

Fueling Station 2: Key to John 3:16



being a disciple for a future kingdom?

Or



escaping from hell to go to heaven?

“For God so loved the **world**, that he gave his only Son, that whoever **believes** in him should not **perish** but have **eternal** life.”

John 3:16 ESV

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

*world.

Probably from the base of [komizo](#); orderly arrangement, i.e. Decoration; by implication, the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively (morally)) -- adorning, world.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

*believe, put in trust with.

From [pistis](#); to have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), i.e. Credit; by implication, to entrust (especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ) -- believe(-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with.

**it is extremely important to note that this word for believe/faith is written in the present tense active which shows an ongoing continuing faith in both word and deed!

HELPS Word-studies: *perish

622 [apólymi](#) (from [575](#) /apó, "away from," which intensifies [ollymi](#), "to destroy") – properly, fully destroy, cutting off entirely (note the force of the prefix, [575](#) /apó).

*It is important to remember that again context is extremely important. The warnings throughout the New Testament of being cut off from blessings, rewards, and inheritance are too numerous as warnings to the church for unfaithfulness to warrant any other reasoning. Heaven and Hell are not the focus of Christ's teachings to Nicodemus in this chapter but entrance into His kingdom. In fact Jesus tells Nicodemus that if he can't even understand the earthly teachings he is giving how would he understand heavenly?

HELPS Word-studies:*age

Cognate: 166 aiōnios (an adjective, derived from 165 /aiōn ("an age, having a particular character and quality") – properly, "age-like" ("like-an-age"), i.e. an "age-characteristic" (the quality describing a particular age); (figuratively) the unique quality (reality) of God's life at work in the believer, i.e. as the Lord manifests His self-existent life (as it is in His sinless abode of heaven). "Eternal (166 /aiōnios) life operates simultaneously outside of time, inside of time, and beyond time – i.e. what gives time its everlasting meaning for the believer through faith, yet is also time-independent. See 165 (aiōn).

*This future promise is like any other "age" God has referred to throughout the Bible. You must define it and its length by the context! The kingdom age that Christ taught about over and over again and promised to fulfill when He returned. This can only be the 1,000 year millennial reign promised in the book of revelation and by Old Testament prophets!

The Race to the kingdom version:

“For God so loved the world and every person He created that whoever continues to faithfully follow in Him shall not be cut off from inheriting the kingdom but have life in the age to come”

*This is a much better rendering of the context surrounding John 3:16.

Intro:

This “eternal life” is the life of promise when Jesus finally reigns on the earth and sits on the throne of David just like the angel Gabriel declared to Mary and the prophets of old proclaiming a coming ruler and day of restoration. In the race to the kingdom, this is the next phase or “age” of the fulfillment of Genesis chapter 3’s promise of crushing the serpents “head”. It is also a fulfillment of restored inheritance: intimacy, rule, and land! To “perish” actually means to be “cut-off” from this glorious inheritance and not a punishment in hell for all eternity!

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall **surely die**.””

Genesis 2:16-17 ESV

*This death began as a separation of innocence, a level of intimacy with God, rulership over the earth, and residence in the garden. Eventually it would lead to physical death due to lack of access to the tree of life.

*It is interesting to note that “in the day” of eating with the insight given by Peter that a day to God is likened to 1,000 years, that Adam and Eve after being kicked out of the garden lived 930 years.

Let's look at the comparison between "life" and "death" in the garden:

"And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be **fruitful** and **multiply** and **fill** the earth and **subdue** it, and have **dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 1:28 ESV

vs.

"therefore the Lord God sent him **out** from the garden of Eden to **work the ground** from which he was taken. He **drove out** the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."

Genesis 3:23-24 ESV

Instead of the ease of the garden life of being fruitful:

"To the **woman** he said, "I will surely **multiply your pain** in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children..." And to **Adam** he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' **cursed** is the ground because of you; **in pain** you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. **By the sweat of your face** you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Genesis 3:16-19 ESV

Rulership and Dominion in a healthy marital relationship will change:

"Now is the judgment of this world; **now will the ruler of this world** be cast out."

John 12:31 ESV

*only through Christ and the New Covenant can we have rulership over Satan.

