

2 Tim 1-10 Immortality 21-12-22a

Hi there, Grace and Truth, Bible Church, Hardcore Christmas Week aficionados. This is the 22nd of December, 2021, and we're doing another Christmas special, as it were. This is going to be centered on a particular verse of scripture that is at least indirectly connected to the Christmas season, and that is 2 Timothy 1.10. So when you get a chance, you can be turning to that.

This is a letter of Paul to Timothy, 2 Timothy 1.10 is where we're going. But we'll begin by asking God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, it is such a blessing to not only visit with family and friends and loved ones and to spend this time in celebration of the incarnation of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Savior and our fullest example and fullest communication of your character, your grace, and your love. We thank you for this time of celebration. We thank you for the opportunity to look afresh at some of the truths that are brought to our minds and our hearts at this time of year and in the expression of that sacrificial love where the Lord Jesus emptied himself and took on the form of a servant and came in our likeness.

We are grateful and we ask your blessing on us as we look at the particular aspect of that coming and that work that the Lord Jesus accomplished for us on this evening. And we pray that you'll be with each one of us and impress these truths on our hearts through the ministry of your Holy Spirit. And we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. So in 2 Timothy 1.10, Paul has as his subject to Timothy, the Lord Jesus himself. And in chapter one, verse 10, he says, beginning in verse eight, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.

And in a, this is a little bit of a misuse of this scripture on my part, but there in recent times has been an attack on the apostle Paul from within the church that he somehow took legitimate Christianity away from the Lord Jesus and redefined it in his own image. And I appreciate this verse and I take a sort of sideways personal exhortation from it that we should not be ashamed of the apostle Paul and the wonderful truths that God communicates to us through him. And I would submit that any brand flavor or thought process of Christianity that diminishes the witness of the apostle Paul does what Peter says.

They twist this as they do the other scriptures to their own harm. You cannot discount the gift that God gives us through the apostle Paul. And this is part of it.

So do not be ashamed of me, his prisoner in these sufferings for the gospel, according to the power of God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. God made the plan, accomplished the design, set out the parameters, the timing, the individuals who would be born and who would have the opportunity to participate before the

world was created, before time on this earth began. And the privilege and the opportunity we have in this age of the Holy Spirit is so fraught with potential and with the ability to produce fruit, to learn and to grow.

We've got just unlimited resources and it is a gift. He has called us with a holy calling, not because we were doing such a good job by ourselves, but his purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

And with that son comes these tremendous potentials. And this purpose and grace that was given before time began in Christ Jesus has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ. That appearing begins with the nativity.

It begins with the birth. It begins with the shepherds and the wise men. It begins with Simeon and Anna.

It begins with the appearance at the temple at the age of 12. And certainly with the earthly ministry for three and a half years on this earth, the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. This is the heart of our observation this evening.

The appearing of Jesus Christ reveals the grace and purpose of God in doing these specific things, which is abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light, life and immortality to light. This is the issue. And I'm just going to state the premise that we're going to be looking at because there are legitimate criticisms of Christianity as practiced in sweeping areas of the Christian world.

There are some things that are right that we do and they're criticized, and this is sort of suffering for the name of Christ. If they hated me, they hate you. To stand up for the righteousness and justice of God, to stand up for defining and calling out sin and evil and shallow human good that is righteousness that partakes of the quality of filthy rags.

This is our job. We are to shine as lights in the world, but men love darkness rather than light when their deeds are evil. And the more we stand up for the light, there is going to be some criticism for that witness and for that testimony for representing the Lord Jesus Christ as his body on this earth.

Jesus was not able to love everybody over to his viewpoint. He didn't love the Pharisees into acceptance. He didn't love the Sadducees into believing in resurrection.

He didn't love the scribes and chief priests and elders in the Sanhedrin into accepting and acknowledging him. And as we've seen in recent weeks, there is a point of view, there's a narrative that is being pushed that says that we should use the Jesus hermeneutic to interpret everything in terms of God's plan and purpose, in terms of bringing love into the world, practicing enemy love, doing away with anything that speaks of the difference between light and darkness, between good and evil, and that we should simply just love, love, love, you know,

get a John Lennon record and play it backwards and all the time. If God's purpose in Christ was to replace the law of Moses with the law of love, what do you do with passages such as this? The only way you can get around this passage is to attack Paul.

