

PMB 1395/25



R236

IMO

14259

Eternal Life:  
Is it a gift or a Reward From God?

A Thesis  
Presented to the Faculty  
Of  
Malua Theological College

In Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

By  
Poloaiga T. Imo  
2004



## ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at eternal life through the eyes of reward and gift. It is an analysis in ascertaining whether eternal life is viewed as a reward or a gift. The study is mostly biblical, analyzing texts in the Old Testament and mainly the New Testament, but also looks at the views of three theologians.

The findings of the study are twofold. Firstly, eternal life is meaningless to the unfaithful. Secondly, for the person with faith, eternal life can be a reward or a gift.



## Table of Contents

Table of Contents	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
CHAPTER 1: Introduction	1
CHAPTER 2: A view from the Old Testament	3
(2.1.0) Daniel 12:1-4 Exegesis	3
(2.1.1) Social and historical context of the Book of Daniel	7
(2.1.2) Analysis of Dan 12:1-4	8
(2.2.0) Isaiah 26:19 Exegesis	10
(2.2.1) Social and historical context of Isaiah 26:19	12
(2.2.2) Analysis of Isa 26:19	13
(2.3.0) Concluding Remarks on Old Testament view	14
CHAPTER 3: A New Testament view.	15
(3.1.0) First Jesus Perspective: Matthew 19:16-30 Exegesis	15
(3.1.1) The social and historical context of Mat 19:16-30	19
(3.1.2) Analysis of Jesus First Perspective.	19
(3.1.3) Second Jesus Perspective: John 3:16 Exegesis	21
(3.1.4) The social and historical context of John 3:16	22
(3.1.5) Analysis of Jesus Second Perspective	22
(3.2.0) First Pauline Perspective: Romans 6:15-23 Exegesis	24
(3.2.1) Social and Historical Context of Romans 6	29
(3.2.2) Analysis on First Pauline Perspective	29
(3.2.3) Second Pauline Perspective: Galatians 6: 7-10 Exegesis	30
(3.2.4) Social and Historical Context of Galatians 6	34
(3.2.5) Analysis on Second Perspective Pauline	34
(3.3.0) Revelations 2:8-11 Exegesis	35
(3.3.1) Social and historical context of the Book of Revelations	37
(3.3.2) Analysis of Rev 2:8-11	38
(3.4.0) Concluding Remarks on New Testament view.	38
CHAPTER 4: Views from Theologians	41
(4.1.0) Views from John Calvin	41
(4.2.0) Views from Emil Brunner	44
(4.3.0) Views from Hans Kung	47
(4.4.0) Concluding Remarks on views from the theologians	49
CHAPTER 5: Conclusion	51
Bibliography	54



### Acknowledgments

For the Lord is good: his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations (Ps 100: 5).

I would like to thank Rev Si'u Vaifale, who supervised my thesis, for his support, encouragement and direction, which has enabled the completion of this thesis. A special note of thanks to Church Elders: Rev Risati Ete and Rev Oka Fauolo, for sharing their thoughts on my topic.

My greatest thank you is reserved for my family. I apologize to my wife Lauao for the pain of the last four years, but her invaluable support and the smiles of our four children: Tile, Mauinuuese, Sumeo and Berakah, have been an opium for me to complete this project, and training at Malua. God bless.

Lastly, these pages are dedicated to my father, Dr Tofaeono Tile Imo. The greatest gift a son can receive from his father is to hear him say, "You have done well my son."  
I miss you, papa. *fa* papa.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This paper looks at the question: **Is eternal life a reward or a gift from God?** A number of issues aroused my interest to this question. One is: if eternal life is a reward, could we work towards it? Another is, if eternal life is a gift from God then all should be able to receive it. Yet only those with faith in Jesus Christ, receive eternal life according to Jn 3:16. This appears very much like a condition, and gifts do not have conditions or they cease to be gifts. Is this view correct? This paper looks to addressing these issues while eternal life is scrutinized on whether it is a reward or a gift.

D. H. Johnson notes that **eternal life** can be described under four points.

Firstly, eternal life involves a personal relationship with God. This notion of life as a relationship with God is carried over into the teachings of Jesus and into the gospels. Secondly, in the gospels, eternal life is connected with the coming of Jesus Christ (Jn 10:10). Eternal life is the life of the future messianic age, and Jesus is the Messiah. Thus ones attitude towards Jesus determines ones entrance into life (Mt 25:45-46). Thirdly, this life, which is a relationship with God comes through Jesus Christ, is begun in the present age. In Jesus Christ, one begins to know God, for he reveals his Father (Jn 1:18). Finally, eternal life, which is inaugurated in the present, is fully realized only in the future. Among its many blessings are the resurrection of the body and the promise of abundant life (Jn 3:16).<sup>1</sup>

The term 'eternal life' has parallel equivalents such as 'kingdom of God,' 'kingdom of heaven,' 'salvation.' All these signify God's sovereign, eschatological rule.<sup>2</sup>

A **reward** has various meanings in different contexts. It is "a return or recompense for service or merit, requital for good or evil."<sup>3</sup> P. E. Davies writes that in the Old Testament, "the history of the Judges and the Kings was written in terms of

<sup>1</sup> D. H. Johnson, "Life," in Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel, Eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (Illinois: Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1992), 470.

<sup>2</sup> C. C. Caragounis, "Kingdom of God," in Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel, Eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (Illinois: Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1992), 417.

<sup>3</sup> "Reward," The Concise Oxford Dictionary. Oxford University Press, 1964, 1069.



reward for faithfulness and punishment for sin and idolatry."<sup>4</sup> He notes, when "this 'neat doctrine of reward and punishment' was applied to the individual life in Psalms and Wisdom literature," it was found that it breaks down in many circumstances such as in Ps 103:10.<sup>5</sup> The writer of Ecclesiastes also saw that life was not so ordered and the doctrine of retribution does not always apply to the individual life.<sup>6</sup> In the New Testament, the teaching of Jesus is that God punishes sin and rewards righteousness. Apostle Paul projects the rewards for the Christian into the future, at the judgment where the great reward will be the possession of eternal life.<sup>7</sup>

A **gift** also has many meanings in different contexts. A gift is by law, a voluntary transference of property without consideration.<sup>8</sup> Lawrence. O. Richards notes that in the Old Testament, the words used are *minhah*, which is 'an offering' or 'a tribute,' and *natan*, which has a meaning 'to give.'<sup>9</sup> The common word *didomi* used in the New Testament has this meaning of giving. In Eph 2:8, God is portrayed as the giver, giving the gift of salvation, which comes through faith.<sup>10</sup>

This paper has five chapters. In Chapter 2, the question, 'Is eternal life a reward or a gift from God?' is asked of the Old Testament. An exegetical look at Dan 12:1-4 and Isa 26:19 is undertaken. In Chapter 3, the question is asked of the New Testament. The views of Jesus from Mt 19:16-30 and Jn 3: 16 are looked at, then those of Paul from Rom 6:15-23 and Gal 6:7-10. Last is a view from the Book of Revelation. In Chapter 4, three theologians are assessed on this question. We look at John Calvin, Emil Brunner and Hans Kung. Kung, a Catholic, and Brunner are modern theologians: Calvin a Protestant leader. Chapter 5 is the conclusion.

<sup>4</sup> P. E. Davies, "Reward," in The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 72.

<sup>5</sup> P. E. Davies, 72.

<sup>6</sup> P. E. Davies, 72.

<sup>7</sup> P. E. Davies, 73.

<sup>8</sup> "Gift," The Concise Oxford Dictionary. Oxford University Press, 1964, 516.

<sup>9</sup> Lawrence. O. Richards, Expository Dictionary of Bible Words (Michigan: Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 304.

<sup>10</sup> Lawrence. O. Richards, 304.



## CHAPTER 2

### A view from the Old Testament

There is a scholastic difference of opinion on whether eternal life is an Old Testament belief and taught as such. There are authors who believe there was little evidence till near the end of the Old Testament period that there was any belief in a blessed existence after death.<sup>11</sup> The belief that there is no existence after death means eternal life cannot eventuate.

Other authors believe that the idea of an afterlife was originally unknown in ancient Israel.<sup>12</sup> This belief that there is no afterlife means also that there can be no eternal life. On the other hand, there are authors who believe that the Old Testament had not been limited to earthly things but contained a promise of spiritual and eternal life.<sup>13</sup>

These authors have different views yet they almost always quote the same reference from the bible as proof of their views. We shall look at two of the most commonly cited references from the Old Testament and seek to ascertain whether eternal life is seen as a reward or a gift. The two references to be looked at are Dan 12:2<sup>14</sup> and Isa 26:19.<sup>15</sup>

#### (2.1.0) Daniel 12:1-4 Exegesis

**<sup>1</sup>At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall rise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book.**

<sup>11</sup> N. W. Porteous, "The Theology of the Old Testament," in *Peakes Commentary on the Bible*, Eds. Matthew Black and H. H. Rowley (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1962), 159.

<sup>12</sup> O. A. Piper, "Life," in *The Interpreters Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 126.

<sup>13</sup> John Calvin, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*, Ed. John. T. McNeill, translated Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), Vol xx, 448.

<sup>14</sup> John Calvin, 448.

<sup>15</sup> O. A. Piper, 126.



Dan 12:1-4 is the culmination of Daniel's vision. The dream was given to him by an angel, which began in chapter ten. In verse 1, the phrase 'at that time' indicates that the narrator has now reached the climatic moment of the vision itself.<sup>16</sup> 'Michael' is Israel's guardian angel who appeared in Dan 10:13. He is the protector of the people of God.

The phrase 'your people' indicates the Hasideans, which frequently means pious in the Old Testament.<sup>17</sup> These were pious Jews who staunchly defended the law against encroachment from Hellenism. The Hasideans is a sect that Daniel belonged to.<sup>18</sup>

The word 'book' has variable meanings throughout the bible, where at times they are understood to be judicial records, sometimes Book of Remembrance or the Book that contain the deeds of obedience and disobedience done by individuals in their lifetimes.<sup>19</sup> 'Book' brings a connotation of judgment at the end of time.

According to S. H. Travis, the Old Testament judgment takes the form of earthly blessing for obedience to God's commands, and punishment for disobedience.<sup>20</sup> But the New Testament presupposes the belief, developed in apocalyptic literature, in a great judgment at the end of history.<sup>21</sup> This judgment would entail these things: all people would be judged, the living and the dead: judgment would be according to works: it would be the moment of division for those who truly belong to Christ, and those not: salvation and condemnation are best understood in terms of relationship to God.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> W. S. Towner, *Daniel, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), 166.

<sup>17</sup> H. W. Hoehner, "Hasideans," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Gen. Ed. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1982), 621.

<sup>18</sup> W. S. Towner, 166.

<sup>19</sup> W. S. Towner, 100.

<sup>20</sup> S. H. Travis, "Judgment of God," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer (Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988), 358.

<sup>21</sup> S. H. Travis, "Judgment of God", 358.

<sup>22</sup> S. H. Travis, "Judgment of God", 358.



**<sup>2</sup>Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.**

In verse 2, the phrase 'many of those who sleep' appear to imply a limited resurrection, that is, only some are resurrected.<sup>23</sup> The word 'sleep' is a metaphor for death.<sup>24</sup> 'Dust' is the element of the grave, which is the natural place of mans ultimate return.<sup>25</sup>

The expression 'everlasting life' occurs here for the first and only time in the Old Testament.<sup>26</sup> According to the Hebrew lexicon<sup>27</sup>, it meant forever, ever or always, but in apocalypticism, everlasting life pointed to the life beyond. John. E. Goldingay warns that we must avoid treating this verse as a piece of theological teaching, warning that it is a vision not a "fully developed" belief in resurrection.<sup>28</sup> W. S. Towner notes also the loose ends abounding in the writer's language here and suggests perhaps the concept of resurrection was so radical and daring that it had not yet had time to undergo the process of maturation that theological reflection go through.<sup>29</sup> The explanation given suggests that everlasting life or eternal life is limited to only a few who are members of his sect and fellow sufferers.

The phrase 'those who are wise' are presumably the writer of Daniel and his sect, the Hasidim.<sup>30</sup> There are writers who believe that the 'wise' were those who during the period of persecution have dealt prudently and wisely with the people to instruct many to the way of righteousness.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>23</sup> J. G. Baldwin, *Daniel*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity, 1978), 214.

<sup>24</sup> J. G. Baldwin, 214.

<sup>25</sup> J. A. Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 472.

