

*Eternal  
Life  
Is...*

**Seventh Day Baptist  
Week of Prayer**

**January 5 - 11, 2020**

## **Seventh Day Baptist Week of Prayer • January 5-11, 2020**

*Sponsored by the*

Seventh Day Baptist World Federation • [www.sdbwf.org](http://www.sdbwf.org)

During the first full week of January since 1967, Seventh Day Baptists around the world have united in prayer by sharing in meditations centered on a theme chosen by the author of the SDB Week of Prayer booklet. This year's theme is "Eternal Life Is..." authored by the President of the World Federation, Pastor Luciano Barreto Nogueira de Moura. As we did last year for the first time, we are encouraging prayers each day of the week for all countries in the world where Seventh Day Baptists exist; not just the countries which are members of the World Federation.

### **Purposes of the SDB World Federation include:**

1. **To provide increased communication** among Seventh Day Baptist groups around the world.
2. **To promote projects of mutual interest** which will benefit from international cooperation.
3. **To stimulate fellowship** among Seventh Day Baptist Christians through periodic meetings of representatives between Conferences or groups and programs of mutual aid.
4. **To receive and evaluate statements of need** as may come to the Federation and to share such expression of need with its members, inviting their response as the Lord may lead.
5. **To provide leadership training** for Conference leaders, pastors and lay leaders appropriate to each individual conference, as determined through consultation.

### **Contributions:**

The SDB World Federation encourages all member Conferences to designate an offering from their churches at least once a year in support of the purposes of the SDB World Federation. Other contributions and designations from Conferences, churches, and/or individuals are also welcome. Please make all checks or money orders out to SDBWF. Contributions may be mailed to: Treasurer, SDB World Federation, P.O. Box 1311, West Palm Beach, FL 33402 or you may also donate via PayPal at [treasurer@sdbwf.org](mailto:treasurer@sdbwf.org)

### **Sessions:**

The last General Session was held in Brazil (Curitiba, Parana) on January 22-28, 2017 with the theme, "The Kingdom of God is Like...". The next General Session is planned to occur at Bethel University, St. Paul, MN in the United States, July 17-24, 2022.

Officers for the World Federation include General Secretary Andrew Samuels ([general.secretary@sdbwf.org](mailto:general.secretary@sdbwf.org)); President Luciano Barreto Nogueira de Moura; First Vice President & Vice President for Caribbean Claudia Ferguson; Treasurer Garfield Miller ([treasurer@sdbwf.org](mailto:treasurer@sdbwf.org)); Assistant General Secretary Michael Spearl; Recording Secretary Karen Umaña; Regional Vice Presidents: Canaan Phiri (Africa), Douglas Machado (South America), and John Pethtel (North America).

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### About the Author



*Pastor Luciano Moura and his wife Liane*

As part of his testimony, **Pastor Luciano Barreto Nogueira de Moura** says, “I was captivated by Christ in 1992 and was baptized in Salvador, Bahia, in my homeland of Brazil. I attended a Presbyterian church for some years and after moving to Brasília, the capital of Brazil, I attended the Bethel Brazilian church. In 1999, I discovered the Seventh Day Baptist Church on the Fortaleza SDB church website and began to lead a small group in the home of a Seventh Day Baptist brother in Sobradinho, Federal District. I was ordained as a pastor in 2007. Since then, I have been pastor of the First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Brasília, a small group that met in my home until August of 2014 when we began renting a room in Brasília.” Pastor Luciano Moura was World Federation Vice-President for South America from 2003 to 2008. He attended the World Federation Sessions in Brazil in 2003 and in 2017, serving as a delegate for his conference. He graduated in Economics and Law, with post-graduate work in both areas and he is finishing Theological Studies by Andrew Jumper Post-graduate Center – Mackenzie University and Applied New Testament Theology at Parana Baptist College. He is a theological student at the Methodist University. He and Liane have been married for 30 years. They have twins; their daughter Ilara, who is single, and their son Gabriel, who is married to Paula; all of them servants of the Lord. They also have a granddaughter, Maria. Following the tragic passing of Pastor Jonas Sommer, late President of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation, Pastor Luciano Moura was confirmed by election of the member conferences as President in October 2018.

