

December 2010

Christ's Sheep

BB. The Sheep have eternal life. v.28

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” John 10:28 - καγω ζωην αιωνιον διδωμι αυτοις και ου μη απολωνται εις τον αιωνα και ουχ αρπασει τις αυτα εκ της χειροσ μου

1. *“And I give unto them eternal life;”* - καγω ζωην αιωνιον διδωμι αυτοις

As we have seen in our studies, there are three kinds of life. One, **biological life** which all living things, including man, possess. This is the physical life of the flesh. Two, **soul life**, which only humans possess, that they receive at the moment of physical birth. Three, **spiritual life**, which only humans who have believed on Christ as their Savior receive, at the moment of their faith in Christ as a grace gift from God.

These three lives are also related to time and eternity. One, **biological life** ceases at physical death. There is no biological or physical life past death. Two, **soul life** exists past physical death, but there are two schools of thought on this concept. The Conditional view, states that even the soul survives physical death, the soul can die, and unsaved souls will die, at the final judgment of God when he establishes the eternal state. This is where the soul is completely consumed in the eternal fire of God's judgment. The Traditional view, states the soul survives physical death, but is immortal, and because it cannot die it will therefore burn in everlasting conscious torment. Many Christians hold to this view, but so also did the Mystery Religions.

Three, only **spiritual life**, which is given to only believers in Jesus Christ, is eternal and is not bound by time or eternity. Even though physical life ceases at physical death, and soul life continues on past that, spiritual life is immortal, eternal, cannot die, will not die and continues on into eternity. This is the life that Christ gives to his sheep! This is the life that we presently possess in every believer in Christ, and this is the life that we will be living in for all eternity.

The eternal state belongs to God and his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is their domain and no one has the right to enter into it, (let alone the ability), just because they have physical birth, physical life and soul life. Eternal life is possessed only by God and if one is to have it, then it must be given to them by God. *“Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.”* 1 Timothy 6:16 And we see this taking place here by Christ giving this eternal life to his sheep.

One must be granted permission by God and his Son to enter into the eternal state, which takes spiritual, eternal life to exist in. One has no right to this, one has no claim to this, one has no demands concerning this, simply because he or she exists in the physical world. It must be granted to them by God and is given to them as a gift based upon his grace apart from any works or merits of their own. The great white throne judgment of God at the end of time is set up to show why those, who have rejected Christ's atoning work of dying on the cross for their sins, will not be granted eternal life and allowed access into the eternal state.

The only life that has been granted humans by God is physical life and soul life, which occurs at physical birth. If God did not wish them to exist in the physical world, he would not have granted them soul life. They would have been stillborn, or their mother miscarried.

The fact that any human exists in this world shows that God has granted them “the Gift of Life”. Being given soul life at birth shows that God has granted that individual “the gift of life”, which is the privilege of existing in this life, in physical-temporal-soul life on this plane of existence. And make no mistake about it – **life is a gift!** Although there are many who despair of this life, being alive with soul life and physical life is a gift and a privilege granted by the Eternal One! And we should always be thankful for it and live it to the fullest, as we serve the will of the God who gave it to us.

But being alive and possessing soul life in this life, in this plane of existence, is no guarantee that one will exist in the spiritual, eternal state. Nor does it become a basis where one has a claim to do so! Just as physical life is nonmeritoriously given at physical birth by God, which enables them to inherit and live in this life of existence, so is the next life given, or granted, nonmeritoriously to people by God and his grace, only when they believe on Christ as their Savior. **And Jesus Christ is the grantor of this eternal life!**

One has no right or claim to eternal life by virtue of being physically born. It must be granted to him by Jesus Christ, who gives it only to the one who trusts him as his/her Savior. At the moment that the individual believes on Christ, then they are regenerated by the Holy Spirit creating inside of them a new nature, which is both spiritual and eternal, thereby enabling them to live in that eternal state.