<sup>26</sup> E. J. Young, *Daniel*, Geneva Series of Commentaries (Edinburgh: The Banner Trust, 1997), 256.

<sup>27</sup> Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), Vol ii, 860.

<sup>28</sup> J. E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary (Texas: Word Books, 1989.), 306.

<sup>29</sup> W. S. Towner, 167.

<sup>30</sup> W. S. Towner, 167.

<sup>31</sup> Edward. J. Young, 256.



Towner comments that the  
the stars forever and ever' are ambi  
as they do in Judges 5:20 and in Job  
verse envisages a life of heavenly ch

**<sup>32</sup>Those who are wise shall  
who lead many to righteousness, li**

In verse 3, the 'wise' and  
context are seen as one and the sam  
reward of the righteous.<sup>35</sup> These a  
The righteous are rewarded for their

N. H. Snaith notes that in th  
signify that which conforms to th  
character of God himself.<sup>36</sup> The Isra  
however notes that 'righteousness'  
behavior within a community.<sup>37</sup>

Wright adds that in the Old  
shape to the idea of righteousness.  
the idea of the standing of a person  
covenantal setting merges with that c  
is the covenant charter."<sup>38</sup> To have  
and the hope of which was that God

---

<sup>32</sup> W. S. Towner, 167.

<sup>33</sup> J. E. Goldinghay, 309.

<sup>34</sup> Louis. F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di.  
York: Doubleday, 1978), 309.

<sup>35</sup> M. F. Unger, *Ungers Commentary on the*

<sup>36</sup> N. H. Snaith, "Righteous," in *A Theologi*  
(London: SCM Press Ltd, 1957), 202.

<sup>37</sup> N. T. Wright, "Righteousness," in *New Di*  
J. I. Packer (Illinois: Downers Grove, Interva

<sup>38</sup> N. T. Wright, 591.



saving them from their enemies. In the text as observed, the justification that the believers will be resurrection, so they will get their just reward.

**<sup>4</sup>But you, Daniel, keep the words secret and the book sealed until the time of the end. Many shall be running back and forth, and evil shall increase.**

The angel has finished giving his revelation on the future course of history and has given assurance of the ultimate victory through resurrection of the faithful. Daniel is ordered to 'keep the words secret and seal the book until the time of the end.'<sup>39</sup> As with chapter 8:26, Daniel was told to preserve his writing because its relevance was far ahead. At the end of time men will be vainly seeking to discover God's plan, as Amos foretold (Amos 8:12), 'in order to increase knowledge', and the only answer will lie in God's word.<sup>40</sup>

### **(2.1.1) Social and historical context of the Book of Daniel**

Joyce. G. Baldwin comments that with the contents dated in the sixth century it would be natural for a sixth century background as the historical setting for the Book of Daniel.<sup>41</sup> But, general consensus is that the book was written in the second century BC in response to a religious and political threat upon Judea.

Baldwin points out that the writer, using legendary material well known to his fellow Jews and adding the visions to bridge the course of history between the exile and his own day, was encouraging opposition to the foreign oppressor and rallying the faithful to fight.<sup>42</sup> Baldwin gives a date, 168BC or 167BC, and not earlier than

<sup>39</sup>Louis. F. Hartman, Alexander. A. Di. Lella, 310.

<sup>40</sup> A. R. Millard, "Daniel," in *The Pickering Bible Commentary for Today*, Gen. Ed. G. C. D. Howley (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1984), 924.

<sup>41</sup> J. G. Baldwin, 18.

<sup>42</sup> J. G. Baldwin, 18.



c300BC.<sup>43</sup> This dating supports the belief that resurrection was a late development in Israelite history.

John Bright also agrees that much of the material in Daniel may be quite a bit older than the period concerned.<sup>44</sup> He notes in agreement that the present form of the Book of Daniel was composed during the persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, not long after the desecration of the temple with probably dating of 166/5 BC.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes nicknamed 'madman' was born in 215BC and died insane in 164BC.<sup>45</sup> He was a Syrian ruler between 175-163BC. His career with respect to Palestine is recorded in 1 and 2 Maccabees and remarkably predicted in Dan 11:21-35.<sup>46</sup> The time of Epiphanes was a time of persecution for the Jews. Women who had circumcised their children were put to death with their families. Groups who kept the Sabbath, were slaughtered by soldiers, while refusing to defend themselves. Many were put to death for refusing to touch unclean food.<sup>47</sup>

### (2.1.2) Analysis of Dan 12:1-4

#### (a) Reward Perspective.

Eternal life is a reward for two reasons. Firstly, it is a reward for the righteous. The righteous are those who are 'wise' or 'those who lead many to righteousness,' which A. Di. Della saw as the same group.<sup>48</sup> They were seen as the Hasidim, of whom Daniel was one of its members.<sup>49</sup> The righteous were the followers who despite persecution held on to the faith and taught that faith. They

<sup>43</sup> J. G. Baldwin, 18.

<sup>44</sup> John Bright, *A History of Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1980), 424.

<sup>45</sup> B. K. Waltke, "Antiochus Epiphanes." In *The International Bible Study Encyclopedia* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1979), Vol I: a-d, 145.

<sup>46</sup> B. K. Waltke, 145.

<sup>47</sup> John Bright, 424.

<sup>48</sup> A. Di. Della, 309.

<sup>49</sup> W. S. Towner, 167.



persevered and lived the life that was 'holy' or deemed righteous. Baldwin<sup>50</sup> and John Bright<sup>51</sup> attested to this persecution as those committed by Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Wright noted that the righteous were those who were in the right standing or relationship to God, whether in the law-court setting or with regards to the covenant.<sup>52</sup> In the covenant setting it means having hope that God will vindicate or justify his nation. Yet, this is faith as Heb 11:1 describes it. So eternal life, a reward for the righteous is in fact a reward for those with faith.

Secondly, eternal life is a reward of the judgment at the end of days. This is seen by the connotation implied by the term 'Book.'<sup>53</sup> Now the books are seen to contain deeds of obedience and disobedience, and judgment is according to these records. This is in line with the view of S. H. Travis who says judgment will be 'according to works.'<sup>54</sup> The person's work is the evidence of whether a living faith is present in him or not. It is faith that is being judged. The works of obedience come about because of faith in a person. Again eternal life is a reward for faith.

#### (b) Gift Perspective.

The scholars hardly perceived or mentioned eternal life as being a gift. I however see eternal life as a gift for three reasons. Firstly, resurrection is Gods plan for the future. It is God who will resurrect the believer. God gives this life. For eternal life to occur, resurrection must occur first. In the Old Testament, the concept of resurrection was applied not to the life of the individual after death but metaphorically to the renewal of Israel as a nation.<sup>55</sup> The resurrection noted here in

<sup>50</sup> J. G. Baldwin, 18.

<sup>51</sup> John Bright, 424.

<sup>52</sup> N. T. Wright, 591.

<sup>53</sup> S. H. Travis, "Judgment of God," 358.

<sup>54</sup> S. H. Travis, "Judgment of God," 358.

<sup>55</sup> R. H. Fuller, "Resurrection," in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Eds. Bruce. M. Metzger, Michael. D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 647.



Daniel denotes the coming back to life through an act of God. This act of God makes the 'life giving' a gift from him for God had to be amiable to give this life in the first place. Eternal life must be a gift from God for he gives resurrection to His people.

Secondly, eternal life is a gift for God is giving His covenant people what He promised. The phrase 'your people,' which translated to the Hasideans must infer covenant people. These were the people who adhered to covenant conditions. Part of the covenant charter was for obedience by the covenant people, and for God to give them what he promised.<sup>56</sup> All of Gods covenant with Israel include divine promises and eternal life is part of that promise (Jer 31:31-34). However being covenant people meant believing in God, being faithful to God. The natural conclusion of God's new covenant is the giving of the gift of eternal life to those of the covenant who believe in God and are faithful to Him (Jn 6: 44-47).

Thirdly, eternal life is a gift for God gives the characteristics that go with it-shine like the brightness; stars forever. The characteristics of eternal life do not appear out of nowhere. Humans, by their own power cannot shine forever or be eternal. God has to give them this eternalness and forever-ness in order for them to be that way.

#### (2.2.0) Isaiah 26:19 Exegesis

**<sup>19</sup>Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy. For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth will give birth to those long dead.**

Merril F. Unger highlights Isaiah 26 as Judah's millennial song.<sup>57</sup> He indicates verse 19 as an assurance of bodily resurrection of righteous Old Testament saints. According to R. E. Clements this verse is a peculiar difficult verse and has

<sup>56</sup> Bernhard W. Anderson, "Covenant," in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Eds. Bruce. M. Metzger, Michael. D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 139.

<sup>57</sup> Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah," in *Student Bible Commentary* (UK: Candle Books, 1998), 133.



been much discussed.<sup>58</sup> He points out that because its mood and content stand in marked contrast to the proceeding lament in vv 16-18, it is regarded as a latter addition. Its language is poetic and symbolic, which is another source of difficulty.

The verse can be viewed in several ways. Bernhard. W. Anderson sees it as the resurrection of the individual.<sup>59</sup> H. H. Rowley sees it as the restoration of Israel as a nation.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore it can also be seen as a combination of these; a symbol of Israel's restoration, and also a future reality for the individual.<sup>61</sup>

According to Otto Kaiser, the phrase 'your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise' points to the dead as departed Israelites who are particularly close to the author, or perhaps even righteous.<sup>62</sup> Kaiser notes the phrase emphasizes bodily resurrection. He notes that 'dwellers in the dust' are those who sleep "because of their stay in the grave,"<sup>63</sup> which is the usual comparison of death with sleep.

The phrase 'awake and sing for joy' shows that the future life is characterized by joy.<sup>64</sup> According to R. Gregor Smith, "joy is a gift from God proceeding from himself... and it is the power of the Holy Spirit that joy arises."<sup>65</sup> Smith adds that it is in the presence of God that joy is full.<sup>66</sup>

The word "your" in 'your dew is a radiant dew' must refer to God and the language seems to reflect, the ancient belief that the dew, has a fertilizing, life giving power. Like the fresh dew of dawn, with all it's life giving potency, God will give

<sup>58</sup> R. E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994), 216.

<sup>59</sup> Bernhard. W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1966), 539.

<sup>60</sup> H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 166.

<sup>61</sup> David. A. Hubbard, "Paul Van Imschoot Theology of the Old Testament," in *Contemporary Old Testament Theologians*, Ed. Robert. B. Laurin (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1970), 207.

<sup>62</sup> Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1980), 215.

<sup>63</sup> Otto Kaiser, 217.

<sup>64</sup> Otto Kaiser, 217.

<sup>65</sup> R. Gregor. Smith, "Joy," in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, Ed. Alan Richardson. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1957), 117.

<sup>66</sup> R. Gregor. Smith, 117.



new life to the dead community.<sup>67</sup> God is seen as the source of life, through water and through light, which are, both needed for life.

### (2.2.1) Social and historical context of Isaiah 26:19

With reference to the 'Isaiah Apocalypse' (Isa 24-27), Rainer Albertz writes "it is difficult to date than Deutero-Zechariah though easier to put into social context."<sup>68</sup> Albertz wrote,

There was conflict between city and country, which stemmed from the fact that the great landowners resided in their city houses and indulge in their life of luxury while the small farmers dependent on them spent their lives far away in the villages...however, the low-class groups, which lived on the land, must have felt that they were surrounded by a city culture suspect to them, which formed the starting point for their oppression.<sup>69</sup>

Rainer quotes Tcherikover saying the "cultural transformation, undergone by the social conflict in the Hellenistic period, from which the Maccabean revolt then derived a good deal of its potential for conflict, as being responsible for the notion of judgment in Isa 24-27."<sup>70</sup> Otto Kaiser also puts the period of composition of the Isaiah Apocalyptic as lying "between the second half of the fourth century and first third of the second century BC."<sup>71</sup>

A number of writers put the date away from the first century. Clements notes that the Isaiah Apocalypse is probably from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>72</sup> However William. R. Millar suggest that a 6<sup>th</sup> century date is not unreasonable and places the early portion of the chapters close to 587 BCE, the Fall of Jerusalem.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>67</sup> R. E. Clements, 217.

<sup>68</sup> Rainer Albertz. A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period: From the exile to the Maccabees (London: SCM Press, 1994), Vol ii, 570.

<sup>69</sup> Rainer Albertz, 573.

<sup>70</sup> Rainer Albertz, 573.

<sup>71</sup> Otto Kaiser, ix.

<sup>72</sup> R. E. Clements, 3.