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### Introduction

Throughout our lives, we face situations that lead us to reflect on how we are living and, in more difficult times, about the brevity of our lives. How old will we be until “that day”? And until then, how will we live? These questions always come back to our minds. We often face the two thoughts summarized in the following statement: Life is short and I cannot waste it!

We fight the clock. The world often imposes on us a busy, busy life, with no time for family, friends, in short, to enjoy the moments of communion better. The difficulty around us is that we know our days are numbered! This reality is normal for all people around the world. Even people who live in remote and rural communities face, in one way or another, the question of the brevity of life.

True, life is short and it seems like the days are shorter too. Tasks pile up, we often procrastinate, miss priorities, and face a lot of anxiety and stress. When we tell this to some friends, the answer is unanimous: this is normal, the world is like this! People are resigned to being slaves to circumstances. Still others live in more than slavery because of things, titles and power. The world loses every day the prospect of an abundant and full life.

In this sense, God’s Word is revolutionary and goes against all com-

mon sense. The message of Scripture, and especially God’s plan to give eternal life to everyone who is in Christ, puts the “normalcy” of the world upside down. “Eternal life” - What is the meaning of this for my life here and now? What is the significance of this if we think that life does not end in the grave? These are questions that someone may ask. The truth expressed in the revelation of God in His Word is categorical and definitive: God is the giver of eternal life, which exists only in Christ Jesus, and everyone who belongs to Christ enters eternal life, enjoying even at that moment of life, all the effect of this grace and deliverance.

We are identified with Christ in His death and resurrection, for He has already conquered death, and with this, has secured for us eternal life in Him, as it is written:

“Death was swallowed by victory. Where is your victory, O death? Where is thy sting, O death? Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!  
1 Corinthians 15: 55-57

Eternal life is a gift from God, a promise already fulfilled in Christ Jesus and guaranteed by the Lord! Please note that the first letter of the first word of each day’s meditation, forms an acrostic for the word ETERNAL.

## **Eternal life is... a gift from God**

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)*

Eventually we see people carrying this verse on their t-shirts. There are books, posts, sermons, and a myriad of ways to present God's love using this text. It is also not uncommon to see that people understand this verse as a conditional statement such as: If I believe, I will have eternal life! Many claim a half-truth because they do not see the love of God in Jesus Christ, but only the apparent condition of how to achieve eternal life.

The verse presents a simple message and a direct consequence, the result of God's gracious love. Therefore, when we read this verse from the Gospel of John, we must immediately be alert to God's action: God loved and loves absolutely and unconditionally. It is not our love for Him, but above all His love for us, as it is written: "In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). Yet, we know that the initiative was from God because He first loved us, as it is written: "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Thus we understand that whoever believes in Christ will not perish, nor suffer eternal death, but will have eternal life. In fact, God's love and faith in Christ are truths

contained in this well-known and used verse. We can also state that this gift is free, as it is written in the Letter to the Romans chapter 6, verse 23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. In this way, we must place in our hearts and minds that eternal life is first and foremost a gift from God and, so important, that it had an immeasurable cost: the sacrifice of Jesus.

From these truths, without forgetting the love of God, wonderfully represented in sacrifice, we have to understand that life is a very precious good, life is in Christ only, and true life here and in the future is the result of a promise from a faithful, loving, and merciful God: "And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life! 1 John 2:25.

**Let us pray that we may live for this love, confident in our Lord's promise that it is the gift of eternal life!**

**Pray for Seventh Day Baptists in Australia\*, Bangladesh, Brazil\*, Burundi\*, Cameroon, Canary Islands, and Chile.**

*\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.*

**Eternal life is... communion with God in Jesus Christ!**

*And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (John 17: 3)*

**T**heory and practice in the Christian life must converge. Practice cannot differ from the principles and values taught to us in the Word. Likewise, we cannot teach and profess a faith we do not live. If there is such a dichotomy, it is the result of a religious life without intimacy and communion with God. Those who say they know God must walk according to His Word, living according to the teachings and commandments, for as it is written, "He who says, 'I know Him', and does not obey His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him "(1 John 2: 4).