Millions upon millions of people are going to be heartbroken when they stand before Christ at his judgment, for they will not only see him as he is, but they will also have a glimpse of that eternal state that goes on into eternity, but it will not be for them.

When they stand there, they will see that they had “the gift of life” - physical life, biological life, soul life, and realize that was all they would ever have. They had their “day under the sun” and that's all there ever would be. They will see the eternal state. They will see those beings with spiritual, eternal life, but they will not be with them. Instead, they will be thrown into the lake of fire.

Now it says that Christ gives eternal life to his sheep. And we notice that it is not soul life that he is giving to them, they already have that, but eternal life. One immediately notices that this is very exclusive in that **he does not give it to anyone else but his sheep!** The second thing we see that it is **given as a gift out of his grace.** It cannot be earned, we do not deserve it, we have no right to make him do it, we do not merit it because of our *good works* or *righteousness*, and we cannot work for it. Salvation and eternal life cannot be worked for. It is a gift of his free and sovereign grace.

Now the word for *give* is *didomi* and it does mean to give something to someone. But when used with deity or royalty it takes on a fuller and more official meaning of a great king conferring something to someone by way of a grant. It is a legal concept and signifies the conveying the full title of something over to that individual, where they not only possess the thing given, but possess the title to it also! The title idea is used to prove that they had received, whatever it was from the king, and to demonstrate the permanence of the gift. “*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*” 1 John 5:13

Now there is a difference between eternal life and everlasting life. **Everlasting life would begin at a point in time, then continue on from there for all eternity.** Life that begins, but never ends. While **eternal life** would be life that will never end, but never had a beginning. No beginning, nor ending.

One would normally ask, how can that be? Only God is eternal. Man's physical life and soul life began at a point in time, but God's life never had a beginning, nor will it ever have an ending. So how can a believer be given, not just life that will never end, but life that had no beginning? Man does not possess this inherently. If he is to have it, it must be given to him. And for the Christian he receives it at the moment God creates a new nature in him. **It is this new nature that is eternal!**

It goes back to the nature of what took place in us at the moment of our salvation. When we believed on Christ as our Savior, God created in us a new nature. A new nature that is spiritual and eternal in its essence. And this new nature is from God the Father patterned after Jesus Christ as its prototype, where we are of the same essence as he is. *"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."* James 1:18

God didn't just forgive us, and he didn't just create a new nature inside of us, he took from the very nature of Christ himself, who is eternal, and made us anew. That holy seed, which is spiritual and eternal, is what we were created from. *"Being born again, not of corruptible **seed**, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."* 1 Peter 1:23

We need to understand that we were the spiritual seed in Christ, when he was dying on the cross for our sins, when he descended into Hades, when he was raised from the dead, and when he ascended into heaven, even though we were not physically or spiritually alive. One will be able to understand this, by understanding how Levi was in Abraham, even though they lived centuries apart. *"And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him."* Hebrews 7:9,10

It is this spiritual and eternal seed, which was implanted in us, and that was activated through faith in Christ, (the incarnate truth), that caused us to be born again. Now that we are born again, regenerated, we are to grow in grace in conformity to Jesus Christ, who is the prototype from which we came. Which takes faith, truth and the filling of the Holy Spirit. *"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."* James 1:18

The prototype is the first one after which all other models are patterned. But the models carry within them the same essence of the prototype that they were patterned after. *"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."* Romans 8:29 Christ is also called the Firstfruit. *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."* 1 Corinthians 15:20

The point is, the essence from which we came, our new essence, is spiritual in nature and eternal. Eternal in that it came from God himself. When God created our new natures in us, he did not come up with a new nature just for people, but took from his own Spirit and created that in us. He took from that which is eternal and created a nature that is in itself eternal as well.

What the resurrection from the dead accomplishes for us is that God will give us an eternal body for us to dwell in forever. There must be an eternal outer body to house an eternal inner nature. For now the eternal internal man lives in temporal body subject to decay and death.

