

Article 2: Look for Eternal Life

“And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day.”

- Deuteronomy 6.24

The great promise of God’s covenant was God Himself, dwelling in the midst of His people, receiving their worship, overseeing their lives and work, and distributing His blessings according to Israel’s faithfulness. The tabernacle and temple were the great symbols of God’s presence. But these were mere material objects, and could easily be lost (as we know).

Yet God’s covenant cannot be broken: His Word must be fulfilled. A day is coming when God’s people will dwell in His glorious presence forever. The psalmists were already anticipating that day (cf. Pss. 23, 84), as their forebears, who dwelled in the land before them, must have conditioned them to expect it.

God promised life through His Law (Lev. 18.1-5). Yet good people continued to die. Did God have something more than mortal life in mind when He held out the promise of life to His people? They must surely have reckoned it to be so. God *is* the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as He told Moses. Those great saints must have been alive with the Lord somewhere.

This is exactly how Jesus understood this text. And if the progenitors of the promise were alive forever with God, surely those who longed for God’s promises and kept His Law would soon enough join them in His promised presence forever.

Jesus Christ came to fulfill the promise of life, which is the promise of the Law (Jn. 10.10; 14.6). By keeping the Law He opened the way to eternal life, the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ forever (Jn. 17.3). The Law thus points forward to eternal life by pointing forward to Jesus – Prophet, King, Priest, Sacrifice, Tent of the Lord, Temple of Glory. This would have been very hard for Israelites to see. Nevertheless, those who strained to understand, and who pressed forward through obedience to the next stage of God’s blessings, would, by faith, have gained the longed-for hope of everlasting life, by believing in what God was going to do, as revealed in what He had already done and said.