"...Your **desire** shall be contrary to your husband, **but he shall rule** over you."

Genesis 3:16b ESV

*Note: It is important to point out that nowhere is heaven or hell mentioned but only a depiction of them based on the story.

Heaven=garden with privileges

Hell=outside garden with consequences

*Nowhere does God have them floating in space with angels playing harps and nowhere does he cast them into a fiery pit for all eternity.

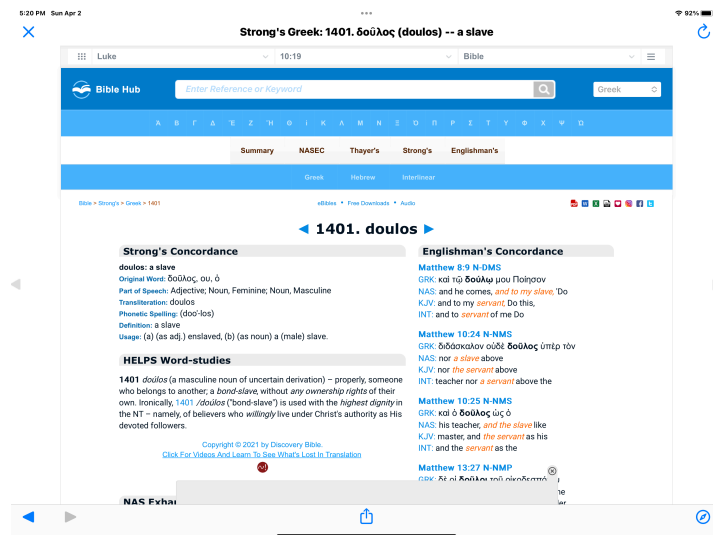
Same story between life and death in the New Covenant:

“For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is **death**. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal **life**.”

Romans 6:20-22 ESV

*notice the life and death theme again. Several of our other articles address the sanctification salvation part of this verse heavily. But pay close attention to the future implications that Paul gives as both a warning and reward to the church. The fruit we bear now not sinning but serving God as “slaves” of righteousness is key to being sanctified and receiving eternal life at the “end”. This life is the promise of God to receive glorification in the “age” of the millennial reign of Jesus and “life” pertaining to the inheritance of ruling and reigning in the promised land.

*slave



*this understanding of a slave is key to Pauls argument. The word actually means bond servant. The important difference between a Roman slave and a bond-slave for Jesus is considerable.

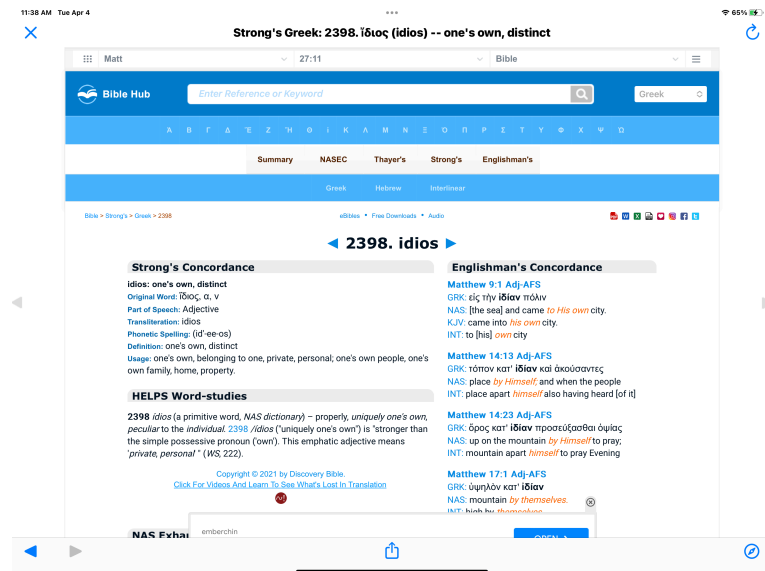
Jesus calls us His own personal servants:

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were **bought with a price**. So glorify God in your body.”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 ESV

““For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.”
Matthew 25:14 NASB

*OWN



Jesus defines greatness as a servant/bond slave:

“It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you **must be your servant**, and whoever would be first among you **must be your slave**, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.””
Matthew 20:26-28 ESV

*nothing Jesus wasn't willing to do for the love of His Father and the pay off!