2. “*And they shall never perish,*” - και ου μη απολωνται εις τον αιωνα

What we have here is the subjunctive mood used with two negatives, *ou* and *me*, for emphatic negation. Whenever someone is making a point in a negative sense and wants to stress that something will not happen under any conditions whatsoever, then the double negative *ou plus me* are used with the subjunctive mood. “*And they shall **never perish***”. So what Christ is emphatically stating is that **his sheep will never perish under any conditions whatsoever!**

The word for *perish* here, *apollumi*, doesn't just mean death, although death is in it. The people were destroyed by: the flood, the fire, the serpents, the armies, etc.. But *thnesko*, *apothnesko*, *teleutao*, *koimao* refer to death as well. *Apollumi* in the middle voice meant to be ruined, destroyed. It is death brought about by a series of events, usually connected to God's judgment, whereby one is destroyed.

Using the intensive middle this is destruction of the soul that results in eternal death. It is appointed unto man to die once, this is the first death, this is physical death. Even Christians must experience this. But destruction is something different. **The result of being given eternal life is that their souls will never perish with the type of destruction that is eternal.**

And Christ emphatically states that his sheep will never perish, as he also told his disciples in John 6:39, “*And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*”

Apollumi is the same as the Hebrew *abad*. When used of people it refers to death, but when used of land, nations, or cities, it speaks of desolation. The word seems to have the idea of not merely dying, but an act of destruction, desolation, or calamity of some sort, an act of violence, a breaking down or tearing down of something, often is the sense of divinely willed destruction.

Both Hebrew *abad* and the Greek *apollumi* meant to ruin utterly, to consume, to dissolve, to die – yes, **but death by violent means**. It's used of God, who is able to destroy both the body **and** the soul in Gehenna. “*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather **fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.***” Matthew 10:28

The Israelites were destroyed (died), by the earth opening up and swallowing them alive. “*And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign.*” Numbers 26:10

The antediluvian generation was destroyed (died) by the flood of Noah's day. “*Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.*” 2 Peter 3:6 The Israelites, who were caught up in bitterness, were destroyed by snakes. “*Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.*” 1 Corinthians 10:9

The heavens and the earth will be destroyed by fire (a violet end). “*Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?*” 2 Peter 3:12

He who lives by the sword will die (be destroyed) by the sword, that is, die a violent death by the sword. “*Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*” Matthew 26:52

Those whose names have been written down in the Book of Life will not be thrown into the lake of fire and they will not experience the second death, which is eternal. The gift of eternal life is the guarantee that the believer in Christ cannot and will not experience eternal destruction by *apollumi*, (violent means) in the lake of fire. “*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*” Revelation 20:15 “*shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*” Revelation 21:8b

Those that did not believe on Christ during their lifetime, and those living in the tribulation, who will receive the mark of the beast on their forehead or hand, will not see eternal life, but eternal death. It is appointed unto man once to die, then after that the judgment. But no one has been appointed to the second death. The second death is reserved for those who reject Christ's redeeming salvation through faith in him. These will all be judged and be thrown into the lake of fire.

During the tribulation there will be the ones who take the mark of the beast. Everyone on earth, except those whose names are in Christ's Book of life, will worship the antichrist and the devil, and all of them will be thrown into the lake of fire. “*And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*” Revelation 13:8 “*Tormented with fire and brimstone*”, Revelation 14:10, “*was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone*”, Revelation 20:10, “*And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*” Revelation 19:20

So when Christ states, promises, declares that **his sheep will never perish**, it means just that. They will have to die, that is, experience physical death, **but physical death is not eternal destruction**. Eternal destruction is reserved for those outside of Christ. They will experience the second death, which is death in the lake of fire. And if they are those living in the last days, then they will be the ones who wholeheartedly embrace the world system and take the antichrist's mark!

