1Timothy 6:15-16

God is Immortal

Open your Bible to…

1Tim. 6:15 He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

1Tim. 6:16 *who alone has immortality*, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

Pray

Intro

√ Immortality

In 1941 Ted Williams ended his MLB season with a .406 batting average…

> For those of you who don't follow baseball that means that Ted hit the ball and got on base 4 times out of every 10 trips to the plate.
>
> A great player only gets a hit 3 times out of every 10 times he faces a pitcher, which means that Ted was in a class of his own.
>
> In fact no one in the last 85 years has ever completed a season in the MLB with a 400 average!

Well in 2002 Mr. Williams passed away and his family had his body flown by private jet to Alcor Life Extension company in Scottsdale, Arizona…

Where his remains were cryogenically frozen in liquid nitrogen in the hope that at some point in the future medical technology will have advanced so that Ted can be raised back to life and so *gain immortality*!

Why? Because as one of his children who had Ted's body frozen stated…

"This is what we want, to be able to be together in the future, even if it is only a chance."

Well I hate to inform Ted's family but *only God is immortal* and He alone has the power to raise the dead and to grant immortality!

God is Immortal ~ a Definition

√ God is Immortal

When Christians talk about God's *immortality*, they often confuse it with His *eternality*…

While they are similar, they are *not* the same.

The easiest way to distinguish between God's *immortality* and His *eternal* nature is to think about this way…

God's *immortality* tells us that He is *not subject to death or decay*…

…while God's *eternality* tells that He is *not subject* to or bound by *time*.

Or, we might say that *immortality* means that God is *deathless*…

…whereas God's *eternal* nature means that He is *timeless*.

The God revealed in Creation, on the pages of the Holy Bible and in the Person of Jesus is *immortal*—Death and decay have no power over Him, He is immune to…

Corruption, rot and putrification.

He cannot die.

Nothing can do damage to His Person, dimmish the integrity of His Being, or threathen His life because *God is immortal*!

The Biblical Foundation of God's Immortality

√ God is Immortal

Interestingly the words *immortal* and *immortality* are used only six times in the Bible, and all of them are found in the New Testament!

Though God's immortality is often implied by other words and phrases found in both the Old and New Testaments that describe Him as…

…"*everlasting*", "*imperishable*", and "*incorruptible*."

Well in addition to 1Timonthy 6:15-16 that we read at the beginning of our study there are two more verses that *affirm God's immortality* found in the New Testament.

"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible,
to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever
and ever. Amen."
1Timonty 1:17

To which Paul adds…

"(the wicked) exchanged the glory of <u>the immortal God</u> for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things."
Romans 1:23 ESV

So when it comes to the claim that <u>*God is immortal*</u> we stand on solid biblical ground…

…our God cannot die!

The Implications of God's Immortality

√ The implications of God's Immortality

Immortality is a difficult thing for us to grasp because we ourselves are mortal and we are surrounded by mortals!

> Everyone and every living thing that we have ever known is subject to death, decay and corruption.
>
> Even non-living things like rocks, gas and energy are subject to decay, corrosion and degredation.
>
> So to think on God's immortality is <u>*exciting*</u>, but also <u>*challenging*</u> because we don't have anything from our earthly experience that we can relate to.

So let's stretch our minds a bit by looking at a couple of the implications of God's immortality that will help us better understand this amazing God that we serve!

1) Because God is immortal, He cannot be destroyed

The Greek word translated as <u>*immortal*</u> in our English Bibles means to be…

Without death
Indestructable
Imperrishable
Undecaying
Incorruptable

That is, God's word tells us that there is ***nothing*** in all of creation whether in the material or the spirit realm that can inflict any harm or hurt upon God.

Which makes sense because anything that God has created is by definition ***less*** than He is…

…therefore there is nothing and no one in creation that can kill God, cause Him to perish, decay, cease to be, or degrade His Person or being.

That would include philosophers like Nietzsche who infamously wrote that…

"God is dead"

God is ***not*** dead, point in fact, He ***cannot*** die, nor can any warrior, Satan or the philosophical panderings of accademics kill God…

…because ***God is immortal***.

Ap. Saints, be encouraged for our God cannot be defeated!

