

John 10:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Analysis

Jesus declares 'I give unto them eternal life' (kago didomi autois zoen aionion). The present tense didomi indicates ongoing action - He continually gives life, not a one-time transaction. The life given is zoen aionion - not merely endless duration but the quality of divine life itself. Jesus then promises 'they shall never perish' using the emphatic double negative ou me apolontai, the strongest possible negation. The verb apollumi means to destroy, to lose, to perish utterly. The second promise 'neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand' (ou me harpasei tis auta ek tes cheiros mou) uses harpazo (to seize, snatch violently). The imagery of being held in Christ's hand conveys security, possession, and protection. This verse teaches the doctrine of eternal security - those whom Christ saves cannot be lost, not due to their own grip but because they are held in His hand.

Historical Context

This assurance responds to the anxious question about Jesus' identity (10:24). While Jewish leaders rejected Him, His sheep were secure. The contrast with the thief who comes to steal and destroy (10:10) is stark - Jesus gives life that cannot be taken. In a context where persecution threatened the early church, this promise provided profound comfort. Origen and Augustine discussed this verse in debates about apostasy and perseverance. Reformed theology emphasized unconditional security based on Christ's keeping power, while Arminian theology questioned whether voluntary departure constituted being 'plucked out.' The verse's emphasis

on Christ's action rather than human effort suggests security depends on the Shepherd's strength, not the sheep's grip.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the present tense 'I give' shape our understanding of eternal life as ongoing gift rather than one-time transaction?
2. What is the relationship between Christ's holding us and our responsibility to continue following?

Interlinear Text

κάγω ζωὴν αἰώνιον δίδωμι αὐτὰ καὶ οὐ μὴ
And I **life** **eternal** **give** **them** **and** G3756 G3361
G2504 G2222 G166 G1325 G846 G2532

ἀπόλωνται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ οὐχ ἄρπάσει τις αὐτὰ
perish G1519 G3588 G165 **and** G3756 **man pluck** **any** **them**
G622 G2532 G726 G5100 G846

ἐκ τῆς χειρός μου
out of G3588 **hand** **my**
G1537 G5495 G3450

Additional Cross-References

John 6:37 (Parallel theme): All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Hebrews 7:25 (Parallel theme): Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Romans 8:29 (Parallel theme): For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

John 18:9 (Parallel theme): That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

Isaiah 54:17 (Parallel theme): No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

Philippians 1:6 (Parallel theme): Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

1 John 2:25 (Eternal Life): And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

John 4:14 (Eternal Life): But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Romans 8:1 (Parallel theme): There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

John 17:2 (Eternal Life): As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.