

1 John 2:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

Analysis

And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. John identifies the glorious promise secured by abiding in apostolic truth. "And this is the promise" (καὶ οὐτέ εστίν ἡ επαγγελία)—epangelia means pledge, commitment, assurance given by God. "That he hath promised us" (ἥν αὐτος ἐπένγειλατο ἡμῖν) —the aorist "hath promised" (epēngelato) indicates definite past action with continuing validity. God made this promise; it stands secure. Autos (he himself) is emphatic—God Himself guarantees the promise.

"Even eternal life" (τὸν ζῷον τὸν αἰώνιον)—the promise is eternal life. This isn't merely endless existence but the very life of God (4:9)—qualitatively different from biological life, characterized by knowledge of God (John 17:3) and fellowship with Father and Son (verse 24). "Eternal" (αἰώνιος) denotes both quality (divine, imperishable) and duration (everlasting, without end). This life is both present possession ("hath everlasting life," John 5:24) and future consummation ("shall inherit eternal life," Matthew 19:29).

The connection to verses 24-25 is crucial: abiding in apostolic truth about Christ ensures abiding in Father and Son, which is eternal life. The promise isn't earned by abiding but received through faith that abides. Those who reject apostolic truth about Christ forfeit the promise. Those who confess the Son and abide in apostolic gospel receive God's promise—eternal life secured by God's own commitment, not human merit or perseverance apart from grace.

Historical Context

God's promise of eternal life runs throughout Scripture, from Genesis 3:15's proto-gospel to Revelation 22:5's eternal reign. Old Testament saints trusted God's promise though its fullness awaited Christ's revelation. Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). The prophets spoke of coming age when death would be swallowed up (Isaiah 25:8) and God would dwell with His people forever (Ezekiel 37:26-27).

Jesus proclaimed eternal life as present reality for believers: "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). This was revolutionary—not future hope only but current possession. Yet full experience awaits consummation when believers receive resurrection bodies and dwell in new creation. Paul described this as "already/not yet"—possessing eternal life now, awaiting its full revelation (Romans 8:23-25, 1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

The Reformation recovered assurance of eternal life as present possession through faith in Christ, contra medieval uncertainty requiring purgatorial purification. Calvin taught that believers can know they have eternal life based on God's promise received through faith, not on fluctuating feelings or insufficient works. John's statement became foundational for Protestant assurance: God promised eternal life; believers have it through abiding in Christ confessed in apostolic truth.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does knowing eternal life is God's promise (not human achievement) provide assurance despite personal failures and struggles?
2. In what ways do you experience eternal life now (present possession) while awaiting its full consummation?
3. How should certainty of God's promise of eternal life shape your daily priorities, choices, and responses to suffering?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	αὕτη	ἐστὶν	ἡ	ἐπαγγελία	ἡν	αὐτὸς	ἐπηγγείλατο
And	this	is	G3588	the promise	that	he	hath promised
G2532	G3778	G2076		G1860	G3739	G846	G1861
ἡμῖν	τὴν	ζωὴν	τὴν	αἰώνιον			
us	G3588	life	G3588	even eternal			
G2254		G2222		G166			

Additional Cross-References

John 10:28 (Eternal Life): And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Titus 3:7 (Eternal Life): That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Jude 1:21 (Eternal Life): Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

1 John 1:2 (Eternal Life): (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

1 Timothy 6:12 (Eternal Life): Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Romans 5:21 (Eternal Life): That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Titus 1:2 (Covenant): In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Romans 2:7 (Eternal Life): To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

John 6:68 (Eternal Life): Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

John 12:50 (Eternal Life): And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.