<sup>73</sup> W. R. Millard, "Isaiah 24-27." In The Anchor Bible Dictionary: Chief Ed David Noel Freedman (New York: DoubleDay, 1992), Vol 3: H-J, 489.



### (2.2.2) Analysis of Isaiah 26:19

Eternal life is not indicated in Isa 26:19 but the theme of this verse is resurrection. The dead shall rise, the dwellers in the dust to awake, the earth to give birth to those long dead, are three descriptions of resurrection. Although resurrection is hardly an Old Testament word, the descriptive phrases given explain it. So whether 'corporate or individual,' resurrection is announced and it is the righteous that the writer of Isaiah points to who are being resurrected.

#### (a) Reward perspective.

Otto Kaiser<sup>74</sup> and Merrill Unger<sup>75</sup> indicate that it is the righteous person that is resurrected. Now the social context although contentious indicate the Maccabean<sup>76</sup> times or the Fall of Jerusalem (586BC),<sup>77</sup> which were times of persecution. The righteous are those who adhered to the faith despite these persecutions. It is the righteous who are here rewarded by God.

#### (b) Gift Perspective.

There is no mention of gift here in this verse but I see two reasons for a gift perspective. Firstly, resurrection is a gift for God gives this life and its character. The word 'dew' gives this implication. The word 'dew,' is for life giving power.<sup>78</sup> Only God has this power and only he can give this life. The 'dew' or the 'life' is a gift from God. Eternal life comes about from the life giving dew of God; it is therefore a gift from God.

Secondly, the word 'joy' has a gift implication. Joy is a gift from God, which one experiences in His presence. Smith noted earlier that 'joy' is part of God's gift

<sup>74</sup> Otto Kaiser, 217.

<sup>75</sup> Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah," 133.

<sup>76</sup> Rainer Albertz, 573.

<sup>77</sup> W. R. Millar, 489.

<sup>78</sup> R. E. Clements, 217.



proceeding from Him.<sup>79</sup> It is only in the presence of God that joy is full. Joy is felt at the resurrection, which implies that God is present for he must have given the joy felt.

### **(2.3.0) Concluding Remarks on Old Testament views.**

The Daniel and Isaiah analysis points to eternal life as being both a reward and a gift. It is a reward for God judges the people for their character and rewards those deemed righteous. Righteous was the way of life for the believer, a life based on God. The reward notion in this instance stems from the fact that the people were under trials and persecutions. It was to motivate and encourage those who were suffering. In the persecutions, many of the believers were killed and many apostatized. The reward notion consoled them and encouraged them for the future. To the believers, final judgment sees their vindication and the just reward given to the un-faithful.

Eternal life is also a gift by noting that it is God who brings about resurrection. He gives the life at end of time. He is the cause of the characteristics that are brought about at the end of time. In and through Him are joy and life giving power given. Eternal life is His plan for the future. At the end of time, God will fulfill his promise. I have said eternal life is a gift but notice who the gift is for: it is for the righteous and the faithful. The gift is for one with faith.

These views are particular to the books of Daniel and Isaiah, but can the Daniel and apocalyptic Isaiah be representative of Old Testament view? I believe yes. In the fact that Daniel and Isaiah are part of the Old Testament canon, and also that the Bible in its entirety are interconnected. The Bible itself verifies and any discrepancy in one part will be verified or questioned from another.

---

<sup>79</sup> R. Gregor. Smith, 117.



## CHAPTER 3

### A New Testament view

Although anticipated in the Old Testament, the concept of eternal life seems to be largely a New Testament revelation.<sup>80</sup> The New Testament gives our best notion of understanding eternal life as it presents Jesus' view on the topic. Jesus is central to eternal life which we defined earlier, and if we can ascertain his view, then all the better. Paul's view is also special for it reflects the view of the early church not long after the Lords' ascension. We also take a view from the Book of Revelation to see whether, with the Book of Daniel, we can draw a conclusion from their apocalyptic nature.

### (3.1.0) First Jesus Perspective

#### Matthew 19:16-30

#### Exegesis

<sup>16</sup>Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have **eternal life?**" <sup>17</sup>And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." <sup>18</sup>He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; <sup>19</sup>Honor your father and mother; also, you shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>20</sup>The young man said to him, "I have kept all these; what do I still lack?" <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." <sup>22</sup>When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions. <sup>23</sup>Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup>Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." <sup>25</sup>When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, "Then who can be saved?" <sup>26</sup>But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible." <sup>27</sup>Then Peter said in reply, "Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" <sup>28</sup>Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup>And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or

<sup>80</sup> J. F. Walvoord, "Eternal Life," in *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Ed. W. A. Elwell (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984), 368.



fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit **eternal life**.<sup>30</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

These verses usually come under the title, The Rich Young Man. Matthew describes him as a *neaniskos*, which according to Philo designates an age between twenty-one and twenty-eight.<sup>81</sup> Jesus' reply challenges the assumption that doing something good can earn one a place in the kingdom. There is also a hint that the young man is treating eternal life as possession he could claim.<sup>82</sup> The young man's question is inappropriate because the phrase 'the good' can only be applied to God. Matthew renders the text in this way to avoid the question that Jesus was not good.<sup>83</sup>

The answer Jesus gave the rich man was twofold. First, 'keep the commandments' or 'obey the commandments' (NIV). Now commandment is the Law. According to B. J. Moo, 'Law' is the standard translation of the Greek word *nomos*.<sup>84</sup> This word denotes the body of commandments given by God to the people of Israel through Moses. The Law could thus be called "the Law of the Lord" as well as "the Law of Moses."<sup>85</sup> Now the Law has to be obeyed.

W. A. Whitehouse notes that 'to obey' brings out the full meaning of the verb 'to hear.'<sup>86</sup> It indicates the right response to 'the voice' or 'the word' of God. Whitehouse notes that the word obey is closely related to the word believe and its associates (faith). Where the covenant response is explicitly referred to, the Old Testament usage gives priority to the term 'hear' or 'obey,' but the New Testament prefers the word 'believe.'

<sup>81</sup> Douglas. R. A. Hare, *Matthew*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 225.

<sup>82</sup> Blaine Charette, *The Theme of Recompense in Matthew's Gospel* (Sheffield: Journal for the study of the New Testament Supplementary Series 79, 1992), 110.

<sup>83</sup> David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub Co, 1990), 283.

<sup>84</sup> B. J. Moo, "Law," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel*, Eds. Joel B. Green, Scot Mcknight, I. Howard Marshall (Illinois: Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1992), 451.

<sup>85</sup> B. J. Moo, 451.

<sup>86</sup> W. A. Whitehouse, "Obey," in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, Ed. Alan Richardson. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1957), 160.



This is why special reference is given to 'obedience' in the New Testament to denote the work of Christ upon which salvation works. By 'believing' men come to participate in the accomplished obedience of Christ. The primary demand on everyone is to believe. In the Old Testament where it has not been established, the primary demand is precisely for obedience.<sup>87</sup>

The young man responded, 'which ones?' The commandments specified by verses 18-19 are taken from the second table of the Decalogue.<sup>88</sup> The response is for Jesus to indicate the type of commandments he has in view rather than to assign an order of importance to the commands.<sup>89</sup> 'I have kept all these, what do I still lack?' shows that the young man has kept not just the six commandments mentioned by Jesus but the totality they represent.<sup>90</sup>

The second response now sees Jesus elevate the discussion to the standards of discipleship in the kingdom where absolute commitment is required.<sup>91</sup> It is a challenge to be perfect. It is a call given to all who would enter the kingdom. For this young man it is his wealth that kept him from total uninhibited commitment, and it is just this fact that is pointed out by Jesus' command to 'go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor,'<sup>92</sup> 'then come follow me.' The action would result in reward for the young man.<sup>93</sup> The fact that the price was too high for the young man shows the dangers of wealth. The young man who desired to have eternal life forfeits the opportunity to have such a treasure in heaven because his real desire is to have treasure on earth.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> W. A. Whitehouse, 160.

<sup>88</sup> Douglas. R. A. Hare, 225.

<sup>89</sup> Donald. A. Hagner, Matthew 14-28, Word Biblical Commentary (Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1995), 557.

<sup>90</sup> David Hill, 558.

<sup>91</sup> David Hill, 558.

<sup>92</sup> David Hill, 558.

<sup>93</sup> Blaine Charette, 111.

<sup>94</sup> Blaine Charette, 111.



In the act of following Jesus, M. J. Wilkins notes that it would have meant a number of things.<sup>95</sup> It means attachment to Jesus, to follow his person, which would be a decisive act. It means continuing to count the cost. It means becoming like Jesus, which includes belonging to the same family of obedience.<sup>96</sup> Following is therefore connected to faith; to follow Jesus was to have faith in Jesus.

With the departure of the rich young man Jesus gives one of his most memorable hyperboles when he tells His disciples it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.<sup>97</sup> "We must remember that the young man represents a model citizen who is law abiding, charitable, and religious, which signifies to the disciples one blessed by God. If such is not accepted by God, who is?"<sup>98</sup>

Douglas R. A. Hare notes, "The Gospel of Matthew often seems to support the very natural assumption that we are saved by works. Faith is assumed, and judgment is on the basis of performance. At certain critical points, however, Matthew corrects this misinterpretation. By grace and grace alone, are we admitted to the kingdom."<sup>99</sup> Matthew shows that Jesus' response, while affirming the indispensability of God's grace to salvation, is a rebuke of the disciple's endorsement of the rich man, who being the ideal Israelite was not able to effect his own salvation.<sup>100</sup> Only God is able to do that.

Peter then raises the question of rewards to which the answer is given in three parts. In the first (V28) the apostles are promised a spectacular reward. The second part (V29), generalizes the concept of a reward for Jesus followers. And third, is the

<sup>95</sup> M. J. Wilkins, "Discipleship," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel*, Eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (Illinois: Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1992), 187.

<sup>96</sup> M. J. Wilkins, 188.

<sup>97</sup> Douglas R. A. Hare, 227.

<sup>98</sup> Douglas R. A. Hare, 228.

<sup>99</sup> Douglas R. A. Hare, 228.

<sup>100</sup> Blaine Charette, 112.



parable in Mt 20:1-16.<sup>101</sup> The parable is a corrective to the concept of rewards that 19:16-30 looks at. It subordinates rewards to grace.

D. A. Hagner notes that verse 29 is written in poetic language describing the charity of eschatological blessing, showing that the latter gain will exceed initial losses incurred.<sup>102</sup> He notes that the seven items stand symbolic for such losses. Houses and fields represent material possessions; the others personal relationships. The absolute commitment to the kingdom may involve sacrificing such possessions and relationships.<sup>103</sup> Eternal life is the future reward for such actions.

### **(3.1.1) The social and historical context of Mt 19:16-30**

Jesus was in the region of Judea beyond the Jordan and he was addressing the crowd, which comprised the village people, the Pharisees, the rich young man, children, and his disciples (19:1).

The dating of the Book of Matthew is widely contentious. David Hill suggests "a date between AD 80-90."<sup>104</sup> Donald. A. Hagner suggests, "a pre-70AD dating."<sup>105</sup> Bruce Metzger notes "he text depicts the life of Jesus from 4 BC to AD 30."<sup>106</sup>

### **(3.1.2) Analysis of Jesus First Perspective.**

#### **(a) Reward perspective.**

Eternal life is a reward from God for two reasons. The first reason has two parts to it; it is a reward for obeying the law and following Jesus. Now obeying the

<sup>101</sup> Douglas. R. A. Hare, 229-231.

<sup>102</sup> Donald. A. Hagner, 566.

<sup>103</sup> Donald. A. Hagner, 566.

<sup>104</sup> David Hill, 50.

<sup>105</sup> Donald. A. Hagner, 1xii-1xxv.

<sup>106</sup> Bruce. M. Metzger, The New Testament, its background, growth, and content (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 103-105.



law was to obey the commandments, which were given to Moses.<sup>107</sup> To obey was to hear and to respond to God in faith.<sup>108</sup> This is by doing works of faith and by believing in God. Obeying is related to faith as Whitehouse indicated. Eternal life is the reward for those with faith.

To obey was to have faith; living faith to live according to the law God gave to Moses. The rich young man failed the law by the tenth commandment of covetousness. Jesus did not mention the tenth commandment while he was listing out the second part of the Decalogue to the young man, but the Lord looks at the heart (1Sam 16:7). The young man perhaps in his self-righteousness lied to the Lord that he obeyed all the law, but he was covetous, therefore failing to observe the law.

