

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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

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

καὶ γὰρ	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.