Contrasted with all of our human heroes for even the strongest and most skilled in battle are subect to death!

Richard the Lionheart for all of his skill in combat was ulitmately killed in battle.

Despite their courage the American folk heroes James Bowie and Davy Crockett died trying to hold the Alamo against the Mexican army.

And even our most decorated soldiers like Audie Murphy who survived every battle he ever fought was eventually defeated by death.

Even Chuck Norris, who was rumored to be the 8th Bowl Judgement, recently lost his mortal combat with Death!

The truth is that the bodies of every warrior, every hero and every champion are subject to violence, disease or the slow decline of age that ends in weakness, infirmity and death.

But because *God is immortal* we can live out our lives boldy and with great confidence in the knowledge that our Hevenly Hero, protector and mighty warrior *cannot be defeated*…

…*because He is immortal and cannot be killed*!

Thus, the great and awesome God we serve is well able to protect us from every foe. David spoke of this truth when he sang…

"As for God…He is a shield to all who trust in Him."
~ 2Samuel 22:31

Like David we can face every enemy in life with courage because our Divine Hero cannot be killed, defeated, or destroyed…

…for *He is immortal*.

2) Because God is immortal, His word cannot be broken

An exciting implication of God's immortality is that just as *He* cannot be destroyed…

…so too neither can *His word be destroyed—broken*!

That's what Jesus meant when said…

"…the Scripture cannot be broken…" ~ John 10:35

Jesus' point is that the *indestructible* nature of God's word means that whatever God *says*, or *promises*…

…*cannot be undone, cannot be broken, and will never decay*.

> That's because the attribute of God's immortality guarantees that His Word is immortal too!

With that in mind consider what Jesus said when He claimed that…

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."
Mark 13:31 NKJV

The Amplified renders Jesus' words…

"Heaven and earth will perish and pass away, but My words will not perish or pass away."
Mark 13:31 AMPC

What we don't want to miss is that Jesus claimed here that *His words* are *imperishable*, or *indestructible*…

> …a subtle, yet clear declaration that He is God!

Since only God and His words are imperishable (with never pass away)…

…then if Jesus' words will never pass away He must be God!

Ap. Great witnessing text

The Jehovah's Witnesses haven't changed this verse in their Bible yet, it reads…

"Heaven and earth will pass away, <u>but my words will by no means pass away</u>." ~ NWT

And while they might want to argue with you regarding what Jesus meant all you have to do is point them to the footnotes in *<u>their own online commentary</u>* which confirms…

"The use of two Greek negatives with the verb emphatically expresses rejection of an idea, <u>vividly emphasizing the permanence (read "immortality") of Jesus' words</u>."

That is, without realizing what they are affirming the official Jehovah's Witness commentary tells us that *<u>Jesus' words are permanent, indestructible, immortal</u>*…

…since only God's words are *<u>permanent, indestructible, and immortal</u>*, then Jesus must be Jehovah for only God's words are immortal!

Objection to God's Immortality

1) God cannot be immortal because Jesus died!

Critics of the Christian faith are quick to point out what they believe is a contradiction in our faith.

> For as Christians we believe that the Bible clearly communicates that Jesus is God, and therefore immortal.

However, the critic and the skeptic point us back to the Cross and remind us that the Bible also says that *Jesus died*!

Their objection—you can't have it both ways!

Either Jesus is *God* and therefore immortal and immune to death…

…or He is just a *man* as demonstrated by the fact that He died on the Cross!

How do we respond?

√ Jesus is the God—Man

The Bible is clear that Jesus is God the Son, who in fact is immortal and therefore *cannot* die.

But the scripture also tells us that *God the Son became a Man* when He put on human flesh at His incarnation.

As such God the Son—Jesus is *one* Person with *two* distinct natures…

A divine nature—which is an *immortal* spirit.

And, a human nature—which includes a *spirit*, *soul* and a *mortal body*.

So, when Jesus—God the Son died on the Cross it was only His *human body that died*…

…*not* His immortal divine nature.

Listen to how Peter in his Pentecost sermon described this mystery…

"(David) foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that <u>His soul was not left in Hades</u>, nor did <u>His flesh</u> see corruption."
Acts 2:31

Peter, quoting Psalm 16 is telling us that when Jesus died ***<u>His soul was separated from His human body</u>*** (that's the very definition of physical death!).