Now the other half of the order was to follow Jesus. We may obey the law for all its worth but if we do not follow Jesus as well, it would be of no good to us. Following the law would be mechanical, because the fulfillment, the spiritual side of the law is achieved only in Jesus Christ. As Wilkins stated earlier, following is related to faith for it means becoming like Jesus, which means belonging to the same family of obedience.<sup>109</sup> To follow is to believe. To follow is to have faith. Again, eternal life is a reward for those who have faith.

Secondly, eternal life is a reward for those who have given up possessions for Jesus sake. This is Jesus' reply to the probe by the disciples on their commitment to the cause. Jesus highlighted the fact that the rich man had all the possessions in the world relinquished eternal life, whereas the disciples who relinquished all to follow Jesus will inherit eternal life. The seven numbers of things given up for Christ indicates a total commitment in the giving up of personal relations and belongings, to follow Christ.

---

<sup>107</sup> B. J. Moo, 451.

<sup>108</sup> W. A. Whitehouse, 160.

<sup>109</sup> M. J. Wilkins, 188.



(b) Gift Perspective.

In the text, Jesus gives a hint of eternal life being a gift by saying 'but for God, all things are possible.' The rich young man cannot achieve his goal. Only by God's grace can he achieve his goal. This makes it a gift for God gives his goal freely. The teachings of Jesus are such that eternal life is also a gift from God. This is seen in the next passage that we look at.

(3.1.3) Second Jesus Perspective.

**John 3:16 Exegesis**

<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have **eternal life**.

In chapter 3 of John, Jesus and Nicodemus are discussing new rebirth. Verse 1-21 is the discourse on regeneration.<sup>110</sup> The phrase 'for God so loved the world' indicates that God's love for man is all embracing as manifested when he gave 'his only begotten son'.<sup>111</sup> It is a distinctively Christian idea that God's love is wide enough to embrace all people and not be confined to any group or spiritual elite.<sup>112</sup> Leon Morris quotes Odebury Finly as saying, "the Son is God's gift to the World and moreover it is the gift".<sup>113</sup> The word 'love' is used here for the first time in the Gospel of John, with a universal application.<sup>114</sup>

'Gave his only Son' are words, which replace the descent of the Son of Man of V13 and conveys the idea of the Incarnation and Passion.<sup>115</sup> According to Leon Morris, John uses 'gave' in two senses; God gave the Son by sending him into the

<sup>110</sup> Merrill F. Unger, "John," in *Student Bible Commentary* (UK: Candle Books, 1998), 227.

<sup>111</sup> J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St John* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1969), 118.

<sup>112</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The International Commentary on the New Testament (Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Pub Co, 1995), 203.

<sup>113</sup> Leon Morris, 203.

<sup>114</sup> Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub Co, 1995), 159.

<sup>115</sup> Barnabas Lindars, 159.



world but also gave the Son on the cross.<sup>116</sup> So that 'everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life' is the purpose of God.<sup>117</sup> John here contrasts perishing and eternal life, which he does again in 10:28.<sup>118</sup>

### **(3.1.4) The social and historical context of Jn 3:16**

Jesus was in a conversation with a Pharisee: Nicodemus, who approached Jesus by night (3:1). The dating of John's gospel is also contentious which Bruce. M. Metzger puts towards the end of the first century.<sup>119</sup> Leon Morris sees a pre-AD70 date.<sup>120</sup>

### **(3.1.5) Analysis of Jesus Second Perspective**

#### **(a) Reward Perspective.**

God gave the Son so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life. Eternal life is the reward for those who believe in the Son. This is taking the verse literally as it stands. The belief must be twofold. Firstly that God send the Son. This thought is anathema to many people in the world and to the Jews. Secondly, that God send the Son to save the world.<sup>121</sup> Again an idea well disliked by many.

#### **(b) Gift Perspective.**

The Son is a gift from God. The Son was given voluntarily, that is, He was given out of God's love for the world.<sup>122</sup> Yet through the Son is given the gift of eternal life. This gift of eternal life is from the Father and is given to all who believe in the Son. It may seem that eternal life has a condition, which is belief or faith in the

<sup>116</sup> Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, 203.

<sup>117</sup> Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, 204.

<sup>118</sup> J. H. Bernard, 118.

<sup>119</sup> Bruce. M. Metzger, 98.

<sup>120</sup> Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, 30.

<sup>121</sup> Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, 203.

<sup>122</sup> Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, 203.



Son. This however makes the gift of eternal life conditional. Gifts do not have conditions or else they cease to be gifts. This begs the question whether eternal life really is a gift. It seems more like a reward for meeting the condition of belief in Christ, as stated above.

By definition, eternal life is a gift for it is given. The acceptance of this gift is the prerogative of the person, who decides whether to accept the gift or not. The acceptance or not, of the gift does in no way alter or change the value of the gift, it is there. It remains still a gift, even though not received or appreciated. When God created man, he gave man the freedom to choose. This is exercised here. This has been God's way as we have seen with God's dealings with the people of Israel. Israel chooses, if they obey, they are blessed, if they disobey, they are cursed: it is a matter of 'choice'. The same applies to the individual. Eternal life is God's gift. One chooses whether to accept it or not.<sup>123</sup>

There is an aspect of this question on whether eternal life is a gift or not that relates to the belief of universalism. John McClintock and James Strong note that "universalists believe that God restores all sinners at the end of days, as it would be contrary to the illimitable love of God."<sup>124</sup> The universalist argue that "God is against sin and not sinners but this is without biblical foundation for the bible states the sinner himself who dies impenitent will be eternally punished."<sup>125</sup>

McClintock and Strong note that there are passages that seem to support universalism (1Cor 15:22-28, Eph 1:9,10, Phil 2:9-11), but these must be viewed in connection to other texts that contradict the doctrine of universalism.<sup>126</sup> They argue

<sup>123</sup> The view presented in this paragraph was consolidated for me when Elder Rev Risati Ete, and Elder Rev Oka Fauolo were sought on their thoughts on eternal life being conditional: erroneous ideas here are mine.

<sup>124</sup> John McClintok and James Strong, "Universalism." In Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1981), Vol x: Su-Z, 656.

<sup>125</sup> John McClintok, James Strong, 656.

<sup>126</sup> John McClintok, James Strong, 657.



that when 'Christ is said to die for all men,' it must be viewed in relation to statements where Christ died for 'many,' laid down his life for 'the sheep,' or to 'gather together in one the children of God who are scattered abroad.' So to reconcile these passages is the ready answer that provision indeed is made for the salvation of all, but its actual effect will depend upon the voluntary embracing or rejecting of it on the part of men individually.<sup>127</sup> This offers the same conclusion reached as in the paragraph above.

### (3.2.0) First Pauline Perspective.

#### Romans 6:15-23 Exegesis

<sup>15</sup> What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? <sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, <sup>18</sup> and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup> I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. <sup>20</sup> When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. <sup>22</sup> But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is **eternal life**. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul's Letter to the Romans was to announce his intention to visit them and to enlist their prayers and interest in evangelizing the West.<sup>128</sup> Rom 6:15-23 is part of a section (Rom 6:1 – Rom 8:39) where Paul discusses the sanctification of the believer.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>127</sup> John McClintok, James Strong, 657.

<sup>128</sup> Merrill F. Unger, "Romans," in *Student Bible Commentary* (UK: Candle Books, 1998), 248.

<sup>129</sup> Merrill F. Unger, "Romans," 248.



In verse 15, "Should we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?" is oriented to the thought that if we are not under the law, we can sin.<sup>130</sup> J. D. G. Dunn notes that setting the law over against grace was a recipe for moral disaster; for the law was God's barrier against sin and replacing it with grace would open the floodgates of sin.<sup>131</sup> The answer is an emphatic 'no' that is, 'not being under the law' does not mean we can transgress it.<sup>132</sup> Paul argues that freedom to sin is incompatible with being enslaved to God.<sup>133</sup>

In verse 16, Paul asks his readers, 'Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey?' John R. W. Stott states that the concept of voluntary slavery is surprising for we tend to think of Roman slaves as being captives from war or bought in the market place, not as having offered themselves.<sup>134</sup> But voluntary slavery existed for food and housing. Paul's point was that those who offered themselves and had become slaves could not be free at the same time.<sup>135</sup>

The principle here is that we are bondslaves of whomever we obey. The apostle highlights who we render obedience to, that is to 'sin unto death', or 'obedience unto righteousness.'<sup>136</sup> Man cannot be independent for God is either his master, or sin is his master. For Paul there is no third alternative. The choice is to be ruled by God or to be ruled by sin.<sup>137</sup> The result of being enslaved to sin is death in

<sup>130</sup> John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1986), 230.

<sup>131</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), V38a, 352.

<sup>132</sup> John Murray, 231.

<sup>133</sup> John Murray, 231.

<sup>134</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans*, (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 183.

<sup>135</sup> John R. W. Stott, 183.

<sup>136</sup> John Murray, 231.

<sup>137</sup> James D. G. Dunn, 353.



all its aspects, culminating in eternal death of 'everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power' (2Thes 1:9).<sup>138</sup>

In verse 17 the phrase, 'But thanks be to God that you, having once being slaves of sin....' emphasizes the past, on the change that took place when the believers came to obey the Lord. The change had become so complete that Paul breaks out in thanksgiving.<sup>139</sup>

John Stott believes that the exchange of slaveries or conversion has four stages.<sup>140</sup> The first stage is that 'you used to be slaves to sin' (V17a). All human beings are slaves, either to sin or to God. The second stage is that, '(you) have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted' (V17). Dunn reckons that from the heart is the obedience that God is looking for, not obedience to law. Moreover it was to Christ they became obedient to (V17).<sup>141</sup>

The third stage is that the Romans were emancipated from its slavery by 'having been set free from sin' (V18). They were not perfect and were still capable of sinning, but they had been rescued from darkness into the kingdom of Christ. In consequence is the forth stage, that they 'have become slaves of righteousness.'<sup>142</sup>

In verse 19, 'I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations' is a kind of apology Paul begins with for the human terms he is using.<sup>143</sup> For slavery is not an appropriate metaphor of the Christian life but Paul uses it because of 'your natural limitations.' Their natural limitations must be a reference to their fallenness, either in their minds or in their characters.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>138</sup> John Murray, 231.

<sup>139</sup> John R. W. Stott, 184.

<sup>140</sup> John R. W. Stott, 184.

<sup>141</sup> James D. G. Dunn, 353.

<sup>142</sup> John R. W. Stott, 184.

<sup>143</sup> John R. W. Stott, 184.

<sup>144</sup> John R. W. Stott, 185.



Their conversion did not accomplish their complete salvation. It opened them to a new and stronger power source (grace, righteousness), it transferred them to a new master (God). Now they cannot escape the continuing responsibility to live accordingly.<sup>145</sup>

So Paul urges them that 'just as you once presented yourselves to sin, now present yourselves as slaves to righteousness for sanctification' (V19). The exhortation is in effect a repetition of V16. "Notice again that the antithesis to 'iniquity' is not obedience to the law, but once righteousness—righteousness not as determined by the law, but as determined by grace."<sup>146</sup>

James D. G. Dunn notes, "This righteousness achieves 'holiness,' something the protagonists of the law would think of as a state bound up with observance of the law. Paul is reminding his Gentile addressees that the goal is the same (purity, but inward as well as outward), but exercised in terms of the righteousness of grace, not in terms of the law."<sup>147</sup>

According to K. Bockmuehl, "sanctification is the act or process by, which people or things are cleansed and dedicated to God, ritually and morally."<sup>148</sup> He writes "in the Old Testament the term is primarily a technical term of cult ritual. The New Testament concept of holiness and satisfaction emphasizes their moral meaning. Sanctification is the work of God (Jn 10:36), of Christ (Jn 17:19), especially the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:16)."<sup>149</sup>

In verses 20-22, Paul is still comparing and contrasting slaveries.<sup>150</sup> Paul admits paradoxically that each is a kind of freedom, and each freedom a kind of

<sup>145</sup> James D. G. Dunn, 355.

<sup>146</sup> James D. G. Dunn, 355.

<sup>147</sup> James D. G. Dunn, 355.

<sup>148</sup> K. Bockmuehl, "Sanctification," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer (Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988), 613.

<sup>149</sup> K. Bockmuehl, 613.

<sup>150</sup> John R. W. Stott, 185.



slavery. Before, you were slaves of sin, and you were free in regard to righteousness. Now, you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God.