And he has just been pleading with us, don't do that. Uh, do not be ashamed of the apostle Paul and his witness. And certainly don't shoot yourself in the foot by ignoring the doctrinal truth that he communicates.

And what is he saying here? God's purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus in the eternal past has now been revealed in Christ's appearing the appearing of our savior, Jesus Christ. He has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel to which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. And that's why I'm suffering.

I am representing the purpose of God in abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. The gospel says life and immortality are conditional. And there are people who don't like that message, but what we're going to focus on tonight, because I've told you, I've largely finished my, uh, expose and warning about progressive Christianity.

But I was intrigued because if you recall, one of the signature issues that causes people to question their faith, leave the church and start deconstructing and going progressive, there are several things. They don't like the wrath of God being vented on sin on the cross. They say, well, this is cosmic child abuse.

It's volcano, God demanding a virgin and bloodshed before he can be happy. And, and so on. That's one issue.

And I think we've addressed that pretty well last time, but this is the Christmas positive message. What did God bring to light through the gospel? Not one thing, but two life and immortality. This, if you are thinking about it long enough raises an issue, which has been raised by critics of biblical belief, critics of traditional Christian doctrine related to hell, eternal conscious torment in the lake of fire.

And oddly enough, uh, the Christmas season, Elizabeth was quick to inform me that, you know, hell fire and, and eternal conscious torment is not a great Christmas subject, but it's alternative is, and the misunderstanding that has been a stumbling block for so many people is resolved by passages such as this. And it's what Jesus brought with his appearing. He brought life and immortality to light.

And what I'm getting at here is the premise that has existed ever since the days of Jesus and the days of Paul in Greek thought and in the Roman empire, beginning with the Greek philosophers, Plato, Socrates, and, and, uh, some of the other notable lights, the Greeks, and actually even the Persians before them developed a notion all by themselves, extra biblically of the immortality of the soul. Your soul is immortal and it exists in the body in this life. And they had this, uh, view that, that the body is one thing and the soul is another.

And when the body perishes, the soul goes on. And so the idea of, uh, immortality, virtually everyone in the ancient Greek world was brought up to believe that the soul is immortal. And that was the prevalent view in Jesus day in Paul's day and, and on through the next 2000 years there, only the Epicureans, uh, denied that the soul was immortal.

They were kind of the outliers in Greek thought, but Plato really is the guy in the forefront of this. So, um, there is a, uh, school of thought now that this seeped into unconsciously into Bible interpretation and, uh, hermeneutical approaches have come to scripture with this notion already assumed. And so scripture gets interpreted in the light of, well, your immortal soul is either going to spend eternity in heaven or in hell.

And when you die, you need to go to a place of, um, uh, intermediate waiting. You go to a waiting room. Some people believe the waiting room is already excessively heated, uh, for those who are heading for the lake of fire.

Others believe that there's a, an Abraham's bosom paradise effect for those who are ultimately going to end up in heaven. Uh, Catholics think a purgatory, but the, all of this, the notion of purgatory, the notion of intermediate state disembodied souls and all the rest of it is conditioned by this, this assumption that the human soul is immortal. And people will argue back and forth.

And, uh, people who take the traditional view of eternal conscious torment will say, um, well, uh, just because the view of immortality, the soul originated with Greek philosophers doesn't necessarily mean that it's wrong. That is the genetic fallacy. I've been talking about different kinds of fallacies.

I really encourage you if you have a few minutes and you want to go on a lark, study some of the, the most popular types of fallacy, the fallacy of composition, the fallacy of division, the genetic fallacy, you know, genetics is like, where did it come from? Did I inherit it? Kind of a thing. And the genetic fallacy is that the origin of a thing, uh, can taint it. So if the idea came from the Greeks, it must automatically be wrong.

Not necessarily. Uh, we, we saw another, uh, example of the genetic fallacy when the deconstructionist, uh, progressives say that dispensationalism, uh, didn't come until John Nelson Darby in the 1830s and that penal substitutionary atonement was unknown until John Calvin originated it in 1540 or so. Well, that again is the genetic fallacy.

Just because John Calvin wrote about it or distilled it, just because Darby, uh, might've been the first and then Schofield and others after him to sort of, uh, solidify the understanding because it originated late or because it originated with a particular party doesn't make it intrinsically wrong. You can't say just because it came from this source, it's wrong any more than you can declare that somebody who is of illegitimate birth is automatically tainted and disqualified from anything. They must be bad seed because their parents weren't married.

