

than speaking of immortal souls, the Bible refers to resurrected bodies, to persons being reconstituted through the power of God (Phil 3:20). In a word, Jesus Christ "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:10).

The idea of souls being naturally immortal is not a biblical one, and the effect of believing it stretches the experience of death and destruction in Gehenna into endless torment. If souls are immortal, then either all souls will be saved (which is unscriptural universalism) or else hell must be everlasting torment. There is no other possibility since annihilation is ruled out from the start. This is how the traditional view of hell got constructed: add a belief in divine judgment after death (scriptural) to belief in the immortality of the soul (unscriptural), and you have Augustine's terrible doctrine.

Nevertheless, I do not call my position conditional immortality. It is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition of my view Conditional immortality then, while necessary to belief in annihilation, does not prove that annihilation is true. The key issue remains my first argument: the Scriptures suggest the destruction of the wicked.

3. As I intimated earlier, everlasting torment is intolerable from a moral point of view because it makes God into a bloodthirsty monster who maintains an everlasting Auschwitz for victims whom he does not ever allow to die. How is one to worship or imitate such a cruel and merciless God? The idea of everlasting torment ... raises the problem of evil to impossible dimensions.

4. The need to correct the traditional doctrine of hell also rests upon considerations of the divine justice Unending torment would be the kind of utterly pointless and wasted suffering which could never lead to anything good beyond it Furthermore, it would amount to inflicting infinite suffering upon those who have committed finite sins There would be a serious disproportion between