The two slaveries are evaluated by their 'fruit.' The negative benefits of slavery to sin is in the present guilt 'from the things you now are ashamed of' (V21) and in the end, 'death' (V21). The positive benefits of slavery to God are in the present sanctification and in the end eternal life. Thus there is a freedom that spells death, and a bondage which spells life.<sup>151</sup>

Dunn writes that the phrase, 'for the wages of sin is death,' (V23) claims that death affects the mortal body until death alone is the end.<sup>152</sup> 'Sin' rewards its servants with death, thus sin pays wages and one gets what one deserve.<sup>153</sup> 'But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.' God gives a free gift where you are given what you do not deserve.<sup>154</sup>

What the gospel offers ends in eternal life. The gospel offers a life which gives rise to 'sanctification.' This is, the progressive transformation from inside out, so that the final rising with Christ is but a continuation and completion of the whole process.<sup>155</sup> Paul speaks here of 'eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord,' where earlier he had spoken of 'living with Christ' (V8). But clearly the idea is the same. One's identification with Christ begins in conversion and continues through death to the resurrection beyond.<sup>156</sup>

In characterizing eternal life as a 'free gift,' Paul notes that God *owes* man nothing; if the talk is to be of something earned, then only death is in view.<sup>157</sup> Dunn notes that, the words 'free gift,' denotes that eternal life is not an object that leaves the

<sup>151</sup> John R. W. Stott, 186.

<sup>152</sup> James D. G. Dunn, 356.

<sup>153</sup> John R. W. Stott, 186.

<sup>154</sup> John R. W. Stott, 186.

<sup>155</sup> James D. G. Dunn, 356.

<sup>156</sup> James D. G. Dunn, 356.

<sup>157</sup> James D. G. Dunn, 357.



possession of the giver and becomes the possession of the believer. It is rather a relationship sustained by God's grace. As such it will still be in terms of Christ (life in Christ, life with Christ) and involve the believer's obedient response to his lordship.<sup>158</sup>

### **(3.2.1) Social and Historical Context of Romans 6**

The background is the life and lifework of Paul. Dunn writes that the letter to the Romans must have been written sometimes in the 50's A.D, probably in the middle 50s, and most probably late 55/early 56, or late 56/early 57.<sup>159</sup> Paul wrote to the beloved or saints in Rome (Rom 1:7), and he most probably wrote from Corinth.<sup>160</sup> Metzger<sup>161</sup> agrees that the letter was written from Corinth and puts a probable date of AD 57-58 on it.

### **(3.2.2) Analysis on First Pauline Perspective**

#### **(a) Reward Perspective**

Eternal life is seen as a reward for the person who has been sanctified (Rom 6:22). By tracing Paul's words, the person here has achieved holiness or sanctification, and this is not by observance of law. It comes about by being righteous, which is brought about by obedience. Sanctification comes through faithful obedience, as an act of grace. In the past, the person was under sin, to which death was the result. In the present, the person is living a sanctified life for God is now his or her master. As K. Bockmuehl noted earlier, sanctified life is a life dedicated to God.<sup>162</sup> Sanctification is the way of life now. In the future, the person will be rewarded with eternal life

<sup>158</sup> James D. G. Dunn, 357.

<sup>159</sup> James D. G. Dunn, xliii.

<sup>160</sup> James D. G. Dunn, xlv.

<sup>161</sup> B.M. Metzger, 209.

<sup>162</sup> K. Bockmuehl, 613.



However it is worth noting that it is by obedience to the teachings given to the believers that enabled them to achieve righteousness and then sanctification. The teaching has to be about Christ for only Christ can bring about this kind of change in a person. But to be changed by a teaching about someone they had only heard about is faith, as 'faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ' (Rom 10:17). This relates with the righteousness that Paul talks about, that is, it is through faith, not the law.

### (b) Gift Perspective

Now eternal life is a gift for two reasons. Firstly, eternal life is the gift of God given through Jesus Christ as verse 23 tells us. It is a gift from God. It is a gift we can take or leave. As Stott stated earlier, it is free gift because you are given what you do not deserve.<sup>163</sup> God gives us a free gift.

Secondly, it is a gift because sanctification is brought about by the work of God as K. Bockmuehl noted. Suppose God does not want to work? Sanctification then will not occur. It seems like we want God to give us sanctification else we remain unsanctified. The work of God is the gift of God that once a person receives must be maintained by continuing to obey Him, in the way that Dunn sees, as a relationship existing between believer and God.<sup>164</sup>

### (3.2.3) Second Pauline Perspective

#### Galatians 6: 7-10 Exegesis

<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. <sup>8</sup> If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap **eternal life** from the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.

<sup>10</sup> So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

<sup>163</sup> John R. W. Stott, 186.

<sup>164</sup> James. D. Dunn, 357.



According to Alfred Plummer, the Book of Galatians is a burning appeal to the Galatians who have apostatized due to Judaizing teachers.<sup>165</sup> Plummer notes that Paul makes it clear to the Galatians that the Mosaic Law, although divine in origin, is not binding upon Christians, because legal ordinances have been superseded by faith in Christ. Our passage is part of the practical application of Paul's letter.

In Gal 6:7, the phrase 'do not be deceived' is the reformatory formula that is a warning to the reader.<sup>166</sup> H. D. Betz observes that the reason for the warning is expressed in what appears to be a proverb: 'God is not mocked.'<sup>167</sup> Betz notes the term mocked is a rhetorical device for expressing utter contempt for someone, and it belongs together with "irony" as being basically cynical.

The idea of God expressed in the 'proverb' was common in antiquity, where he was the inescapable deity who relentlessly destroys those who rebel against him.<sup>168</sup> R. N. Longenecker adds that the use of the 'proverb' is not apparent until verse 8, where Paul gives his own explanation.<sup>169</sup> He summarise this briefly; one cannot expect to sow to the flesh and reap eternal life, and so mock the justice of God, for 'God is not mocked!'

Betz explains that the phrase, 'For you reap whatever you sow', is also proverbial and serves as a reason for the phrase 'do not be deceived.'<sup>170</sup> He says that Paul is thinking here of divine retribution at the Last Judgment where each is judged

<sup>165</sup> Alfred Plummer, "The New Testament-Summary of Books," in *The Holy Bible*, Authorized King James Version (England: William Collins and Sons, 1945), 48.

<sup>166</sup> Ronald. Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1953), 294.

<sup>167</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians*, A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 306.

<sup>168</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 306.

<sup>169</sup> Richard. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1990), 280.

<sup>170</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 307.



according to his deeds.<sup>171</sup> The person decides whether life becomes a blessing or judgment, for God is not a deity who reverses his laws or can be tricked.<sup>172</sup>

Betz notes that the whole of verse 8 is an eschatological 'rule', in terms of the flesh-spirit dualism, in a two-line antithetical, chiastic parallelism.<sup>173</sup> The metaphors are now taken as an allegory: the sower sows 'into his flesh' or 'into the spirit' as if they were fields, and he reaps 'from the flesh' or 'from the Spirit,' a reap which is either eternal 'corruption' or 'eternal life.'<sup>174</sup> The Spirit (Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Paraclete) is a referring expression for the power and presence of God in action, especially in the means of God's self-revelation.<sup>175</sup>

The association of the Spirit with eternal life is in line with Paul's references to living by the Spirit (Gal 5:16,18, 22-25).<sup>176</sup> Betz explains that Paul previously had associated flesh with circumcision (Gal 3: 3) but here he goes further. 'To sow to your own flesh' is done by placing one's hope for salvation upon circumcision and obedience to the Torah, which would result in missing salvation altogether.<sup>177</sup> Paul has in mind the libertine tendencies of the Galatian converts to quarrelsomeness (5:15,26), conceit (5:26), envy (5:26) and pride (6:3-4). Such things show a misuse of Christian freedom and will have disastrous results personally, for 'destruction' is their final end.<sup>178</sup>

Betz notes that Paul concludes the eschatological warning (Gal 6:7-9) with an appeal that has two parts.<sup>179</sup> 'So let us not grow weary in doing what is right' is the first part and it is an appeal. The phrase 'doing what is right' includes everything the

<sup>171</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 307.

<sup>172</sup> Richard. N. Longenecker, 280.

<sup>173</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 308.

<sup>174</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 308.

<sup>175</sup> M. M. B. Turner, "Holy Spirit," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel*, Eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (Illinois: Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1992), 341.

<sup>176</sup> Richard. N. Longenecker, 281.

<sup>177</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 308.

<sup>178</sup> Richard. N. Longenecker, 281.

<sup>179</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 309.



Christian is responsible for doing, including following the Spirit and the concept of 'fruit of the Spirit.'<sup>180</sup> Paul's fears for the Galatians was that they would be enticed back to their old lifestyle after the initial enthusiasm lived 'in step with the Spirit.'<sup>181</sup>

H. B. Betz observes that "in verse 9, the phrase 'for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up' is a promise that undergirds the appeal."<sup>182</sup> He maintains that the metaphor 'reap' is used to describe the eschatological reward. The condition for this eschatological reward is that 'we do not give up.' This sums up what Paul regards as is to maintain the life of freedom in Christ. Such freedom was made possible by the gift and 'fruit of the Spirit,' and is to be practiced by following the Spirit.<sup>183</sup>

Betz writes that verse 10 gives a final appeal as to what the apostle regards as the ethical task of the Christian community.<sup>184</sup> The phrase 'so then' is found in the NT only in Pauline writings, used to introduce a logical conclusion to the preceding statement.<sup>185</sup> Betz says the phrase 'whenever we have the opportunity,' means in Paul's view the time the Christian lives 'in the flesh.'<sup>186</sup>

Furthermore, he adds that the phrase, 'Let us work for the good of all' must not be misunderstood as another kind of 'doing the works of the Law.' This understanding should be impossible because the singular term 'the good' points to the one 'fruit of the Spirit.' This stands in opposition to the plurality of the 'works of the Law' and of 'the flesh.'

The oneness of the good means the Christian is expected to do good to all mankind. However the phrase, 'especially for those of the family of faith' seems like

---

<sup>180</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 309.

<sup>181</sup> Richard. N. Longenecker, 281.

<sup>182</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 309.

<sup>183</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 310.

<sup>184</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 310.

<sup>185</sup> Fung, 295.

<sup>186</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 310.



a qualification appended to the appeal. This final remark is a typical Pauline paradox.<sup>187</sup> The welfare of fellow believers is in mind, in line with Jesus' command to 'love one another.' For Paul, believers in Christ make up the 'household of faith,' which is the whole of Christianity, and the members of such a household.<sup>188</sup>

#### **(3.2.4) Social and Historical Context of Galatians 6**

Again the context is Paul's lifetime. Galatian to which Paul wrote is a contentious location among scholars. Acts 13: 14-14: 23 gives an account of the establishment of the Galatian churches. Longenecker argues for a date of AD 49-50.<sup>189</sup>

#### **(3.2.5) Analysis on Second Perspective Pauline**

##### **(a) Reward Perspective.**

Eternal life is a reward for sowing to the Spirit. Longenecker noted that sowing to the Spirit is to live by the Spirit.<sup>190</sup> Now sowing and reaping are eschatological metaphors,<sup>191</sup> where reaping denotes a reward. Sowing to the Spirit is taking the Spirit allegorically as fields thus one reaps from the Spirit in this way.<sup>192</sup> Sowing to the Spirit is living by the Spirit,<sup>193</sup> which involves bearing the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, patience, peace, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22, 23). Also, living by the Spirit means following the Spirit.<sup>194</sup> As in following Christ, following the Spirit has connotations of faith. The reward is for the faithful.

---

<sup>187</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 311.

<sup>188</sup> Longenecker, 283.

<sup>189</sup> Longenecker, lxxii.

<sup>190</sup> Longenecker, 281.

<sup>191</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 308.

<sup>192</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 308.

<sup>193</sup> Longenecker, 281.

<sup>194</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 308.



## (b) Gift Perspective.

The scholars do not mention eternal life as a gift in this passage yet eternal life is reaped from the Spirit (V8). I believe that we can rephrase this by saying the Spirit gives to the sower the fruit or result of what he sows. So the sower is receiving from the Spirit. The Spirit gives to the sower. In this sense eternal life is given, it is a gift.

## (3.3.0) Revelations 2:8-11

## Exegesis

<sup>8</sup>And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of the first and the last, who was dead and came to life: <sup>9</sup> I know your affliction and your poverty, even though you are rich. I know the slander on the part of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup> Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Beware, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the **crown of life**.

<sup>11</sup>Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Whoever conquers will not be harmed by the second death.