> While His mortal human ***<u>body</u>*** remained in the tomb.
>
> His immortal ***<u>soul</u>*** went to the grave ("Sheol" in Psalm 16, which Peter quoted, and "Hades" here in Acts 2).
>
> But His ***<u>divine nature did not die, nor cease to exist</u>***, nor was it dimished in any way.
>
> In fact, it was by His immortal divine nature that ***<u>Jesus raised Himself from the dead</u>***!

Remember that Jesus said…

"Destroy this temple, and in three days <u>I will raise it up</u>…Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" <u>But He was speaking of the temple of His body</u>." ~ John2:19-21

The point is that when Jesus died His ***<u>human heart stopped beating</u>***, His ***<u>blood stopped flowing</u>***, and His ***<u>soul was separted from His human body</u>***…

…but, *<u>His divine nature</u>* remained alive and never ceased to exist for even a moment because Jesus—God the Son is immortal!

√ Back to Jesus' duel-nature

In Philipians 2 the apostle Paul helps us to understand *<u>how</u>* the two natures of Jesus coexisted for he tells us that when Jesus took on human flesh that while *<u>He remained fully God</u>*…

> He willingly *<u>laid aside His rights to use His divine attributes</u>* during His 1st Advent so that He might experience life as human being.
>
> For example, as a human being Jesus experienced hunger, thirst, exhaustion, pain and death.
>
> There were times when the Bible says that Jesus grew in wisdom (ref. Luke 2:40), and other times when He didn't know the future (ref. Mark 13:32).
>
> But He never ceased to be God, He simply *<u>chose not to use His divine attributes</u>* during His short pilgrimidge as a Man.
>
> Relying on the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit to do the will of the Father.

The point is that the supposed contradiction raised by the critics only reveal his or her ignorance or unwillingness to actually address *<u>the truth of Jesus' duel nature</u>* as revealed in the Bible…

…thus there is no contradiction in scripture, nor is Jesus' death evidence against His deity.

Ap. Proof text for the Triunity of God

Question—who raised Jesus from the dead?

Jesus said ***He*** would (John 2:19-21).

Paul tells us that the ***Father*** did (Galatians 1:1).

Paul also tells us that the ***Spirit*** did (Romans 8:11).

The Bible tells us that each member of the Triune God was involved with Jesus' resurrection…

…thus affirming the mystery of the Trinity, One God revealed in Three Persons!

The Blessings & Benefits of God's Immortality

√ Blessings & Benefits

We've just seen a couple of the benefits of God's immortaliy in the previous section to which I want to add the following that I hope will bring additional joy to your heart this morning as we contemplate God's immortality!

1) Because God is immortal, He has the authority to grant immortality to others

That's the promise the apostle Paul spells out in Romans 2:7 where he writes…

"(God) "will render to each one according to his deeds": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality…"

Additionally, and excitingly, the immortality that God has promised is for our whole being—*body,soul and spirit*!

That means we will *not* be unembodied spirits floating around in Eternity…

…rather we will be given a *glorified immortal body* like the one Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15.

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ~ 1Corinthians 15:53-54

A body, John tells us, will be like Jesus' resurrected *immortal* body…

"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."
1John 3:2

In other words, the immortal body that God will give us at the Rapture/Ressurection of the saints is *not* subject to death, decay or corruption…

…it is a body that is *imperishable*, a body that is both *material* and *spiritual*, a body *fit for Heaven and the new Earth*!

A body that will be able to enjoy the taste and texture of food on a whole new level (wedding supper of the Lamb).

A body with enhanced senses by which we can better enjoy the fragrance and beauty of our eternal home.

A body that is able to move freely between the material realm of the New Earth and the spiritual realm of Heaven.

A body that is capable of gazing upon the glory and beauty of God without fear.

And a body that can fully appreciate our eternal home where we will have unhindered access to the River of Like and the Tree of Life both of which will promote our capacity to enjoy eternal life and immortality.

So while we could never gain immortality by our own strength, ingenuity or cryogenic freezing…

…because God is immortal *He is able to grant immortality to anyone* who accepts His free gift of salvation!

Ap. Don't pass it up!