Those are two separate issues. So even if immortality of the soul originated with the Persians and the Greeks and so on, that doesn't mean that it's wrong. And this is a, is a argument against it that is often used.

And I don't think it has traction. What is our criteria for what is true? It's the word of God. However, being aware that this is an idea that may have been assumed when approaching scripture, we want to be doubly careful to see, is it really in scripture or am I, I said, eating it into passages.

So, uh, and I will say that, although I felt like I was at the end of a set of tracks into the unbroken snow when I first suggested that, uh, the lake of fire may not be unending conscious torment. Um, since that time, I have found that there are many very notable theologians who believe that as well. And, uh, uh, depending on how much reading you've done, uh, John R. Stott, who is a very erudite, uh, Bible scholar.

Um, uh, Greg Boyd, I'm reading a book of his right now. Um, Dr. David Reagan, um, uh, Clark Pinnock has, has done a lot of, of, uh, good commentary work and article journal published articles and so on have all, uh, revised their view to what is now called, uh, conditional immortality. Immortality is not automatic and it's just where do you spend it? Only some people will partake of immortality.

That's why our passage is so important. And if you're not sensitive to this subject, we just read right through it and we say, Oh, well, Jesus brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Well, wait a minute.

Life is one thing. Immortality is a different thing. If Jesus brought immortality to light in his appearing, that means that immortality was not already in existence until Jesus accomplished it in the same way that our salvation isn't real and, and possessible until the Lord Jesus comes and accomplishes it.

There cannot be a forgiveness and substitutionary atonement and redemption and reconciliation and propitiation until the Lord Jesus accomplishes it. And so the Lord Jesus, uh, brought it to light. So this was an intriguing thing.

I was, I was working on, you know, the progressive study and, and I saw this as a side note and the more I got to looking at it, the more interesting it became and I wanted to share it with you. So, um, turn back to Romans chapter two. This is another oft visited passage that where this concept, uh, is addressed by Paul.

And remember in verse four, do you despise the riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance, but in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God who will render to each one according to his deeds, which is a quotation from, uh, Psalm 62 eternal life to those

who by patient continuance in doing good, seek for glory, honor, and immortality seeking for immortality, not assuming I'm immortal. And I just wonder where I will spend it, but my motivation to patiently continue doing good. The reason I'm doing that is I'm looking for God's glory.

I'm looking for God's honor in both directions and immortality, but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness. There's indignation and wrath, tribulation, and anguish on every soul of man who does evil, whether they're Jew or Greek and so on. Paul uses the word seek with respect to immortality.

It is something to be sought something to be acquired. You seek what you do not currently have. Um, glory and honor are not intrinsic to us as fallen human beings.

And the parallel idea would be neither is immortality. We seek glory. We do not have, we seek honor.

We seek to enter into God's glory and God's honor and God's immortality. Um, you can flip back a few more pages to John chapter six. Um, Jesus says in John 6 51, uh, the bread that comes down from heaven, one may eat of it and not die.

I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever, conditional immortality. If you partake of the bread, you will live forever.

And this is life in the sense of its duration. Jesus has not been describing eternal life in the sense of quality here. He says, partake of the bread.

You will live forever in the same way that Adam and Eve before the fall could eat of the tree of life and live forever. What does God say when he decides to send them forth out of the garden? Now man has become like one out from us knowing good and evil. And lest he reach out his hand and partake of the tree and live forever.

And he sends him out. So you begin to, to be sensitive to what scripture says about whether or not we last into the unending eternal future. Uh, why would Jesus make this offer to live forever? If everyone lives forever, and it's just a matter of what kind of quality of existence do you have? Um, John 3, 16 tells us that God sent his son so that we should not perish.

And the word perish is really interesting. We've looked at it before. It is, um, Apolumi and Apolia, the verb and the noun.

And these have the idea of destruction of being destroyed. So, um, when, once you begin looking closely, um, there is a, a, a notion that, uh, there is, uh, the possibility of existing no after death. There is of course, the judgment and revelation pictures, people being raised, being judged, but then being sent to the lake of fire where they are destroyed.

This is the second death. So, uh, idea that we're immortal. If you want to go to scripture and try

to find it, the general argument is, well, we're made in the image of God.