The Book of Revelation is an apocalypse (from Greek root meaning 'to uncover', 'to reveal,')<sup>195</sup> or a revelation, which Jesus gave, for his servants, through his angel to John.<sup>196</sup> Chapters 2:8-11 is one of seven letters in Chapters 1-3, which warns the church against deception and lawlessness.<sup>197</sup>

In verse eight, Leon Morris notes that "the message is from 'the First and the Last', an application of divine terms to Christ."<sup>198</sup> Morris says the phrase means very much the same as 'the Alpha and the Omega,' used of God (Isa 44: 6). The message is addressed to the 'angel' of the church in Smyrna. Morris adds that the word 'angel'

<sup>195</sup> D. S. Russel, "Apocalyptic Literature," in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Eds. Bruce. M. Metzger, Michael. D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 34.

<sup>196</sup> J. Sweet, "The Book of Revelation," in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Eds. Bruce. M. Metzger, Michael. D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 651.

<sup>197</sup> J. Sweet, 652.

<sup>198</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (England: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 63.



means messenger and can be used of human messengers.<sup>199</sup> He notes it may mean something like 'guardian angels' of the churches but there is no evidence that churches have heavenly beings associated with them in this way. He suggests that 'angel' may point to the essential 'spirit' of the churches and thus be identified with the church itself.<sup>200</sup>

"Smyrna was one of the greatest cities of the region" ...with "an excellent harbor at the head of a well-protected gulf."<sup>201</sup> It was one of the first cities to worship the Roman emperors.<sup>202</sup> The church at Smyrna was a persecuted church, and the letter from the sovereign One tells them that as he was victorious over death, so they too can face martyrdom knowing that faithfulness is rewarded with eternal life.<sup>203</sup>

Mounce explains that in verse nine, the church in Smyrna is reminded that its tribulation and poverty have not gone unnoticed by the Lord.<sup>204</sup> He adds that the linking of tribulation and poverty suggests a close connection between the two. In an antagonistic environment, it would be difficult for the Christian to make a living, and thus many were made poor. Furthermore, Christ is aware of slanderous accusations directed against the believers. Antagonism against the believers would lead Jews to become informers for the Roman overlords, and with strong Roman ties, this was a simple matter to incite.<sup>205</sup>

Mounce sees that the Jews who blasphemed were not real Jews in the sense that Paul says, "he is not a real Jew who is outward...but...he is a Jew who is inward (Rom 2:28-29)."<sup>206</sup> The hostile Jews of Smyrna were a synagogue of Satan (Hebrew

<sup>199</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 56.

<sup>200</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 57.

<sup>201</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 63.

<sup>202</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 63.

<sup>203</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Michigan: Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 92.

<sup>204</sup> Robert H. Mounce, 92.

<sup>205</sup> Robert H. Mounce, 92.

<sup>206</sup> Robert H. Mounce, 92.



of 'adversary and Greek for 'slanderer'). Regardless of descent, they had become by their bitter opposition a synagogue carrying out the activities of God's adversary.<sup>207</sup>

Mounce explains that in verse 10, the church is told not to fear things they are about to suffer.<sup>208</sup> Opinions vary in the view of the 'ten days' of tribulations. Some view it as a round number indicating a short period of time,<sup>209</sup> while some see it as the time of Daniel's testing (Dan 1:12 - 15) and may point to the completion of their suffering.<sup>210</sup>

Leon Morris notes that the church is exhorted to 'be faithful' even until death and the 'crown of life' will be theirs.<sup>211</sup> He adds that death, which people fear so much is set in sharp contrast to life, which alone matters. There is an article used with life though not with death. It is 'the' life, eternal life that is in mind.<sup>212</sup> 'Crown' means a wreath and is to be distinguished from royal crown. The Greek term *stephanos* was the trophy awarded to the victor. The believer who remains faithful even when it means death will receive the trophy of victory: his crown is life.<sup>213</sup>

In verse eleven, the call is to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The overcomer will not be harmed by the second death. Second death is being cast into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20; Rev 20:10); it seems to mean eternal punishment.<sup>214</sup>

### (3.3.1) Social and historical context of the Book of Revelations

Leon Morris dates the Book of Revelation in the time of Domitian, that is, c.AD 90-95.<sup>215</sup> Metzger agrees with this for he puts the writing also at the close of

<sup>207</sup> Robert H. Mounce, 92.

<sup>208</sup> Robert H. Mounce, 93.

<sup>209</sup> Robert H. Mounce, 94.

<sup>210</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 64.

<sup>211</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 64.

<sup>212</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 64.

<sup>213</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 65.

<sup>214</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 65.

<sup>215</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 41.



the reign of Emperor Domitian (AD 81-96).<sup>216</sup> It was then that Domitian began to demand that his subjects address him as 'Lord and God' and to worship his image. For refusing to commit to this act of idolatry, many Christians were put to death (Rev 6:9; 13:15), others were exiled, and all were threatened.<sup>217</sup>

### (3.3.2) Analysis of Rev 2:8-11

#### (a) Reward Perspective.

The reward of the faithful is the 'crown of life.' In the text, the 'crown of life' is eternal life that is promised to the overcomer or the victor.<sup>218</sup> Even if death is met, Christ will give eternal life to the faithful (V10). It is not only in death but those who are faithful to Christ, in afflictions and poverty; they will be given eternal life.<sup>219</sup> Many have been slandered but Christ encourages them to be faithful and He would reward them. It is the faithful who are rewarded.

#### (b) Gift Perspective.

Perhaps the point is too obvious that writers and commentators do not comment on eternal life being a gift. However I feel that by our definition of gift; that it is something given, it must mean that eternal life is a gift from Christ for Jesus Christ gives the 'crown of life' (V4).

### (3.4.0) Concluding Remarks on New Testament views

The view from the New Testament shows that eternal life is seen as both a reward and a gift. Eternal life is a reward from God for obeying and following Jesus. It is a reward for those who relinquish their possessions and follow Jesus. It is a reward for those who have faith in the Son. It is a reward for those who are

<sup>216</sup> B.M. Metzger, 268.

<sup>217</sup> B.M. Metzger, 268.

<sup>218</sup> Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 64.

<sup>219</sup> Robert H. Mounce, 92.



sanctified. It is a reward for those who sow to the Spirit. It is a reward for those faithful in afflictions and even unto death.

A number of things though must be noted. From the usual view that obedience of the law is the criteria Jesus gave to the rich young man for eternal life, I emphasize obedience and following Christ. Take for example a Jew, or a Hindu or one of another faith who perfectly obeys the law but does not follow Christ. What does this mean?

As a Christian, it means to me a contradiction in many ways. The law is supposed to point sinners towards Christ, with Christ being the fulfillment of it. The saying of Jesus, that He is the only way to the Father is contradicted (Jn 14:6). These point to the law as not wholly, or correctly the way to the Father. This is only because mankind cannot satisfy the law.

I feel Jesus amends this view in the situation with the rich young man. He does this by correcting the young man's failure by the law then asks him to come and follow. If the young man had obeyed Jesus and sold his properties for the poor, he would have been made righteous. To be perfect and gain the things of the kingdom, Jesus was to be followed.

It must be noted also that the condition to give possessions to the poor and follow Christ was peculiar to the rich young man. Possessions were hindering his obtaining eternal life and Jesus' call was to correct his failing. Possessions were the center of his life not God. In a way, it is idolatry-possessions were his gods. It may be ours too, but the lesson is that when the Lord calls us to remove these obstacles that hinder our way to eternal life, then this is what we must do.



It must be noted that I disagree with Betz when he says that the condition for this eschatological reward is 'we do not give up.'<sup>220</sup> I feel the condition for the reward is faith, not 'in giving up.' If one has faith, then 'giving up' means forfeiting eternal life. Without faith, the matter becomes arbitrary. Whether he gives up or not, eternal life is out of reach.

Also noted is that Revelation has a theme on the reward for the faithful. This is in line with Daniel and Isaiah, which are also termed apocalyptic. These books center on life during persecutions and sufferings and thus gives a motto to encourage and to abet the faithful. The motivation was twofold. Firstly, it is a reward for perseverance, and secondly a punishment for failing to live this life. We must keep in mind that revelation from God can come in any circumstance and humans are never so receptive than when in suffering.

Eternal life is also a gift. It is a gift for the one who has faith in the Son. It is a gift from the Son. It is a gift for the sanctified. Note that it is a gift for mankind, for on its own, mankind cannot achieve salvation or eternal life. This is why Leon Morris stresses God's giving. The rich young man who had everything could not afford it. It had to be given by God.

Note that the gift of eternal life is for the faithful. It is for one who has been sanctified. This is the person who is living a life of faith. It is a gift from the Spirit for one who sows to the Spirit. This is one who is living a Spirit filled life, a faithful life. As seen eternal life is a gift for one with faith.

Now these are some views from Jesus and Paul and from the Book of Revelations. Again are these views representative of New Testament view? The answer I feel is yes, unless otherwise contradictory with the teachings of Jesus, Paul and the New Testament.

---

<sup>220</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, 309.



## CHAPTER 4

### Views from Theologians

#### (4.1.0) Views of John Calvin

John Calvin (1509-1564) is a Reformation Theologian born in France.<sup>221</sup>

"Under the newly discovered teachings of the Bible, and the power of the Spirit," Calvin, "redefined Christian life and work" contextual to the "conditions of Europe in his day."<sup>222</sup> He believed "in a basic unity in the teaching of Scripture and sought to do justice to the whole content of the written word if God."<sup>223</sup>

"Calvin wrote commentaries on nearly all books of the Bible," and "his belief in the authority and integrity of the word made a critical approach to the text impossible."<sup>224</sup> "He believed that Christ was present to the people in the Old Testament," though "the revelation then given took different forms from that in the NT. His belief in the unity enabled him to interpret one text by the whole of Scripture."<sup>225</sup>

#### (a) Reward Perspective

Calvin sees eternal life as a reward for two reasons. Firstly, it is a reward of inheritance. According to J. R. Porter,

'Inheritance', in its secular sense is the transmission of property on the owner's death to those entitled to receive it." This was the right of those related by blood (Num 27:8-11; 1 Kings 21:3), generally the sons, among whom the firstborn receive a double portion. The promise of inheritance to Abraham is fulfilled in Christ, so that he is the promised inheritance (Gal 3:4). In the parable of the evil tenants, Christ is the son to whom inheritance rightly belongs, and after his death it passes to his followers.

For Paul, Christians are the real descendents of Abraham because they share in the inheritance with Christ, meaning the inheritance now

<sup>221</sup> R. S. Wallace, "John Calvin." In *New Dictionary of Theology*, Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer (Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988), 120.

<sup>222</sup> R. S. Wallace, 120.

<sup>223</sup> R. S. Wallace, 121.

<sup>224</sup> R. S. Wallace, 121.

<sup>225</sup> R. S. Wallace, 121.



belongs not just to Abraham's physical descendents but also to faithful non-Israelites.<sup>226</sup>

We see again that faith plays a part in the concept of inheritance. The faithful non-Israelite is the one who inherits eternal life.

Calvin states that even though it is called 'reward,' we should not suppose that "works are the cause of our salvation."<sup>227</sup> Calvin notes:

The kingdom of heaven is not servant's wages but son's inheritance (Eph 1:18), which only they who have been adopted as sons by the Lord shall enjoy (Gal 4:7), and for no other reason than this adoption." Even in the passages where the Holy Spirit promises everlasting glory as a reward for works, by terming it an 'inheritance' he is showing it comes to us from another source. Christ enumerates the works, which he repays with the reward of heaven (Mt 25:35-37), in calling the elect into possession of it, but at the same time he adds that they must possess it by right of inheritance (Mt 25:34). So we are warned not to credit everlasting blessedness to works but to our adoption by God.<sup>228</sup>

Secondly, eternal life is a recompense for toil, affliction and sorrow suffered by the faithful. Calvin notes a purpose to the promise of a reward albeit "scripture leaves us no reason to be exalted in God's sight."<sup>229</sup> Calvin warns us:

Let each consider how hard it would be to leave and renounce not only all our possessions but ourselves as well. For Christ disciplines his pupils under the cross that they may not set their hearts upon desire of, or reliance on, present benefits. As far as this world extends, they are confronted solely with despair yet lest they fail amidst tribulations, the Lord is with them. He warns them to hold their heads higher, and to direct their eyes farther so as to find in Him that blessedness which they do not see in the world.<sup>230</sup>

Calvin notes that "the Lord calls this blessedness 'prize,' 'reward,' 'recompense' (Mt 5:12; 6:1ff), signifying that it is a compensation for their miseries, tribulations, and slander...and admits for this reason, nothing prevents us from calling eternal life a 'recompense' because in it the Lord receives his own people from toil

<sup>226</sup> J. R. Porter, "Inheritance." In *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Eds. Bruce M. Metzger, Michael D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 302.