Jesus invites faithful servants even closer:

““This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends **if** you do what I command you. No longer do I call you **servants**, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you **friends**, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”
John 15:12-15 ESV

This is a race for inheritance not heaven or hell:

“So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are **led by** the Spirit of God are **sons** of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of **adoption as sons**, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, **then heirs**—heirs of God and **fellow heirs** with Christ, **provided** we suffer with him **in order** that we **may also** be **glorified** with him.”

Romans 8:12-17 ESV

This inheritance is not a guarantee but a privilege received by being found faithful:

“Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, **provided** you **continue** in his kindness. **Otherwise** you too will be **cut off**.”

Romans 11:22 ESV

Context, Context, Context:

“Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot **see** the **kingdom** of God.” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot **enter** the **kingdom** of God.”

John 3:3, 5 ESV

“If I have told you **earthly** things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you **heavenly** things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.”

John 3:12-13 ESV

*clearly the context of John chapter 3 is explaining the kingdom and not heaven and hell, even to the Pharisees whom Jesus is talking to. If Jesus wanted to communicate a message about heaven or hell he could have easily done it here.

Old Testament examples brought back into the New Testament are key!

“And as **Moses** lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have **eternal life**.”

John 3:14-15 ESV

“For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into **Moses** in the cloud and in the sea, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and

the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.”

1 Corinthians 10:1-2, 4-6 ESV

*the life God was offering at that time was an earthly promise land and the purpose of lifting up the serpent was for bodily healing in order to continue that voyage! Clearly the Old Covenant was trying to fulfill an earthly rule in a promised land. Even in the book of Revelation this must occur before the age of the new heaven and new earth when the heavenly Jerusalem comes down. This is the final understanding of the last age or period of time mentioned. The New Jerusalem is the only permanent heavenly dwelling that remains in the Bible. All other “afterlife” places like “death” and “hades” are temporary and will be destroyed. The mention of the “sea” and “lake of fire” are references to earthly physical places. The lake of fire represents a place called Gehenna or valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem that was always on fire for the burning of refuse and trash. From the vantage point of Jerusalem it looked like a “lake” of fire. Just like Lucifer was originally thrust out of heaven to the earth and given the title of Satan, so in like manner the beast and the false prophet along with Satan will be thrown into this place along with a portion of humanity for another period of time. This is called the second death just like the first death was a life on fallen earth with Satan ruling. My hunch this will be an entirely different planet called “old” earth when the new heaven and new earth come into existence.

Eternal Life is a person, a place, a time frame, and a privilege:

“**the life** was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and **was made manifest to us**— that which we have **seen and heard** we proclaim also to you, **so that** you too may have **fellowship** with us; and **indeed** our **fellowship** is with the **Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.**”

1 John 1:2-3 ESV

*Eternal life is the person of Jesus Christ and since He will be on earth reigning for a millennium what does say about the offer to receive it?

“Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the **authority to judge** was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to **life and reigned with Christ** for a **thousand years**. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. **Blessed and holy is the one** who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.”

Revelation 20:4-6 ESV

*This reign clearly has not happened yet and is the highly anticipated event throughout the history of the Bible where the promises of restored inheritance will finally take place!!

Questions for contemplation:

1. How often as a Christian have you heard John 3:16?
2. Have you ever heard or been apart of a big evangelistic crusade? What was the main message of salvation that you understood?
3. If Jesus himself said in John 17 that eternal life was to know Him and His Father, what implications does this have to now being told that its also referring to a specific time period called the millennial reign?
4. Does this make “knowing” God more of an important topic? Does it make important the times when Jesus says “I never knew you” or “I do not know you” take on more meaning and why?
5. My favorite use of John 3:16 was when Tim Tebow put it in his eye black when playing for the national title in college. Gods finger prints were all over the statistics: 316 passing yards, 31.6 yard per completion, and 3.16 yards per rush. How is the race to the kingdom like playing for a national championship?

*Remember be a good Berean and be diligent in studying the scriptures to show yourself approved and encourage others to do the same!