Now there have been two views on what eternal death in the lake of fire describes. The **traditional** view states that unsaved man will be judged and thrown into the lake of fire, where he or she will burn forever in everlasting conscious torment. The **conditional** view is that unsaved man will be judged and thrown into the lake of fire, where he or she ultimately will be consumed by the flames.

Now we know that the soul is destroyable, because it says that God is able to destroy both the body and soul in *Gehenna*. “*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Gehenna).*” Matthew 10:28 Which also indicates that he will do that at the judgment!

But there are other passages that indicate the soul and body of unbelievers will be totally consumed by the lake of fire. Jude tells us that Sodom and Gomorrah were examples of what will take place at the second death in the lake of fire. “*Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*” Jude 1:7 And in that judgment the inhabitants were consumed by the flames until there was nothing left but ashes that the wind blew away! The next one is 2 Peter 2:6, “*And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into **ashes** condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;*”. We see that in both passages the inhabitants were burned to ashes.

3. “Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” - και ουχ αρπασει τις αυτα εκ της χειρος μου

The future active indicative of *harpazo* stresses the absolute certainty of this – **no one will snatch Christ's sheep out of his hand!** The use of the word *tis* brings our attention to the fact that **there is not a person alive, nor will there ever be, be it man or angel, that will ever snatch a believer away from the Lord Jesus Christ!**

The word to *snatch*, *harpazo*, is the word used for the rapture from the Latin *rapio*. In the rapture concept it borrows from a bird of prey coming down to snatch its victim, and refers to Christ's angels coming down, after the resurrection, to snatch up his elect from all over the world. “*And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*” Matthew 24:31 But in this passage it refers to the idea of seizing by force, stealing away, robbing, carrying off, etc., where something is taken from someone, such as, stealing a purse from a lady.

In this passage we have, *ek tes cheiros mou*, “out of my hand”, which is in the ablative of separation and shows that no one **will** separate us from Christ. And in verse 29 we have, “*and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand*”, which shows that no one has the power to separate us from Christ and the Father and the omnipotence that they possess. It simply will not happen.

One more passage that conveys the absolute security that every believer in Christ possesses. Our security does not rest upon our holding on to Him, but upon Him holding on to us! This statement and the eternal life given to us, emphatically state that there is no way that we can lose our salvation. “*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,*” Jude 1:24 “*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have (present tense) eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*” 1 John 5:13 “*Therefore being justified (a one time act of being declared righteous) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*” Romans 5:1

Even if one does not believe in the doctrine of election, as taught by the Reformers and held to this day by many believers, **there is no way in the world that one could ever possibly get from the Scriptures that they could lose their salvation!** It simply **won't** happen and it **can't** happen!

One passage they misinterpret to get that is Hebrews 6:4-6, “*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall **fall away**, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*” To *fall away* is *parapipto*, which meant to drift off course from grace, which refers to the early Christians going back to the temple system.

The other passage is 2 Peter 2:22, “*But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The **dog** is turned to his own vomit again; and the **sow** that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*” The **dog** here refers to unsaved men, who had never believed on Christ in the first place. And the **sow** refers to unsaved women, who had never believed on Christ. **Both had been exposed to the Gospel, rejected it, and went back of their own accord – active voice, to what they were formerly doing.** But true believers are called **sheep**, and when we wander off we are returned, passive voice – we receive the action of the verb, to the Shepherd. “*For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now **returned** unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*” 1 Peter 2:25

CC. The Omnipotent Father. v.29

“My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.” John 10:29 ο πατηρ μου ος δεδωκεν μοι μειζων παντων εστιν και ουδεις δυναται αρπαζειν εκ της χειρος του πατρος μου

1. “My Father, which gave them me,” - ο πατηρ μου ος δεδωκεν μοι

Christ talks about the Eternal One as being his Father and he brings out that his Father is greater than all and then he shows that his sheep have been given to him by the Father. The word *them* is not found in the original, but added because of the context. It simply says, “My Father, who has given to me”. And “to me” is in the dative of possession to show that what has been given him is now his!

