

Two Fundamental Questions Pertaining to God's Giving His Blessing of Eternal Life to a Person

1. Why does God give a person eternal life?

Answer – because He has sovereignly chosen to extend mercy and forgiveness to a person through Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, who qualified through his death to appeal to God the Father for mercy on behalf of the person at the final judgment

Therefore, God's choice *and* Jesus' role together are the **basis** (theological foundation) for God's granting a person eternal life.

Notice that this reason why God gives a person eternal life involves what only God has done, His **independent** choice to forgive *and* the death of Jesus, the very icon of God in human history (cf. Colossians 1:15; 2 Corinthians 4:4), so that the occurrence of these do not **depend** on the requirement below of question #2, which God has placed upon a person to obtain eternal life. Indeed, it is the other way around. That which must be true of a person as stated under question #2 **depends** on God's independent choice to forgive and Jesus' death.

In other words, God made His sovereign and independent choice *in eternity past* to extend mercy to a person before the person ever existed and before the requirement of question #2 below was fulfilled in the person's heart.

In addition, Jesus willfully died on the cross primarily as an act of obedience to God the Father and secondarily because he knew that the Father had chosen in eternity past to extend mercy to some persons (cf. Luke 22:42; Hebrews 12:2). Thus, God sent Jesus to die for sinful human beings as part of the **basis** for His giving a person eternal life.

2. What does God require of a person in order to give him eternal life?

Answer – a changed heart that results in the person being committed to God and the things of God

This is the **necessary condition** placed upon us by God. This is **what must be true of us** in order for God to grant us eternal life.

However, only God through the work of His Spirit in us can create this required quality of a changed heart. Because of our inherent evil nature, we cannot change our hearts.

This is also a **sufficient condition** in that if a person died immediately after God changes his heart without his manifesting any of the characteristics listed below, God would still grant him eternal life.

In other words, *nothing needs to be added* to this condition in order for God to grant a person eternal life.

Obviously, most people live past the moment when God changes their hearts, and the following are the ways that they have manifested, do manifest, and will manifest their changed hearts during the three major periods of time in human history –

1. During the period of time between God's giving the Jews the Mosaic Covenant and Jesus' 1st appearance –

A changed heart for a Jew manifested itself...

- a. through belief in the promises God made to Abraham,
- b. and by guarding properly the Mosaic Covenant.

2. During the period of time now between Jesus' 1st and 2nd appearances –

A changed heart for both Jews and Gentiles manifests itself...

- a. primarily through belief in Jesus as the Messiah,
- b. but also through belief in the promises God made to Abraham,
- c. and by aligning one's actions with the moral commandments of God,
- d. and, for Jews if they feel so inclined, by guarding properly the Mosaic Covenant.

3. During the period of time after Jesus' 2nd appearance and he sets up his millennial kingdom on the land of Israel –

A changed heart for both Jews and Gentiles living on the land of Israel will manifest itself in the millennial kingdom...

- a. primarily through belief in Jesus as the Messiah,
- b. but also through belief in the promises God made to Abraham,
- c. and by guarding properly the Mosaic Covenant.

A changed heart for Gentiles living outside the land of Israel will manifest itself during the millennial kingdom...

- a. primarily through belief in Jesus as the Messiah,
- b. but also through belief in the promises God made to Abraham,
- c. and by aligning one's actions with the moral commandments of God.