God is immortal. So we must be immortal. But the image idea kind of fails when you look at Genesis chapter five, verse three, where after the Cain and Abel episode, Adam lives 130 years, begot a son in his own likeness after his image and named him Seth.

And the image and likeness, uh, is usually one aspect or one quality. Uh, it, it, we don't partake of God's omniscience. We don't partake of God's omnipresence.

Why would we partake of his immortality? Just because we are made in his image. And by the way, neither do we partake of his love and this we're, we're made in the image of God. And therefore we must love as God loves.

Well, look at the other attributes in the essence box, sovereignty, righteousness, justice, eternal life, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability, absolute truth. Um, how many of those do we retain in the image of God? The image is more, uh, freedom of choice, um, self-determination, uh, and so on. But, um, the essence of this is what does it mean by destruction? I mentioned Apol, Apolumi and Apolia, destruction.

And the common understanding of what these words mean is that you are no more. It's like the parrot sketch in Monty Python. Uh, all of the synonyms and adjectives for no longer alive apply.

And you find this as early as Matthew chapter two, verse 13, uh, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, arise, take the young child and his mother, flee to Egypt and stay there until I bring you word for Herod will seek the young child to Apolumi him, to destroy him, to make him no more. Uh, it doesn't just transfer him to another place. It doesn't put him into a state of suspended animation.

If Herod destroys the young child, the young child is dead and gone. Uh, later on when the Pharisees begin to really, uh, oppose the Lord Jesus, Matthew chapter 12, verse, uh, 14, the Pharisees went out and plotted against him how they might destroy him. This is annihilate him.

He is no longer present or a factor. Uh, of course, Matthew 10, 28, uh, Jesus said, do not be afraid of those who killed the body, but cannot kill the soul. And that's the word kill.

Um, rather fear him who is able to Apolumi destroy both soul and body in hell, destroy the soul. God is able to destroy the soul to make it as dead as any formerly living thing. I never drive out of here and go to an appointment without seeing roadkill.

And it always puts me in a philosophical frame of mind. You know, you're here, you see a few sunrises and sunsets, and then you're gone sooner or later. Just did a funeral a couple of weeks ago.

And sooner or later, uh, barring the rapture, we're all going to be the guest of honor at one of these events. And we perish. And when someone perishes, they are absolutely, totally not here.

And it is one thing to kill the body, but physical death doesn't kill the soul. What kills the soul? What does the soul, what physical death does to the body, the second death God is able according to Jesus himself to destroy the soul in hell. Uh, you can also look at a James four 12 in that regard.

There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy. So why are you judging one another? God is the judge. And on the basis of his judgment, there will either be salvation or destruction that those are the alternatives you are delivered or you're destroyed.

So when you kill the body, you deprive it of life. If you destroy the body, you deprive it of life. Well, if you destroy the soul, what have you done? You have deprived it of life.

Evidently it is not immortal and eternal. So you also find Apollonia in the middle voice. And you remember me talking about the middle, sometimes it's reflexive, something you do to yourself.

Sometimes it is middle in form, uh, but passive in meaning it is something that happens to you. And it means to perish. You, you yourself perish instead of perishing yourself, you yourself perish.

It's still that middle idea in Greek. So, um, in a first Corinthians chapter 10, verse nine, uh, Paul is reviewing, uh, the history of the old Testament for the instruction and exhortation of his Corinthian congregation. And he says, nor let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted and were destroyed by serpents.

Remember the bronze serpent on the pole. If I'd be lifted up, I will draw men to me as Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness. That occasion, Paul rehearses in first Corinthians, chapter 10.

And he says, those who were bitten by the serpents were destroyed. They died. Um, John three 16, God gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish.

This is Apollumi in the middle voice should not cease to be, but have everlasting life. John 10 28, I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. You get the idea that without the gift of eternal life, perishing is the other option.

And perish is from Apollumi, which is the result of a destructive process, which is you're gone. It is no more. The temple was destroyed.

It's not like they moved it. It's not like London bridge or, you know, the birthplace of Will Rogers. Well, we're going to make an artificial Lake.

So we need to move the birthplace. It, the temple was destroyed. It was utterly and completely gone.

Uh, after 70 AD, there's not one stone left upon another. That's Apollumi. Um, John 17, 12, uh, Jesus, remember this is John 17, the high priestly prayer.