The perfect tense of to give or grant reveals completed action in the past with existing conditions that carry on into the future. The action of giving by the Father to the Son took place in the far and distant past, even from the time of this book. It takes us back to a time before man was even created in eternity past. There the Father granted to his Son many things, a kingdom, a people, a priesthood, etc., with the result that that act of giving in the past continued on into recorded history.

In this passage he reveals that there is a certain group of people from the earth that the Father has given to Him. A group known as His Sheep. “All (this group of people) **that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**” John 6:37 He states that he will not lose one of the sheep that the Father has given him. “And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me **I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.**” John 6:39 He also reveals that they were the Father's and that the Father gave them to his Son. “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: **thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.**” John 17:7

The use of the present tense in John 6:37, “that the Father giveth me”, brings out the ongoing and current aspect of the action of giving, but the perfect tense in our passage here shows that the Father had given them to his Son in eternity past.

2. “Is greater than all;” - μειζων παντων εστιν

The genitive plural of *pas* is used when you want to take people as a whole, or a group. It would refer to mankind as a whole, but included in that idea also would be angels. God is greater than all. The word *meizon* is the comparative, although also used as the superlative, of great – *me-gas*. The context would decide what the greatness is: money, numbers of people, or as we have here, people.

It takes power to snatch a sheep from its shepherd. And it would take power to snatch a Christian away from Christ, And what Christ is saying is that **there is no one, man or angel, who has the power to take a Christian away from Jesus Christ!**

This is an interesting concept brought out here, because what we have is all human beings lumped together as a group. This isn't saying that God is greater than every single being on earth and in heaven, person to person, which he is, but that **God is greater and stronger than the entire human race put together as a whole!** God is greater and stronger than every human being and every angelic being, fallen or unfallen, lumped together into one group.

It's like a tug of war. You put one man up against God in a tug of war and God will win. And then you take every man on earth on one side against God and God will still win! And then you take every human being who will ever live and every angelic being on the one side against God and God will still win. God is greater than all!

The word "is" is the present active indicative of *eimi*, the verb of status quo. The eternal status of God's existence is one of omnipotence. In God's **omnipotence** he possesses all the power of the universe at one time. In his **omnipresence** he fills the universe. And in his **omniscience** God knows all the knowable at one time.

Analogies and comparisons of power are used to try to convey to man, who has no frame of reference at all, to explain just how powerful God is. Such as God testing men with his eyelids, the weakest of all muscles. "*The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.*" Psalm 11:4

God has the power to destroy in an instant the entire universe and in the next instant create a universe that has no ending to it filled with innumerable galaxies populated by other beings. This is the greatness of his power. **It is the power of God that holds this present universe together.** "*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*" Colossians 1:16,17 **And it is the power of God that will dissolve the entire universe in fervent heat.** "*Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"* 2 Peter 3:12 **And it is the power of God that will create an entirely new universe.** "*Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*" 2 Peter 3:13

3. "*And no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*" - και ουδεις δυναται αρπαζειν εκ της χειρος του πατρος μου

The word *able* is *dunatai* and it is one of the words for power. No one, man nor angel, has the power to snatch a believer in Jesus Christ away from the Father. If God created the entire universe by his power, and if God holds the entire universe together by his power, then there is no creature in heaven or on earth that he has made that has power greater than his to snatch us away from Christ!

Will and power are not the same thing. There are many people who would like to see Christ and his sheep destroyed. There are many who would like to see his sheep separated from their shepherd and spend eternity in the lake of fire, and certainly foremost of these would be Satan! "*And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*" Revelation 12:10 They would like to see it; they would like to do it, **but none of them have the power to do it!**

Nothing can separate the sheep from their shepherd. Not their sins, not other people, not the cosmic powers, not life, not death, not problems – nothing! "*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" Romans 8:38,39