<sup>227</sup> John Calvin, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*, Vol xx, 822.

<sup>228</sup> John Calvin, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*, Vol xx, 822.

<sup>229</sup> John Calvin, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*, Vol xx, 824.

<sup>230</sup> John Calvin, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*, Vol xx, 825.



into repose, from affliction into prosperous and desirable state, from sorrow into joy, from poverty into affluence, from disgrace into glory."<sup>231</sup>

### (b) Gift perspective

Calvin believed eternal life is a gift for it stemmed from the mercy of God. He believed that the Fathers had the word and with it also, they had eternal life.<sup>232</sup> It is his thought that "Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham without any doubt they entered into God's immortal kingdom because theirs was a real participation in God, which cannot be without the blessing of eternal life."<sup>233</sup>

Calvin writes, it is this fellowship with God,

That brings eternal life for God states, 'I am...your God' (Exod 6:7), which clearly is a promise of spiritual life. So souls that are joined to God through righteousness remain united with him in death and this union brings everlasting salvation with it. This is established upon the free mercy of God, which was confirmed by Christ's intercession.<sup>234</sup>

Eternal life is as free as the mercy of God.

### (c) Personal View on Calvin

I envy Calvin's immense knowledge of the Bible. Calvin's writing's are influenced by the need he sees of setting a clear view of his faith or the Protestant faith that he aspired to in his time. Also in his 'Institutes' he is defending his belief and correcting heretic views that he sees in his time. I see in Calvin's work a loathing to call eternal life a reward. I feel this was to discourage people from the thought that they can earn eternal life. He was discouraging the thought that man in himself can work for eternal life. In that frame of mind, it means the death of Christ becomes meaningless, for one then depends on his own goodness and works to attain eternal life. I value his 'Institutes,' which is probably an invaluable reference for any intending theologian.

<sup>231</sup> John Calvin, The Institutes of Christian Religion, Vol xx, 825.

<sup>232</sup> John Calvin, The Institutes of Christian Religion, Vol xx, 434.

<sup>233</sup> John Calvin, The Institutes of Christian Religion, Vol xx, 434.

<sup>234</sup> John Calvin, The Institutes of Christian Religion, Vol xx, 434.



#### (4.2.0) Views of Emil Brunner (1889-1966)

Emil Brunner may be regarded as a virtual cofounder along with Barth of neo-orthodox theology.<sup>235</sup> According to C. A. Baxter, "neo-orthodoxy is a title applied to a 20<sup>th</sup> century development in theology, which is 'orthodox' on the emphasize key themes of the Reformed theology, but 'neo' or new as it takes account of contemporary cultural and theological developments."<sup>236</sup>

Brunner was born in Switzerland in 1889, studied at Zurich, Berlin, and Union Seminary in New York, and was appointed professor of theology at Zurich in 1924.<sup>237</sup> He wrote much, and was preferred more than Barth in English speaking theological circles. As a result, English-speaking people came to know neo-orthodoxy primarily through his eyes.<sup>238</sup>

Brunner<sup>239</sup> was first known in Anglo-American circles for his 'crisis theology.' He taught this was a turning point that occurs when God in Christ confronts humanity. A person becomes aware of two divergent paths, which may be followed-one towards God and life, and the other away from God towards death.

##### (a) Reward Perspective.

For Brunner, there are two reasons why he viewed eternal life as a reward. Firstly, it is a reward for being a child of God. Brunner says eternal life gives meaning to the insignificant seventy or eighty years of life.<sup>240</sup> He states that "we could not form a conception of eternal life for we are temporal and worldly."<sup>241</sup> However only Jesus Christ can reveal eternal life to us. From Jesus, we know that

<sup>235</sup> David. L. Smith, *A Handbook of Contemporary Theology* (United States of America: S. P. Publications Inc, 1992), 30.

<sup>236</sup> C. A. Baxter, "Neo-Orthodoxy" in *New Dictionary of Theology*, Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer (Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988), 456.

<sup>237</sup> David. L. Smith, 30.

<sup>238</sup> David. L. Smith, 30.

<sup>239</sup> David. L. Smith, 30.

<sup>240</sup> Emil Brunner, *Our Faith*, Translated by John. W. Rilling (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1949), 121.

<sup>241</sup> Emil Brunner, *Our Faith*, 121.



eternal life "is life with God, in God, from God."<sup>242</sup> So if there were no eternal life, this life, the present life would be meaningless. However Jesus tells us that our life does not end in nothing but eternal life.<sup>243</sup>

Brunner asks, "how does one win eternal life? 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' That question was answered, 'Keep the commandments' 'What must I do to be saved?' That question was answered, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!' Which is the correct? Both mean the same thing-become a child of God! A child of God is, as the scripture says, an heir of eternal life."<sup>244</sup> We are heirs of eternal life because the love of God is eternal.<sup>245</sup> His love is eternal and whom God loves he cares for eternally, so that nothing can separate us from his love-not even death.<sup>246</sup>

Yet all seems lost when death ends life on this earth and it could occur at any time. This is but a look without faith, because "faith says, the end is eternal life."<sup>247</sup> The future for which the Christian hopes, is not made by man but by God.<sup>248</sup> It is not in virtue of something, which is in the human soul, but in virtue of Christ, in virtue of the divine saving act that man gains eternal life.<sup>249</sup> Faith is the assurance that God has truly revealed his will to us in Jesus Christ, and this will is eternal life. "Eternal life begins by faith in Christ, and when this has begun death can have no more dominion over us."<sup>250</sup>

<sup>242</sup> Emil Brunner, Our Faith, 121.

<sup>243</sup> Emil Brunner, Our Faith, 121.

<sup>244</sup> Emil Brunner, Our Faith, 121.

<sup>245</sup> Emil Brunner, Faith, Hope and Love, Translated by Hugh Vernon White (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 33.

<sup>246</sup> Emil Brunner, Faith, Hope and Love, 74.

<sup>247</sup> Emil Brunner, Our Faith, 121.

<sup>248</sup> Emil Brunner, Faith, Hope and Love, 57.

<sup>249</sup> Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, Translated by Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth Press, 1957), 476.

<sup>250</sup> Emil Brunner, Our Faith, 121.



Secondly, eternal life is a reward for all are resurrected to judgment. Brunner writes that resurrection implies primarily resurrection to judgment.<sup>251</sup> "There is no avenue into the world of glory except through death, and no entrance into eternal life except through the narrow pass of judgment."<sup>252</sup> 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad' (2Cor 5:10).

Brunner notes that the apostle goes on to say, "God will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patience continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath" (Rom 2:6-8).<sup>253</sup> "The message of the judgment informs us that God is to be taken seriously, that God is not to be mocked. It tells us that God is not only the loving Father, but also the righteous Lord."<sup>254</sup>

#### (b) Gift Perspective.

In the writings of Emil Brunner concerning eternal life that have been accessed, his views tend towards the reward perspective. Brunner's vast amount of writing has not been looked at and it cannot be said that he does not hold a view of eternal life as a gift from God.

#### (c) Personal view on Brunner.

Brunner also has immense knowledge of the Bible. His writing's are much influenced by his reaction towards Schleiermacher's liberalism, which was the tone of religion of his time. "Liberalism was of two forms: firstly an undermining or denial of the traditional doctrines of the Christian faith, and secondly, it challenged the

<sup>251</sup> Emil Brunner, Eternal Hope, Translated by Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1954), 170.

<sup>252</sup> Emil Brunner, Eternal Hope, 170.

<sup>253</sup> Emil Brunner, Our Faith, 118.

<sup>254</sup> Emil Brunner, Our Faith, 119.



authenticity, historicity, and divine inspiration of the bible."<sup>255</sup> I very much appreciate his view on faith, as he clearly expounds to me the past, present, and future dimensions of the definition of faith in Heb 11:1.

#### (4.3.0) Views of Hans Kung

Hans Kung was born in Switzerland in 1928.<sup>256</sup> He studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, in 1960 assumed the Chair of fundamental theology at the Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Tübingen. He later served as professor of theology as well as director of the Institute for Ecumenical studies at the same institute.<sup>257</sup> With Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx, they are the leading Catholic theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Kung's three main areas of work are apologetics, ecumenism and reform in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>258</sup> He sees his most important task as presenting a relevant message for the modern world.<sup>259</sup>

##### (a) Reward Perspective.

In Hans Kung's writings that were looked at, his views on eternal life have a bias toward the gift perspective given below. Not having read all his writings, it cannot be said that he does not have a reward perspective.

##### (b) Gift Perspective.

According to Hans Kung eternal life is God's gift. "The new life is God's affair, or more precisely, God's gift, God's grace."<sup>260</sup> It is by "God himself that one is taken up, called, brought home into him, finally accepted and saved."<sup>261</sup> "All this

<sup>255</sup> H. Harris, "Liberalism, German." in *New Dictionary of Theology*, Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer (Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988), 386.

<sup>256</sup> David. L. Smith, *A Handbook of Contemporary Theology* (United States of America: S. P. Publications Inc, 1992), 94.

<sup>257</sup> David. L. Smith, 94.

<sup>258</sup> R. J. Bauckham, "Hans Kung," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer (Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988), 273.

<sup>259</sup> David. L. Smith, 94.

<sup>260</sup> Hans Kung, *Credo*, translator John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1992), 117.

<sup>261</sup> Hans Kung, *Does God Exist?* Translated by Edward Quinn (London: Collins, 1980), 679.



occurs in death or-better- out of death, as an event based on God's deeds and faithfulness."<sup>262</sup> This is the concealed, "unimaginable, new creative deed of him who calls into existence the things that are not."<sup>263</sup> For Hans Kung, this is the reason, rather than a supernatural "intervention," that eternal life is a gift.<sup>264</sup>

However, Kung writes that because in the new life, "the ultimate reality is of God himself," it is therefore "from the outset a matter of faith."<sup>265</sup> Since we are dealing with God and by definition this "means with the invisible, incomprehensible, uncontrollable, only one form of behavior is appropriate and required: believing trust, trusting faith, and trust tested and enlightened by reason. There is no way to eternal life that bypasses faith."<sup>266</sup> To believe in a consummation in eternal life by God means that God is all in all, that God gives to all a share in his eternal life in unrestricted endless fullness.<sup>267</sup>

"The promise for the future is not empty and false... for it is founded on something that has happened."<sup>268</sup> The Christ event "does not point to itself but it points beyond itself into the future... his resurrection which the church believes and preaches is the proclamation of the resurrection of all men and the renewing of the world. This is the new event, which is still to come but is being prepared by the new creative act of God."<sup>269</sup>

Kung writes that

Like the creation of the world at the beginning of time, the new creation at the end of time is not described in scripture, but is indicated in images. The promise given by the resurrection of Christ, of an absolute future, is a promise it already knows about in the present. In the end is the final overcoming of sin, suffering, and death, the revelation and

<sup>262</sup> Hans Kung, *Does God Exist?*, 680.

<sup>263</sup> Hans Kung, *Does God Exist?*, 680.

<sup>264</sup> Hans Kung, *Does God Exist?*, 680.

<sup>265</sup> Hans Kung, *Does God Exist?*, 680.

<sup>266</sup> Hans Kung, *Does God Exist?*, 680.

<sup>267</sup> Hans Kung, *Eternal Life?* Translated by Edward Quinn (London: SCM Press, 1991), 233.

<sup>268</sup> Hans Kung, *The Church*, translated by Ray and Rosaleen Ockenden (London: London Search Press, 1971), 488.

<sup>269</sup> Hans Kung, *The Church*, 488.



consummation of the reign of God in the kingdom of God, eternal life, true freedom and cosmic peace.<sup>270</sup>

(b) Personal view on Kung.

The writing of Hans Kung for me has been quite sublime and at times overwhelming. His command of language is very high and at times overbearing. Kung also has a loathing for calling eternal life a reward. He calls eternal life a gift from God, as only God can make it happen. His writings are influenced by his need to be relevant and holistic in the message given to the people. He however emphasizes faith as vital towards eternal life. But how is this faith verified? Does this not call for judgment?