It's called Jesus is talking to his father while I was with them, my disciples in the world, I kept them in your name. Those whom you gave me, I have kept and none of them is lost except the son of destruction, the son of Apollia in order that the scripture might be fulfilled. Uh, um, we've already seen Romans two 12, first Corinthians 15, 18.

Uh, if there is no resurrection, if Christ is not raised and there is no resurrection, then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ, if there is no resurrection and Christ was not raised, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished, never coming back. That's a first Corinthians 15, 18. Um, of course, second Peter three, nine, famously, uh, the Lord is not slack concerning his promises.

Some count slackness, but as long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, leave and be no more, but should come to repentance. Um, the, the term unbelievers in, in Paul, they're often referred to as those who are perishing. It's, it's the, uh, ominous.

You, you turn a verb into a noun the same way. Remember the O E infix turns a Greek verb. I mean, a Hebrew verb into a gerund, into a, into a participle.

And so the ones who are swimming or the ones who are living or the ones who are dying, well, in Greek, you do that with ominous and you turn it into a participle. So you have those who are perishing. They are the Hoi Apolumanoi Hoi Apolumanoi.

And you find this in first Corinthians one 18, the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. What does that mean? They are in, they are on the path to destruction. They are in the process of being destroyed.

They are marked out and headed for destruction. Second Corinthians two 15, we are to God, the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. Uh, second Corinthians four three, even if our gospel is hid, it is hid to those who are, it says in the King James lost, but in, in the new King James, if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

They're not unable to find their way. They're not able to be found. They are perishing.

Death has a grip on them and is working its work on them. And, uh, you know, uh, when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin and sin. When it is finished, brings forth death.

It's a downward process that results in being no more. Uh, second Thessalonians two 10, um, talking about the end times, all unrighteous deception among those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. Uh, enter by the narrow gate, Matthew seven 13.

We saw this a few months back enter by the narrow gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to Apollia. And there are many who go in by it narrow is the way straight as the gate that leads to life. Few there be that find it.

Romans nine 22, uh, God, uh, endures with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction so that he might show his, his grace to the others. Philippians one 28, uh, do not in any way be terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perishing, but to you of deliverance, this distinction that is made sort of between the sheep and the goats, as it were, uh, is the difference between those who are saved and those who are perishing Philippians three 19, uh, those whose end is perishing, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who set their mind on earthly things. Their, their ultimate destination is destruction.

He was 10 39. We are not of those who draw back to destruction, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul, saving of the soul. 10 39 of Hebrews, uh, second Peter three seven, the heavens and the earth, which are now preserved by God's word are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

What's going to happen to the current heavens and earth elements melt with a fervent heat destroyed by fire. Heavens are rolled up like a scroll. That's you can't go back and find it.

It hasn't been moved to a different shelf. It's gone. That's a Pulum, a Poliah, a Pulumanoi Revelation 17, eight, the beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to destruction.

Go to a Poliah. Those who dwell on the earth will marvel. Uh, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.

When they see the beast that was and is not, and yet is he's the anti Christ. He's like Jesus who was alive and then was dead and now is alive forevermore. He's trying to imitate, emulate and counterfeit that, but he is going to ascend out of the bottomless pit.

This of course anticipates Gog Magog and then is going to go to destruction. And even the beast, the false prophet and the, the, you know, the, the unholy Trinity that it says that they're, they're tormented day and night in the presence of God and the holy angels that Ionias has to be understood in the light of other passages that say they too are going to be destroyed. Well, this is a very fascinating subject because, uh, what we're going to look at in the word of God in our second session is going to really draw out what our current status is and what Jesus brought to us when he came to this earth and accomplished our salvation.

If you want to talk about appreciating the baby Jesus and appreciating the, the first advent of the Lord Jesus and the, the work he accomplished on the cross to realize what our current condition and destination is, even right now, we're all headed to Sheol. We're all headed to non-existence, but the gift of God conditioned on faith in Christ is resurrection. It is conferring life and immortality through the gospel.

We do not have it yet. We get it at the resurrection, but it's a sobering thought. I'm not just dying physically, but I've got a soul that's going to exist some way, shape, or form.

Sorry. No, according to scripture. And we'll see it when we come back.

Um, we don't get that until the resurrection. And you want to talk about the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ, when he comes back the second time, apart from sin for deliverance, uh, it's a real eye opener, at least it has been for me. So we'll take a look at it when we come back from the break.