The Gospel of John in chapter 17 presents us with the High-priestly prayer, where our Lord Jesus Christ prays that God the Father may protect, lead, and preserve the disciples. In this prayer, the first request concerning the disciples concerns the eternal life that is granted and given by Jesus. Eternal life is in knowing God, one and true, and Jesus, one and true. The question we ask is: How can I know God? Even through your Word, I can know your deeds and wonders, I have your special revelation, I know your plans and promise. But how do you know God?

Many people know a lot about the Bible and all that is described in it. There are specialists in the original languages, systematic theology, philosophy, apologetics, history, and those who have so much knowledge about God. However, they may know a lot about God, but they do not know Him. They lack fellowship, intimacy, and experience with God. I am not disqualifying the crucial intellectual

and scientific knowledge, but it must be accompanied by a life of prayer, communion and intimacy. On the other hand, we can find many religious practices of prayer and worship without knowledge of Bible truths.

Christ's prayer is that the disciples may have more intimacy and experience with God without neglecting the knowledge of the Scriptures; a knowledge that requires faith, love, hope, obedience and a consistent life of communion with God. The word used here in John 17:3 to "know" is "*ginosko*", and means "to be intimately involved in a relationship." Theory and practice must go together.

Thus we can understand that there is life only in Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life." Eternal life, the source of which is God and granted by Jesus, consists of communion with God in Christ. If we know and believe that God is the Lord of the whole universe and of our lives, we must seek to know Him, love Him, live for His Kingdom, and obey Him. Nothing is more important than that. We are to seek His kingdom and His righteousness by teaching and keeping all the things He has commanded us, according to His Word on the Mount. Matthew 28:18-20.

**Let us pray that we may move each day to have more communion with our God! Pray for Seventh Day Baptists in Democratic Republic of Congo, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, England\*, and Ethiopia.**

*\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.*

**Eternal life is... Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God's love**

*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. (1 John 5:20)*

**E**ternal means that which has no beginning and no end. We may not understand how this happens and we certainly cannot fully understand this mystery. We know that only God is eternal and at the same time, in the Bible, guided by the Holy Spirit, we believe that Jesus is the eternal Son of the Eternal Father.

In the face of the eternity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we ask: How was this eternity? What was there besides the Triune God? Of course it is a pretense to want to understand the Eternal. Everything we know is said by Him, revealed in His Word, by His Spirit. So what happened in eternity? The answer comes from Jesus Himself in the High-priestly prayer in John 17:24. Jesus says: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. First of all, there was always love! The love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father in the glory of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible tells us that God is love. We also know that everyone who says he is from God loves God and his brother. This is the evidence of eternity in our lives: love. We belong to Jesus Christ, we are His sheep, and He is our beloved Shepherd. At the same time,

the Church is the beloved of the Bridegroom, who is Jesus. There is no way to speak of eternal life without bearing in mind that our life must reflect the love of God.

We are children because of this love, as the same apostle John said: "See how much love the Father has given us, to the extent that we are treated as children of God; and in reality we are God's children! For this reason the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." (1 John 3: 1). In the same vein, the apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 1:13: For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves." (NIV).

Thus, to have eternal life is to be eternally loved and at the same time to live in that love. The life we live must be in Christ, the eternal love of God incarnate to make us beloved children.

