The word *state* has several different meanings in our English language. When *state* is used as it is here, it refers to a *condition* in which something exists. For example, in chemistry and science classes you learn about materials or chemicals that exist in a *liquid state* or in a *solid state* or *condition*. If you knew when Dad came home from work tonight, he was going to be driving a new car, which he and your mom were giving you as a birthday gift, you would be in a *state of excitement* all day long!

*Eternal* means “never-ending”—something that had no beginning and will ever end. God is eternal and He gives the gift of *eternal life* to each one soul who repents of their sin and believes by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. ‘Eternal Life’ is the very same life that the Lord Jesus Himself has: “*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*”. (Rom 6:23)

*Eternal state* is often used to describe a lasting condition. We read about this 1 Cor. 15: “(24) Then [cometh] the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. (25) For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. (26) The last enemy [that] shall be destroyed [is] death. (27) For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under [him, it is] manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. (28) And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

This time—the eternal state—is also referred to in 2 Pet. 3:13 where the apostle says: “*Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*”

This is the order of events that leads to the *eternal state*: (1) Right now, Christians are waiting for the Lord’s return to take us Home to heaven—the *rapture*. (2) After Christians are gone, there will be 7 years of tribulation. (3) After this tribulation, the Lord Jesus will come back to reign (over the whole world) in Jerusalem, as Messiah and King. His reign will last 1,000 years during which there will be perfect peace, righteousness, and happiness. (4) At the end of the 1,000 years (the *millennium*) men, seduced by Satan, rise up to fight against the Lord to overthrow Him. All who do so are destroyed. (5) The present “Heaven and earth” pass away, and the “new heavens and earth” referred to above, begin. This begins the *eternal state* where ‘righteousness dwells’ (‘righteousness reigns’ during the millennium).

We—Christians—will be with the Lord Jesus during all this time, and will be with Him forever in the Father’s house at rest and in joy in the *eternal state*. 