

### 13. The New-Covenant Life (2Q 2021—The Promise: God’s Everlasting Covenant)

**Biblical Material:** 1 John 1:4; John 5:24; Rom. 3:24, 25; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 4:16; Rev. 2:11; Rev. 20:6, 14; Rev. 21:8; John 10:10.

#### Quotes

- The New Testament writers also placed their theological analyses of specific passages within the larger context of the multiplex “grand central theme” or meta-narrative of Scripture as set forth in the opening and closing pages of the Bible (Genesis 1–3; Revelation 20–22): creation and the original divine design for this world; the rise of the cosmic moral conflict (Great Controversy) over the character of God, in the setting of the sanctuary; the plan of redemption-restoration centering in Christ and His atoning work; and the eschatological judgment and end of sin at the climax of history. *Richard M. Davidson*
- The Christian life is a life that consists of following Jesus. *A.W. Pink*
- The quality of life is more important than life itself. *Alexis Carrel*
- The man who regards his own life and that of his fellow creatures as meaningless is not merely unfortunate but almost disqualified for life. *Albert Einstein*
- Life is the seed-time for eternity. *John Angell James*
- The Spirit-filled life is not a special, deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people. *A.W. Tozer*

#### Questions

How do we make covenant concepts relevant to our world today? How would you summarize this quarter’s message? What is the basis for hope? What message of encouragement can we draw from this? How do we make sure the focus is on God and not on us? How do we make covenant promises real in our personal lives? How will the conflict finally be ended?

#### Bible summary

John’s objective in writing his epistle is to complete the happiness of the Christian community (1 John 1:4). Jesus says his believers have already passed from death to life (John 5:24). “Yet through the free gift of his grace, God makes us right through Christ Jesus who sets us free. God openly presented Jesus as the gift that brings peace to those trusting in him, the one who shed his blood. God did this to demonstrate he is truly good and right.” Rom. 3:24, 25 FBV. Jesus experienced the consequences of sin so that we could have a character that is like God (2 Cor. 5:21). “We have experienced and trusted in the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who live in love, live in God, and God lives in them.” 1 John 4:16 FBV. Those who are victorious won’t be hurt by the second death (Rev. 2:11), similarly stated in Rev. 20:6. Rev. 21:8 described what happens to those who choose otherwise. Jesus says, “The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I’ve come to bring you life, life full to overflowing.” John 10:10 FBV.

#### Comment

Are we truly living? Deep down in us all is that chilling fear of meaninglessness. That no one cares whether we live or die. And that there’s no point anyway... Don’t claim that you’ve never felt that in that stark cold greyness of the morning as you look into that anxious face in the mirror. Of course the easiest answer is to do nothing. Think nothing. Be nothing. Those sad people who

appear in every poll as “don’t know.” Those who didn’t have an opinion. Those who had no idea about anything.

Our experience of the Christian life is so full of meaning. In contrast to pointless lives filled with the trivial, we get to experience life in all its fullness, full of the meaning God provides. For what did Jesus come to bring us us? A “life full to overflowing.” (John 10:10). He came to bring us full life, the life of God now and eternally. Which means that most people today are not really fully alive. They are only playing at being alive, says Jesus. You know how kids play. Imaginary ideas, fantasy games that usually begin: Let’s pretend. How do people play that game with their actual lives? Let’s pretend that all is well with us when it’s not. That’s what Jesus came to end—the idea of this pointless game we play with our lives. For the “let’s pretend” idea comes from the Devil. Let’s pretend is lying, and the Devil is a liar from the beginning, for he said: “You will not surely die.” And that is the greatest game of all, pretending that we shall never die, that we shall live forever. How ridiculous! But how many do live that lie? Jesus came to end that lie. To give meaning and purpose to our lives. Without him we shall die eternally. But with him we have full lives—and eternal life!

This captivating concept is what should engage us. This is more than “fun” or a chasing after the “feel good” factor. For how do we deal with the way we *feel* about living the Christian life? Feelings can be both a help and hindrance in the Christian life. When you are having a “mountain top” experience the emotion of praise and joy can be absolutely wonderful: a thrilling and inspiring sense of God’s presence that uplifts and sustains. But when you are “down in the valley” the negative feelings can lead to spiritual discouragement and depression. Like David in the Psalms, we need to “call to mind” what we *know* to be true, and trust in God, however bad we might *feel*. So we should ask ourselves, “Where is my confidence? In myself and how I feel from day to day? Or is my confidence in the promises of God?” The Christian life is the assurance of God in our all our experiences: happy, sad, good, and bad. He is the one who walks with us now, and he is also the one who welcomes us at the end.

### **Ellen White comments**

Looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of the faith.... In His care we may rest safely, saying, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.” Psalm 56:3. To all who put their trust in Him, God will fulfill His promise. {AA 467}

Christ was invested with the right to give immortality. The life which He had laid down in humanity, He again took up and gave to humanity. “I am come,” He says, “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10)... All who are one with Christ through faith in Him gain an experience which is life unto eternal life...

Christ became one with humanity, that humanity might become one in spirit and life with Him. By virtue of this union in obedience to the Word of God, His life becomes their life. He says to the penitent, “I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25). Death is looked upon by Christ as sleep--silence, darkness, sleep. He speaks of it as if it were of little moment. “Whosoever liveth and believeth in me,” He says, “shall never die” (John 11:26). “If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death” (John 8:52). “He shall never see death” (John 8:51). And to the believing one, death is but a small matter. With him to die is but to sleep. {1SM 302}

Every moment of our life is intensely real. Life is no play; it is charged with awful importance, fraught with eternal responsibilities... The conviction will be forced upon us that a life without Christ will be a life of utter failure, but if Jesus abides with us, we shall live for a purpose. {TMK 85}

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