**Let us pray to live this love, loving each other as He loved us!**

**Let us pray for Seventh Day Baptists in Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Guyana\*, Haiti, and India\*.**

*\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.*

## **Eternal life is... obedience to God's Word**

*Matthew 19:16-22*

**R**esigned and sad, the rich young man withdrew after hearing Jesus' answer. By asking Jesus Christ how to inherit or gain eternal life, the rich young man treats Jesus as the "good Master." The first part of Jesus' answer is to say that there is only one that is good, God. This first part of the answer already indicates that Jesus knows that the young man does not really know who he is dealing with. The young man does not know Jesus fully, but sees in Christ a good, special Master. The Bible doesn't reveal that to us, but he could just be being polite. What is clear throughout the dialogue is that the young man did not really know who he was talking to.

By confronting the apparent desire to have eternal life with the rich and comfortable life the young man had, Jesus revealed to this man what the real meaning of eternal life is. First, eternal life consisted of obedience to God's Word, obedience to His Commandments. In this regard, the young man understood that he was perfect in keeping the Commandments. The problem is that obeying the Commandments was something deeper, as it must necessarily lead to not being bound by the material goods or circumstances of this life. Eternal life is following Christ, walking with Him, being His disciple, always seeking His Kingdom and His Righteousness.

The rich young man was not only attached to material things; in fact, wealth defined him. Note that he is only called the rich young man. That was his identity; the richness. This question went deeper than he had imagined, for goods and wealth not only enslaved him, but ultimately defined his identity.

Eternal life would have begun immediately if he had followed Jesus. There is not only in the passage an exclusive reference to a distant future, to a life in heaven after some time, but to "enter" into eternal life he must follow Jesus immediately. Again, we should note that Jesus answers using another verb. In Matthew's text He uses the verb "to enter." It was not about inheriting

or winning, but about getting in and starting living from that moment on. Jesus is eternal life as we have seen. To be with Him and in Him is to be living eternal life day after day.

The question we can ask ourselves right now is: How about us, how can we live this eternal life already? The answer is: in Christ we have already entered eternal life. We should remember the apostle Paul's recommendation to Timothy in the first letter in chapter 6: 11-12: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 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."

By taking possession of this truth, we cannot be enslaved or defined by the things of the world. Circumstances may even limit us or be favorable to us, but they never define us. Our identity is in Christ!. This does not mean becoming a hermit, vowing poverty or the like, but using all the material gifts God gives us with gratitude and to help the poor, widows, helpless, despised and hungry. Eternal life is to be lived now and in Christ, fulfilling all the things which we have been commanded. Let us remember that: "He who reaps now receives the reward and gathers its fruit into eternal life, so that both sowing and reaping may rejoice" (John 4:36).

**Let us pray that we may take possession of eternal life now, following Jesus and living in love and obedience! Our identity is in Christ and not in the things of the world. Let us pray for Seventh Day Baptists in Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Jamaica\*, Kenya\*, Lebanon, and Liberia.**

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**Eternal life is ... living by the Word of Christ**

*Simon Peter answered, "Who are we going to follow? You have the words that give eternal life!" (John 6:38)*

**"N**o one has the Word of eternal life, only You Lord!" This was Peter's answer after the most difficult speech that all the crowd following Christ had heard. In this passage, people followed Jesus. They followed him for cures, miracles, even advice. However, as He began to talk about what it meant to follow Him and that it would imply a level of intimacy that was unknown and even outrageous, they did not understand when He spoke of the need to eat the flesh and drink the blood. To a Jew, that was frightening!

What made the disciples, who were also Jews, stay? Despite all the inconsistency they presented in some situations, at that moment, moved by the Holy Spirit, they recognized that only Jesus had the Word of eternal life. This statement by Peter revealed the full effect of that discourse on his life.

We know the whole story of how Peter denied Christ. But the end of the story is consistent with this statement he made. The Word of eternal life, even in the midst of Peter's weakness, changed his and the other disciples' lives forever. The seed had been planted and bore fruit at the right time! It is not very different with us. As we walk, we recognize the incarnate Word and hear the words of eternal

life, but even so, sometimes we feel weak. Like Peter, we got off the boat and walked in the water, and suddenly we watched the waves and began to sink.

What to do then? Let us look to Christ, let us be mindful of His Word, and follow Him who not only has the Word of eternal life, but that is eternal life itself.