If you are not yet a Christian today is the day of your salvation!

√ What about the lost?

At this point in our study some of you Bible students might be wondering …

"What about the lost, don't they live forever too?"

Isn't that what Jesus told us in Mark 9:44 (from Isaiah 66:24) where He described the everlasting punishement of the lost?

"where 'their worm does not die
and the fire is not quenched.'"

Good point!

> Yes, it is true that the lost will *exist forever* in the Lake of Fire as confirmed by both Jesus and His Apostles.
>
> For example, John records in Revelation 20:10 that the condemned will be tormented in the Lake of Fire *forever*.

But, here's the catch, while the lost will *exist forever* they will *not enjoy immortality* because they will have *no life*…

> Rather all that the lost will experience is *eternal death*!

Or we might contrast the saved and the lost by saying, that believers will inherit *eternal life*…

> But the lost are condemend to *everlasting death*.
>
> That's why John calls the Lake of Fire the "*second death*" (Rev. 20:14).

So, while the lost will *exist* for eternity, they will *not* enjoy immortal life.

> For *immortal life is more than existence*, it is true life, which can only be experienced through a relationship with God—the Giver of Life.
>
> The Lost—both human and angelic will be cut off for all of eternity from God and the immortal life that He alone can give.
>
> Therefore, while they will *exist*, they will not have the capacity to enjoy life because they have no access to God—the Giver of Life!

What will that be like? Captain Barbossa from *Pirates of the Caribbean* describes it well, when he lamented…

"For too long I've been parched of thirst and unable to quench it. Too long I've been starving to death and haven't died. I feel nothing. Not the wind on my face nor the spray of the sea. Nor the warmth of a woman's touch."

That's eternal death—an ***existence*** with no joy, no hope, no life, and no immortality.

2) Immortality is more than deathlessness

As we just learned immortality speaks of more than simply existing, it speaks of a ***quality*** of life that…

> Flows from our unhindered fellowship with God that we have in Christ—the giver of life!

That new life was secured for us when Jesus rose from the dead, as Paul declares…

"Death is swallowed up in victory."
1Corinthians 15:54

That is, immortality is ***more than*** deathlessness, it is a quality of life that we will enjoy because ***death is swallowed up by life***!

> In other words, when a Christian's body is resurrected it ***isn't just a resuciated corpse***…like Ted William's family hopes for…
>
> …it's a ***glorified body*** that will never be subject to Death again, nor will it carry forward the decay and corruption of the corpse that was in the grave.

That's the power of Jesus' death and resurrection who…

"…abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel…"
2Timothy 1:10

With Jesus' resurrection the power of Death and the Grave aren't just defeated…

> They are "*swallowed up in victory*", which means that instead of *life leading to death*—as has been the doom of humankind since Adam's sin…
>
> …death is now forced by the victory of Christ *to lead back to life, eternal life in Christ the Conqueror*!

For you fans of C.S. Lewis that's what Aslan meant when He told Susan and Lucy that…

"Death itself would start working backward."

Backwards from Jesus' resurrection to the moment that Death entered the human race as a consequence of Adam's sin.

> Death will be undone and forver removed from the minds of the saints when Jesus tosses Death and the Grave into the Lake of Fire.
>
> From which they will never escape or threathen the saints again!

So immortality is *more than* deathlessness, it is a quality of life that cannot be touched by death, decay or decomposition…

…but it's only available to those who accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior!

Close

√ God is Immortal

God alone is immortal.

He is *not* subject to death, decay or corruption!

No one, and nothing can hurt or harm Him or diminish the integrity of His Person!

He is imperishable, indestructible, and unbreakable!

Any creature, whether angelic or human, who has immortality received it *as a gift from God*.

With regard to humans only believers in Jesus will enjoy immortality—true life, *living* forever as the objects of God's eternal affection.

Those who die without Christ will *exist* forever, but in a state of eternal death with the bitter memory that during their brief pilgrimidge on earth that they rejected God's free gift of immortality!

Saints, be encouraged—God's immortality guarantees that Death will *not* have the final word in our lives nor in the lives of our loved ones who have gone before us into eternity!

If you haven't yet given your life to Jesus today is the day to do so and gain immortality!