



Can We Know... The Preparation for Eternal Life?

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The two previous tracts in this series have established that we can know the origin of life, and secondly, that we can know the answers to the questions of life. When a person gains knowledge of these two things (and we can gain such knowledge--I Timothy 2:4) he, of necessity, must ask a third question: "**How do I make preparation for the eternal life to come?**"

The Source of the Answer.

God through His grace has provided us with the answer to this question in a book, the Bible, which is the very Word of God. The Bible makes it possible for us to know that God exists and that He created all life, including man which He made in His own image (Genesis 1:26). Further, the Bible makes it possible for us to know the answers to the questions of life such as, "What is our purpose while here on Earth?" (Ecclesiastes 12:13), and "What should our relationship be to our fellowman (Matthew 22:39; Romans 12:18), our families (Ephesians 5:22-25; 6:1-4), and our government (Romans 13:1-7)?" Finally, the Bible allows us to know how to prepare for eternal life (I John 5:13). God through the apostle Peter tells us in II Peter 1:3 "...that His divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue"(ASV). The Bible contains the answers to all of life's questions.

What Does the Bible Say?

Through the Bible we know that all of mankind has sinned (Romans 3:23). A person must accept the reality of sin and must know that sin separates him from God (Isaiah 59:2).

Secondly, the Bible tells us that God has provided a remedy for sins (John 3:16). Christ lived a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15) and suffered a cruel death on the cross where He sacrificed Himself for our sins (Hebrews 9:26). This sacrifice and the obedience produced by our faith in God's Word make it possible for us to be prepared for eternal life (James 2:24, 26).

Thirdly, the Bible provides in its pages God's plan, or pattern, for our reconciliation to Him. God's desire is that we comply with His requirements so that our sins might be washed away (I Timothy 2:4). Notice the word "requirements." God does require something from us.

What Must I Do?

What exactly is required from each person in his preparation for eternal life? God in His Word clearly states that a person must hear the gospel message in order to be prepared for eternity (Romans 10:14-17). This requirement clearly shows that our preparation includes the acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, we must be actively involved in acquiring this knowledge (II Timothy 2:15), and those who possess this knowledge must be actively spreading it to others (Matthew 28:18-20).

Upon hearing the gospel we must believe what God says (Hebrews 11:6). This is not a belief in part of God's Word, but rather a belief in the entirety of His will for man. We can not choose those parts which are appealing to us and set the other parts aside. As the Apostle Paul told the Ephesian Elders, "...I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27, ASV). The Bible contains warnings about adding to or taking away from its teachings (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

When we believe God's Word we must turn from our old life of sin. God will not take us "as we are" as some might teach, but rather requires us to determine to make those changes in our lives that will bring us into conformance to His Will (Luke 13:3). These changes may be difficult, but with the goal of eternal life in mind and with God's help, we can begin to make the necessary steps in our lives to be pleasing to God (Phillipians 3:13-14; 4:13).

Preparation for eternal life requires that we publicly confess that Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 10:9). We cannot be ashamed of Christ or His Gospel and be pleasing to Him (Romans 1:16; Matthew 10:32-33).

After we have done all of these things, we must be immersed in water to wash our sins away. Some teach that this is not necessary, but the Bible clearly states that it is very necessary (I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:1-6). When we hear the Gospel and obey it

from the heart, God has promised that He will add us to the one church which belongs to Christ (Acts 2:47).

There is only one church to which we can belong and be a Christian. God's Word says that there is one body (Ephesians 4:4-5), and that one body is identified as the church (Colossians 1:18). Further, we see that Christ is its head and that the church, or the body, belongs to Him (Matthew 16:16-18). We must all be aware that a manmade organization claiming to be a church cannot save. The saved are in Christ's church, or the Body (Ephesians 1:3), and they are the only ones which can enjoy the spiritual blessings which are found only in Him.

One Must Continue to Live the Christian Life.

Becoming a Christian does not, however, complete our preparation for eternal life. God's plan requires that we, as His people, live according to His standard. That standard involves abstinence from sin (I Thessalonians 5:22). The Christian is called to a higher standard of life, one that glorifies God and leads to eternal life (Galatians 5:22-24).

This higher standard involves remaining in the Way. We, as Christians, are commanded to be faithful unto death in order to receive the eternal reward we are seeking (Revelation 2:10). This encompasses living a faithful Christian life until we die. It also encompasses living faithfully even if it costs us our earthly life. Not only must we remain in the Way, but we must grow (II Peter 3:17-18), and we must teach others to be pleasing to God (Mark 16:15-16).

Are You Prepared?

Do you now know that this life is more than the accumulation of material goods, seeking pleasure, and growing old? If you have come to this conclusion, have you done those things which God's Word tells us are required for us to be prepared for eternal life? If not, please do not delay. The Bible tells us that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night (I Thessalonians 5:1-2). If judgment day comes, or if we die before we act, it will simply be too late. We will be **unprepared** and **lost**.

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