**Let us pray that we will not fail to hear the words of Jesus, that they may come to life in the midst of difficulties and storms!**

**Let us pray for Seventh Day Baptists in Malawi\*, Mozambique, Netherlands\*, New Zealand\*, Nicaragua, and Nigeria\*.**

\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.

## **Eternal life is ... being eternally with Christ**

*They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

*(Revelation 7:16-17)*

**A**pocalypse is a word which means "revelation," signifying "something that was not seen or understood, and then the veil was removed." So it is revealed!! The Bible shows us that eternity with Christ will be everlasting rejoicing. Until the final chapter, the restoration of the created universe, we live in the hope of meeting Jesus Christ. The promises we have already received in Christ are that there will be no more pain, sin, death, or suffering. This has always been God's plan, a life project in a harmonious, happy relationship, free from all sin and its consequences.

As we read the book of Revelation, we often dwell on all the suffering yet to come. The bowls of wrath, the wars, the famine, the plague, and all confrontation with the evil forces. Yes, all of this is reported. We are called to be careful not to be deceived by evil. God assures us that we will not be deceived into suffering the evils to come. However, to most of us it seems that the promises of deliverance and protection, before the end, and rejoicing and full grace, in the end, do not draw our attention much. We see brothers and sisters preoccupied with telling times and periods, trying to find a clue as to where we are. This kind of concern is normal and legitimate.

However, I understand that, in view of the revelation given to us, our gaze, even being aware of all the problems yet to come, must be turned to the Final Plan: eternal life with Christ in love and joy. We must understand consummation as the eternally happy

ending, the beginning of a new life and knowledge. Nothing compares to what God has for us, those who believe and live in Christ. We will be fed and our eyes will be wiped from every tear. In the world we have experienced afflictions and sufferings. Our lives, in spite of all the struggle, have been sustained and sustained by the One who is faithful and just to enforce in us all His plans of blessings and grace.

Let us walk in newness of life, and rejoice, for our Lord has assured us and has already shown us part of the wonders that await us!

**Let us pray that this revelation will be effective in our lives, not allowing us to be saddened by sad moments, because every tear will be removed from our eyes! Maranatha!!**

**Let us pray for Seventh Day Baptists in the Philippines\*, Poland\*, Rwanda\*, Sierra Leone, South Africa\*, and South Korea.**

*\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.*

## **Eternal life is ... a Choice**

*Ephesians 1:4-6*

**L**ong-suffering, benevolent, loving, gracious, just, and faithful: these are some of the attributes of Christ. His promises have always been fulfilled and He does not lie. Also, none of your plans get frustrated. These certainties make us trust in the Lord.

4. According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:

5. Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

6. To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.

This God in Christ gives us eternal life free of charge and tells us that we will never perish, for everyone who went to Christ was given by the Father. We have the assurance that the Father and the Son, in the communion of the Holy Spirit, do not despise those who belong to Him. We will understand that Christ's work is complete and the whole sacrifice was not in vain. If Jesus tells us that He has already given us eternal life and we find the assurance that no one will take us from His hands, we cannot doubt it.

Jesus did not mention meaningless words. He prayed for those given by the Father: "I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." (John 17:9). One could argue that this prayer was only for the

disciples, the twelve. Yes, indeed, He prayed for those who were with Him, but also for "others," as it is written in the following verse:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."

What is there to say in the face of Jesus' statements? Hallelujah, glory to God! My Lord lives, reigns, is sovereign, forbearing, merciful and has me in His hands, so I can trust that the Lord will complete the good work and preserve my salvation and eternal life. I must not live in doubt as to the faithfulness and power of my Lord. Eternal life is guaranteed through Jesus Christ!

**Let us pray that our confidence in the promise of eternal life does not weaken. May we not doubt the love and power of our Lord!**

**Let us pray for Seventh Day Baptists in South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda\*, Ukraine, United States of America\*, Canada\*, and Zambia\*.**

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