensating reward.

Following Jesus as citizens of His Kingdom and part of the Church, the Body of Christ, can separate us from others. He warned us of that when He said things like [Mt. 10:16-41](#) and [Luke 14:26](#).

Jesus was simply being open with us when He said that if we want to be His disciple we must take up our cross daily and follow Him. ([Luke 9:23-26](#)) That is, if we want the zoe-life of His Kingdom, we must deny the “self” of our old nature which it replaces! It’s one or the other, but out of the fear of discouraging people we often water down the “cost” side, which simultaneously dilutes the reward side and leads to the bland “Christianity” that marks many Americans.

Conclusion

God created mankind to have a passionate desire for His zoe-life. It’s the [Psa. 42:1-2](#) thing and there is no adequate substitute. We yearn for it and we know something is missing when we don’t have it. It is constant but is especially acute in times of personal need.

Christians who hope to thrive in times of trouble will “seek first God’s kingdom and His righteousness,” as in [Mt. 6:33](#). We will “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Mt. 5:6) more than we desire the pleasures of this world. We do that because we crave the zoe-life that righteousness provides, more than because of fear of the penalty of sin.

We will hate evil ([Rom. 12:9](#)) because it creates distance in our fellowship with God, more than because we fear getting smacked for being bad.

This “extreme makeover” is crucial for authentic followers of Jesus in our day. There are no political solutions to America’s and the world’s problems because they are spirit in nature

The preserving salt and guiding light of [Mt. 5:13-14](#) are the result of the zoe-life of the Kingdom of God. The authenticity of American Christianity can be measured by the impact we are having upon our nation. Regrettably, our [I John 2:15-17](#) love for the world has distanced us from

God and His zoe-life and has minimized our positive influence.

We have nothing of worth to lose and everything to gain by humbly surrendering to Lord Jesus. It might or might not affect our nation, but it will profoundly impact *us* and will help others make their own “life or death” decisions.

A proper understanding of zoe-life is important as we consider difficulties because it enhances our sense of how God can enable us in that time. It is supernatural and empowers us at a level far above human potentials and resources.

There are consequences to the choices that American leaders are making. There will be a refining fire for Christians and many will falter. American religion will not suffice, but the zoe-life of relationship with the Living God through His Son Jesus Christ, and by the power of His Holy Spirit, will be enough! Actually, it will make us the “more than conquerors” of [Rom. 8:31-39](#)!

Further, it will be a time of great harvest among the lost if they can see the [Col. 1:23](#) “hope of the Gospel” in us, and that can lead to eternal life for them too - - now and forever!

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in the darkness but will have the light of life” (John 8:12), and as John 1:5 says, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not extinguish it.” Yes, if we follow Jesus we will have the “zoe-life light” that no darkness can extinguish!

“Eternal life” is one of the most powerful but misapplied terms in Christian vocabulary. That matters, because it diminishes our spiritual vitality and the testimony it is meant to give in the ongoing contest between God and Satan for the hearts of men. It also handicaps us in dealing with the everyday challenges of life even now, and will be devastating in the challenges to come.

[Eph 3:14-24](#) - [Eph. 4:22-24](#) - [Hebrews 10:32–11:40](#).

¹“Two Kingdoms,” at www.john2031.com/cc/2k.html

² “Jesus is Calling” at www.john2031.com/cc/jc.html