**(4.4.0) Concluding Remarks on views of the Theologians**

The scholars looked at viewed eternal life as both a reward and a gift. On the reward side, Calvin viewed it as a reward of inheritance and also a recompense for suffering. At the same time, he noted eternal life as a gift out of the mercy of God, so a gift of God. Brunner hardly mentions eternal life as a gift. He mainly sees eternal life as a 'reward from judgment,' and for being the child of God. Kung is more towards the gift side. He sees eternal life as a gift from God's grace.

For the reward side, let us just extend our findings. Calvin views eternal life as a reward of inheritance. As indicated by Porter, it was Abraham with whom we gain heritance.<sup>271</sup> It was his faith in God that God blessed him for (Heb 11:8). It is by faith of the non-Israelite that will gain the same blessings for he or she then becomes a son of Abraham through this faith. Again it is faith that is rewarded. This is the same for the reward to recompense for toil and hardship. It is the life lived in faith that is

<sup>270</sup> Hans Kung, The Church, 489.

<sup>271</sup> J. R. Porter, 302.



being rewarded. To obey the commandments has been shown to connect with faith. The believer is hereby rewarded with eternal life.

On the gift side it is definitely the person with faith who receives eternal life. For it is only by "a trusting faith, believing trust...in the eternal and living God" does one attain eternal life.<sup>272</sup> It is only by active participation with God does one receive his blessing as did the patriarch's.<sup>273</sup> Again this is a faithful life for only in and with faith is God pleased by one who seeks Him (Heb 11:6). The scholar's see eternal life as a gift for the faithful as well.

---

<sup>272</sup> Hans Kung, Does God Exist?, 680.

<sup>273</sup> John Calvin, 434.



## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION

Eternal Life is a paradox. It is a reward and not a reward; it is a gift and not a gift. Eternal life brings out the essence of Christianity. In this study, I have looked at the question: Is eternal life a reward or a gift from God? The results indicate that eternal life is both a reward and a gift. I shall present three from each.

Firstly, eternal life is a reward for the righteous. In the books of Daniel, Isaiah and Revelation, the righteous were those who remained faithful to the teachings of the sect despite persecutions. The righteous were those in the right standing or relationship to God. The righteous were those who were faithful and as seen, they are rewarded with eternal life.

Secondly, eternal life is a reward for obeying the law and following Christ. To obey the law was to obey the commandments of God given to Moses. To obey was to hear and respond to God in faith. To obey was to believe. In the words of one modern scholar, "only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes."<sup>274</sup> To follow Christ was also to have faith in Him. To follow was to obey. Again the reward is for the one with faith.

Thirdly, eternal life is a reward of judgment at the end of time. Now Daniel talks of judgment where both the faithful and the apostates are judged. The faithful are rewarded with eternal life and the apostates given punishment. Brunner talks of judgment according to what one has done. It is faith in a person that is judged. The works of a person speaks for itself in manifesting this faith. Eternal life is the reward for life lived in faith.

---

<sup>274</sup> John de Gruchy, Ed. Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Witness to Jesus Christ (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 172.



On the gift side, firstly eternal life is a gift for God gives that life. The Old Testament verifies this. It is God's power that brings this about. It is His plan. God brings all these things to bear by giving man resurrection and joy and all the characteristics of the blessedness of eternal life. But it is to the righteous whom God gives this life. The one who has faith receive eternal life.

Secondly eternal life is a gift from the Son for the faithful. God gave his Son so the world may have eternal life but only those with faith will receive this gift for they are in the right relationship with God. The person without faith does not acquire the blessing that the person with faith receives. God loves them both but only the faithful realizes this because of his or her faith, and grows in this realization. It is the one with faith that receives the gift.

Thirdly, eternal life is a gift for the Spirit gives it. This is the gift given to one who has sown to the Spirit. This is given to the person who lives by the Spirit. This is the person who follows the Spirit. This person is Spirit filled and bears the fruit of the Spirit. All these are indications of the faithful person. The gift the Spirit gives is to the person with faith.

The findings of this study show that eternal life is both a reward and a gift. I have shown that on both the reward and gift perspectives, it is the person who has faith that receives eternal life. Eternal life is the reward and the gift for one with faith. This means that for one who is without faith and an unbeliever, eternal life is out of their reach.

This study shows that to be a recipient of eternal life, faith is crucial. It is seen that in the right relationship to God, one attains eternal life. This relationship is faith. We have shown in this study that the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the scholars attest to this. Our Lord and savior affirm this.



There were two queries with which I began my research with, and I believe they have both been answered in this study. Firstly, we cannot earn eternal life for it is gifted to us. We must realize that like the rich young man, our works are never enough to earn eternal life, for as human our works are tainted with sin. However, God is not mocked, and we reap what we sow. If we work the works of faith, then the Lord in his glory will reward us as only He can. Our duty is to be faithful. To the second issue, eternal life is offered to all. It is our choice whether to accept it or not. However if we decide to accept the offer we must have faith. It is only by faith that we can please Him.

To the Church, which is made up of believers, eternal life is not so black and white. But, this study shows that to be a recipient of eternal life one must live a life of faith. The study shows that faith has various meanings. It means: to be righteous, to obey and follow Christ, to believe in God and in the Son, to be sanctified, to live by the Spirit, an inheritance. If one lives life now according to this faith, then judgment will have no effect on that person. That person receives eternal life as a reward or as a gift for a life of faith.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albertz Rainer. A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period: From the exile to the Maccabees. London: SCM Press, 1994. Vol ii.
- Anderson, Bernhard W. "Covenant." In The Oxford Companion to the Bible. Eds. Bruce. M. Metzger, Michael. D. Coogan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Understanding the Old Testament. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1966.
- Baldwin, J. G. Daniel. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity, 1978.
- Bauckham, R. J. "Hans Kung." In New Dictionary of Theology. Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer. Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988.
- Baxter, C. A. "Neo-Orthodoxy." In New Dictionary of Theology, Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer. Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988.
- Bernard, J. H. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St John. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1969.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. Galatians. A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.
- Bockmuehl, K. "Sanctification." In New Dictionary of Theology. Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer. Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988.
- Bright John. A History of Israel. London: SCM Press, 1980.
- Brunner Emil. Eternal Hope. Translated by Harold Knight. London: Lutterworth Press, 1954.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Faith, Hope and Love. Translated by Hugh Vernon White. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Man in Revolt. Translated by Olive Wyon. London: Lutterworth Press, 1957.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Our Faith. Translated by John. W. Rilling. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1949.
- Calvin John. The Institutes of Christian Religion. Ed. John. T. McNeill, translated Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960. Vol xx.



- Caragounis, C. C. "Kingdom of God." In Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel. Eds. Joel B. Green, Scot Mcknight, I. Howard Marshall. Illinois: Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1992.
- Charette Blaine. The Theme of Recompense in Matthew's Gospel. Sheffield: Journal for the study of the New Testament Supplementary Series 79, 1992.
- Clements, R. E. Isaiah 1-39. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994.
- Davies, P. E. "Reward." In The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.
- Dunn, James D. G. Romans 1-8. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word Books, 1988. V38a.
- Fuller, R. H. "Resurrection." In The Oxford Companion to the Bible. Eds. Bruce. M. Metzger, Michael. D. Coogan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Fung, Ronald. Y. K. The Epistle to the Galatians. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1953.
- Goldinghay, J. E. Daniel. Word Biblical Commentary. Texas: Word Books, 1989.
- Gruchy, John de, Ed. Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Witness to Jesus Christ. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.
- Hagner, Donald. A. Matthew 14-28. Word Biblical Commentary. Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1995.
- Hare, Douglas. R. A. Matthew. Interpretation. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993.
- Harris, H. "Liberalism, German." In New Dictionary of Theology, Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer. Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988.
- Hartman, Louis. F. and Alexander. A. Di. Lella. The Book of Daniel. The Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1978.
- Hill David. The Gospel of Matthew. The New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1990.
- Hoehner, H. W. "Hasideans." In The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. Gen. Ed. G. W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1982.
- Hubbard, David. A. "Paul Van Imschoot Theology of the Old Testament." In Contemporary Old Testament Theologians. Ed. Robert. B. Laurin. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1970.



Jenni Ernst and Claus Westermann. Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament. USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997. Vol ii.

Johnson, D. H. "Life." In Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel. Eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall. Illinois: Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Kaiser Otto. Isaiah 13-39. Old Testament Library. London: SCM Press, 1980.

Kung Hans. Credo. Translator John Bowden. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. Does God Exist? Translated by Edward Quinn. London: Collins, 1980.

\_\_\_\_\_. Eternal Life? Translated by Edward Quinn. London: SCM Press, 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Church. Translated by Ray and Rosaleen Ockenden. London: London Search Press, 1971.

Lindars, Barnabas. The Gospel of John, New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub Co, 1995.

Longenecker, Richard. N. Galatians. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1990.

McClintok John and James Strong. "Universalism." in Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature. Michigan: Baker Book House, 1981. Vol x: Su-Z.

Metzger, Bruce. M. The New Testament, its background, growth, and content. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983.

Millard, A. R. "Daniel." In The Pickering Bible Commentary for Today. Gen. Ed. G. C. D. Howley. London: Pickering and Inglis, 1984.

Millard, W. R. "Isaiah 24-27." In The Anchor Bible Dictionary: Chief Ed David Noel Freedman. New York: DoubleDay, 1992. Vol 3: H-J.

Montgomery, J. A. The Book of Daniel. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989.

Moo, B. J. "Law." In Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel. Eds. Joel B. Green, Scot Mcknight, I. Howard Marshall. Illinois: Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Morris Leon. Revelation. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. England: InterVarsity Press, 1987.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Gospel According to John, The International Commentary on the New Testament. Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Pub Co, 1995.



Mounce, Robert H. The Book of Revelation. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Michigan: Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977.

Murray, John. The Epistle to the Romans. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1986.

Piper, O. A. "Life." In The Interpreters Bible Dictionary. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.

Plummer Alfred. "The New Testament-Summary of Books." In The Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version. England: William Collins and Sons, 1945.

Porteous, N. W. "The Theology of the Old Testament." In Peakes Commentary on the Bible. Eds. Matthew Black and H. H. Rowley. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1962.

Porter, J. R. "Inheritance." In The Oxford Companion to the Bible. Eds. Bruce. M. Metzger, Michael. D. Coogan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Richards, Lawrence. O. Expository Dictionary of Bible Words. Michigan: Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.

Rowley, H. H. The Faith of Israel. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956.

Russel, D. S. "Apocalyptic Literature." In The Oxford Companion to the Bible. Eds. Bruce. M. Metzger, Michael. D. Coogan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Smith, David. L. A Handbook of Contemporary Theology. United States of America: S. P. Publications Inc, 1992.

Smith, R. Gregor. "Joy." In A Theological Word Book of the Bible. Ed. Alan Richardson. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1957.

Snaith, N. H. "Righteous." In A Theological Word Book of the Bible. Ed. Alan Richardson. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1957.

Stott, John R. W. The Message of Romans. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994.

Sweet, J. "The Book of Revelation." In The Oxford Companion to the Bible. Eds. Bruce. M. Metzger, Michael. D. Coogan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Towner, W. S. Daniel. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984.

Travis, S. H. "Judgment of God." In New Dictionary of Theology. Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer. Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988.



Turner, M. M. B. "Holy Spirit." In Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel. Eds. Joel B. Green, Scot Mcknight, I. Howard Marshall. Illinois: Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Unger, Merrill. F. Ungers Commentary on the Old Testament. Canada: AMG Publisher, 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Isaiah." In Student Bible Commentary. UK: Candle Books, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. "John." In Student Bible Commentary. UK: Candle Books, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Romans." In Student Bible Commentary. UK: Candle Books, 1998.

Wallace, R. S. "John Calvin." In New Dictionary of Theology. Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer. Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988.

Waltke, B. K. "Antiochus Epiphanes." In The International Bible Study Encyclopedia. Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1979. Vol: a-d.

Walvoord, J. F. "Eternal Life." In The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology. Ed. W. A. Elwell. Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984.

Whitehouse, W. A. "Obey." In A Theological Word Book of the Bible. Ed. Alan Richardson. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1957.

Wilkins, M. J. "Discipleship." In Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel. Eds. Joel B. Green, Scot Mcknight, I. Howard Marshall. Illinois: Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Wright, N. T. "Righteousness." In New Dictionary of Theology. Eds. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright, J. I. Packer. Illinois: Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1988.

Young, E. J. Daniel. Geneva Series of Commentaries. Edinburgh: The Banner Trust, 1997.

"Reward." The Concise Oxford Dictionary. Oxford University Press. 1964.

"Gift." The Concise Oxford Dictionary. Oxford University Press. 1964.