

II. WHO GIVES EVERLASTING LIFE?

God alone grants eternal life.

Rom 6:22, 23 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God, the Father, as the author and fountain of all life, grants eternal life through the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son grants it through the Holy Spirit and the Spirit through himself, which is the normal and natural order of working of the persons of the Godhead.

The Father raises up the dead and quickens them; the Father has life in himself and is the everlasting Father.

Is 9:6, 7 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

John 5:21, 24 – 28 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. ²⁴"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. ²⁵Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; ²⁷My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

Study of Jesus Christ

The Son quickens whom He will; He received from God to have life in himself. The Holy Spirit allows only those into the kingdom of God who have been born of water and of the Spirit, He dwells in us so that He may quicken our mortal bodies, just as He raised Christ from the dead.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

These testimonies establish the Divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit and prove their equality with the Father.

Do the following passages leave room for others besides God to give eternal life?

"...in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel" (1Cor 4:15)

and

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." (1Tim 4:16)

No, they do not.

There are many subordinate causes of the same effect. Christ and the Holy Spirit grant life by their own power, but ministers are merely the instruments through whom Christ works by the power of his Spirit.

"...Men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God." (1Cor 4:1).

"What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe--as the Lord has assigned to each his task." (1Cor 3:5)

If Christ grants life by a power communicated to him, does that mean that the power is not his own? No, it does not.

Christ's power is communicated to him by natural and eternal generation from the Father.

"For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself." (John 5:26)

Therefore, He grants life by his own power.

III. TO WHOM IS EVERLASTING LIFE GIVEN?

Eternal life is given from everlasting to all the elect.

John 10:27, 28 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

John 17:9 - 12 "I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; ¹⁰and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. ¹²While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

Mat 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

John 6:44, 45 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵"It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.

Rom 8:28 - 30 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the

image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Faith and repentance are the beginning of eternal life, which is the clear mark of the elect.

Rom 11:5 - 10 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. ⁶But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. ⁷What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; ⁸just as it is written, "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY." ⁹And David says, "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM. ¹⁰LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER."

Is there a difference between the elect and the converted? After all, the elect are the recipients of eternal life. There is no difference because conversion and faith are already the beginning of eternal life. It follows, then, that one should also ask, 'whom does God convert?' The answer is 'the elect, naturally.'

The elect include those who are not yet converted and are sleeping in their sinful state, waiting to hear and respond to the Gospel and the irresistible, effectual call of the Holy Spirit.

It is furthermore correct to reply that everlasting life is given to the elect only, since then there can be no ambiguity about the effect of this gift, since the reprobate may also seek conversion to obtain the power of faith, however, not to glorify God, but to glorify themselves.

Acts 8:17 - 22 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹saying, "Give this

authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." ²⁰But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹"You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.

With this, they are guilty of sin by accident.

IV. WHY IS EVERLASTING LIFE GIVEN?

Everlasting life is not given as a result of our works, whether present or future but only out of the free mercy and love of God toward the elect, and from his desire to manifest his mercy in the salvation of the righteous. This He accomplishes through the satisfaction and merits of Christ, the mediator, imputed unto us through faith that we may eternally praise God.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Eph 2:8 - 10 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Before our conversion, our works were worthy of eternal death, and afterwards, our works are the results of our conversion. It can never be the cause why eternal life is given, since nothing can be the cause of itself.

We are led to eternal life by many means, such as evangelism, sickness, death, blessings, miracles, and so on, but the means through which we are led to God constitute one thing and the cause, for which we are led, is another thing. We are led through the process of:

- a) election by the Father,
 - b) redemption by the Son, and
 - c) application of faith by the Holy Spirit,
- while the cause for which we are led is solely to glorify God.

Eph 1:5, 6 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

V. HOW IS EVERLASTING LIFE GIVEN?

Everlasting life is given through faith and faith is given by the doctrine of the gospel, the inward efficacy of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit works in us, through the Word, the knowledge of God, and of his will. This knowledge is accompanied with a desire of becoming more and more intimately acquainted with God, and of living according to the requirements of his will.

Where else shall the believer go when the words of eternal life are with Christ?

John 6:67 - 69 So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹"We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

Faith comes from hearing the word of God, which brings the gospel, the power of God so that every one that believes shall be saved. The gospel makes us children of God.

1Co 4:14, 15 I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. ¹⁵For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Rom 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

The ordinary way in which we receive the beginning of eternal life is through the ministry of the word. It is different with infants and those who are converted in a miraculous manner, such as the thief on the cross, Paul and Cornelius. We focus here mainly on the ordinary way in which the beginning of eternal life is given.

