

K.E.Y. Bible Study (2012-2013/Year V)

K.E.Y Bible Study is a systematic study of Scripture that equips participants to become acquainted with the major truths of the Bible over a five-year period. Each lesson is self-contained, so, you can join the study at any time during the five years.

Purpose: To teach the most significant events, passages, and doctrines of the Bible in a manner and using methods that encourage and empower the student to:
Keep the Faith We Have Received
Be Equipped to Serve the Body of Christ
Become Yoked in Ministry with Other Believers

Session 18 January 9, 2013 "The Definition of Eternal Life"

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

Why is John 17:3 a K.E.Y. verse in the Bible?

This verse gives a simple and direct definition to the meaning of eternal life. While we often think of eternal life in terms of heaven or a place, this verse defines it in context of a relationship. This verse not only helps us understand eternal life but also gives us insight into the way we live our faith in the present.

Who?

God, as revealed in Jesus, the Christ

When?

Jesus prayed this prayer on Thursday before the crucifixion either in the Garden of Gethsemane or just prior to entering it.

Where?

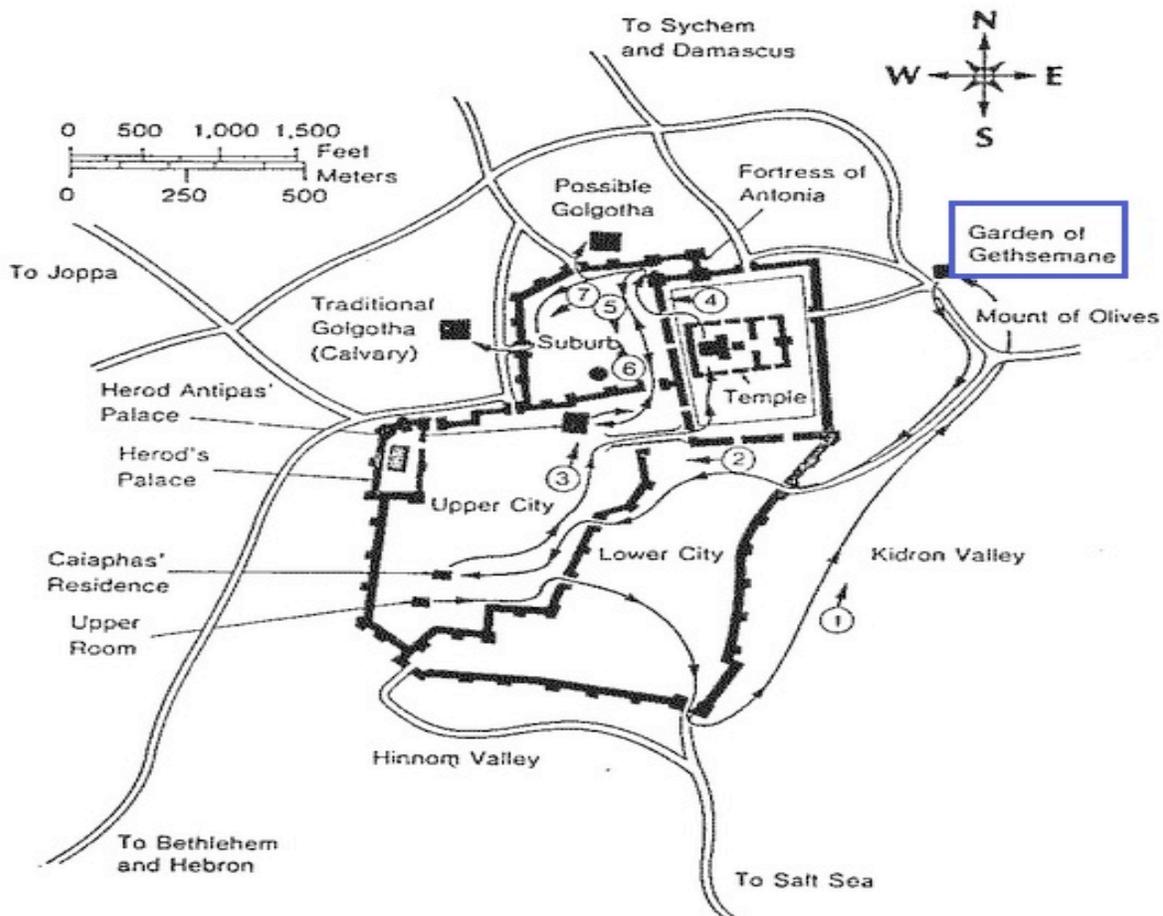
The Garden of Gethsemane was an olive orchard near the foot of the Mount of Olives. The word "Gethsemane" literally means "oil press."

Context:

Jesus observed the Passover meal with His disciples in the Upper Room. During the meal, Jesus spoke of Peter's denial, Judas Iscariot's betrayal, and told the disciples that all of them would fall away. The events prior to Thursday had been emotionally exhausting for the disciples and for Jesus. It is evident that the disciples were discouraged and very disappointed regarding the way events had unfolded in

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Jerusalem. Our K.E.Y. verse is a part of the longest recorded prayer of Jesus in the New Testament. This prayer teaches us not only about how Jesus prayed but also about the nature of the relationship between Jesus and the Father and Jesus and the disciples. According to the John 17:1, Jesus “looked toward heaven” when he prayed. This was one of the most common postures for first century Jewish prayer. Generally the person in this posture kept their eyes open and outstretched their hands with the palms up. Jesus commonly addressed God as “Father.” Jesus spoke Aramaic. The Aramaic word for father was “Abba” which is the expression children used to describe their fathers. This word would have been too informal for most first-century Jews.



Word Study

- **“Now this is eternal life”** – The Greek word for “eternal” has little to do with never-ending life because that would be extending the pains and sorrow of this life. If we live long enough, there is almost a time in which we see death, or the end of life, as a gift. To die to be released. The Greek concept of “eternal” relates to quality more than quantity. Eternal life was associated with a deity; and for first readers of this verse, it would have been logical and understandable. God-life was thought to be

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eternal and human life was thought to be non-eternal. Since it is associated with God, there was an infinite dimension. However, the early reader would have thought of the qualitative dimension first.

- **“that they may know you”** – In the process of praying, Jesus defined eternal life in neither chronological nor locational terms. He described it in the language of relationships. Frequently in Old Testament, knowing God was described as experiencing God not just recognizing God. In the Old Testament, the verb “to know” suggested intimacy. Knowing God included intellectual knowledge, but it is also far more expansive and intimate. To know God is to have encountered the full character and nature God.
- **“the only true God”** – Most of the first-century world believed in multiple gods, but the Old Testament clearly and strongly stated that there was only one God. It was common for both first-century Jews and first-century Christians to include a monotheistic affirmation in prayer. As our culture becomes more pluralistic, we may need to return to including monotheistic statements in our affirmations of faith. There are four truths related to monotheism:
 - God is one.
 - God is personal.
 - God is ethical.
 - God created all people in His image; therefore, the equality of all of humanity is rooted in the truth God is one.
- **“and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent”** – Through this phrase, eternal life is connected to knowing Jesus. This phrase teaches us that Jesus is not only sent from God, but also that He is God. This verse is also closely related to John 1:1.

Central Truth:

To have or to experience eternal life is to know and experience God as revealed in Jesus, the Christ.

Applications:

- While many religious disciplines may teach us wonderful things about the nature of God, it is only through knowing Him experientially that we have eternal life.
- To want to go to heaven yet not want to experience the presence of God now is a contradictory wish.