VI. WHEN IS EVERLASTING LIFE GIVEN?

The beginning of everlasting life is given already in this world, but the consummation of it, will only be experienced in the life to come. No one receives it except those in whom it is initiated in this life. As soon as everlasting life is given in this world, the believer looks upon this world as a temporary home and this life as the life of a sojourner, a place destined to be abandoned with the move home – home with the Lord.

2Cor 5:1 - 9 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, ³inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. ⁴For indeed, while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

^{2Co 5:5}Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. ⁶Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-- ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight-- ⁸we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. ⁹Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

Is 25:8 He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove

the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

1Co 15:53, 54 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory."

2Pe 1:13, 14 I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, ¹⁴knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

Luke 20:36; Luke 21:28; Rom 5:5; 7:24; 8:15, 16, 19, 25, 26; 2 Co 5:2 – 5; 7:5, 22, 23; Gal 5:23; Eph 1:4, 14; 4:30; 5:9; Phi 1:21 – 23; 3:20, 21; 2 Tim 4:8; Tit 2:13; Heb 9:28; 1 Peter 1:7; 1 John 3:2

There are two degrees in the consummation of eternal life.

- a) The first one is when the souls of the righteous are immediately carried into heaven after death in this life, for in death they obtain a deliverance from all the evils of this life.
- b) The second is that greater and more glorious degree to which we shall rise in the resurrection of our bodies, when we shall ascend into heaven perfectly redeemed and glorified, and see God as He is, face to face.

Those who hear the word of Christ, and believe in the Father, have everlasting life and shall not be condemned. They have already crossed over from death into life.

John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

They are here in this life, children of God. Although it is not known exactly what they will be, they know this: they shall be like the Lord as soon as He appears. Then they shall see him as He is.

1 John 3:1, 2 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ²Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

Job 19:25, 26 As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. ²⁶Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh, I shall see God.

Ps 16:11; 17:15; 31:19; Is 56:5; Mal 3:2; Mat 5:8; John 17:24; Rom 8:14, 15, 18, 29; 1 Cor 2:9; 13:12; 15:49; 2 Co 3:18; 4:17; 5:6 – 8; Gal 3:26; 4:6; Phi 3:21; Col 3:4; Heb 9:28; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:1; 5:1

VII. WHETHER, AND FROM WHAT ORIGIN MAY WE BE ASSURED OF EVERLASTING LIFE?

It is not only possible, but also our duty to assure ourselves of everlasting life, for it is given to all and only to those who believe. To believe in everlasting life is to be fully persuaded that not only shall others be made partakers of it, but that I am also a partaker of it. We must be fully aware, and hold fast to this knowledge, to fend off uncertainty as we find with, among other, the Papists.

Being certain of our final, eternal, state is to have peace with God who gave the believers eternal life, through the justification of faith. No one can snatch the believer out of the hand of the Lord.

Rom 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

John 10:27 - 29 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

Study of Jesus Christ

The fact that "*God's gifts and his call are irrevocable*" (Rom 11:29) causes the believer to be certain of everlasting life. Jesus Christ will perform the good work to completion, which He started in each believer, until the day He returns.

Php 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

2 Tim 1:12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

He that believes knows that he believes, which assurance is based upon the following:

1. God, who is the author of everlasting life, is unchangeable.
2. "*God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: 'The Lord knows those who are his.'*" (2 Tim 2:19)
3. Christ's prayers are always heard and answered perfectly, and one thing for which He prays, is that the Father would keep all those whom He has given him. (John 17:12)
4. God will not have us pray for those things necessary for our salvation and then give it conditionally. On account of God's promises, He gives it freely, fully and complete.

To doubt our eternal life is to overthrow the truth of God, and to make the intercession of Christ useless. The origin of our assurance lies within the grace of God, in our faith, which is a gift.

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

We can be fully assured of everlasting life in this world, since we already have the beginning of it, for those who has will be given more, (Mark 4:25) God's gifts are irrevocable (Rom 11:29), God is faithful and will perfect that which He has commenced.

Study of Jesus Christ

That the beginning of eternal life is started in this life is known through a true faith, which, while it resists the doubts and temptations of the devil, it exclaims: "*I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!*" (Mark 9:24). The same assurance is also obtained by the peace of conscience, which we have with God, being justified by faith, and from true repentance and sincere purpose of heart, which we have to obey all the commandments of God. Faith cannot be without true repentance and when we truly repent, we prove our everlasting life.

We are the house of Christ in which we should hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope unto the end. (Heb 3:6, 14)

What do we believe concerning life everlasting? It is a firm persuasion,

1. That after this life, there will be another life in which the church shall be glorified, and God praised forever.
2. That I am a member of this church, and shall for this reason be made a partaker of everlasting life.
3. That I also in this life have the beginning of everlasting life.