



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Various

John Bunyan Lecture VI

TRANSCRIPT

[Johnson Lecture] I want to warn you ahead of time that today I'm going to give you something that probably will sound like a theological lecture, a lecture in a theological seminary. Yesterday I gave a message on "God's Yes to His Saints," which is 2 Peter 3:9, "Not willing that any should perish." I didn't give you the title of that yesterday. I forgot to give you the title, but that was the title.

Today, I want to turn to 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 10 and just talk about a phrase or so. 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 10. The text, if you are Calvinistic in your theology, and if you are forced to defend yourself from time to time, one of the texts that you will be forced to deal with sooner or later is 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 10, in which the apostle writes, "For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe."

And since this is a problem text and since I was asked to speak on passages that have some difficulties for Calvinistic thinking people, this is one I want to deal with. And I say, I want to warn you ahead of time; I'm going to deal with it in some detail. I'll try to make it as simple as possible. It's really essentially very simple. But I think it's necessary to look at the context in order to understand more fully the solution to the text so far as Calvinistic theology is concerned.

Let me open with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the privilege of the study of the word of God together. We thank Thee and praise Thee for the gift of the inspired Scriptures. We thank Thee especially for the one of whom they speak, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We give Thee thanks for him. We ask that the Holy Spirit who has been given to everyone who believes in him may be our teacher in this hour. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Johnson Lecture] I. Howard Marshall, who has been for a long time professor of New Testament exegesis at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, is one of many evangelical Arminians who argue strongly for 1 Timothy 4:10 as evidence for universal atonement. Marshall is not alone, of course. Others argue similarly, although not quite so strongly. Professor Marshall is known as a strong, earnest defender of Arminianism. Others take the same viewpoint.

Millard Erickson, an American theologian, professor now at the Baptist seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, author of the popular evangelical systematic theology by him, refers to 1 Timothy 4:10 as, "among the most impressive of those that teach a universal atonement." Professor Erickson's theology is mildly Calvinistic, although probably, we would say that it is not quite Amyraldianism, but something slightly less than Amyraldianism.

Marshall and Erickson are not alone among evangelicals, of course. There are many others. Just recently, I received John Stott's commentary on the pastoral epistles entitled "Guard the Truth: The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus," and he too takes the same viewpoint with reference to 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 10. We all know of John Stott as an excellent expositor of the word of God. And so, what we have to do is to defend something that is supported by some very, very highly regarded theologians.

Some years ago I wrote an article on Romans chapter 5, verse 12, in which I said some negative things about evangelical scholars who did their work so often without the

necessary knowledge of systematic theology. I want to reverse that emphasis and seek to show among other things in this paper that theologians often err by faulty or weak exegesis of the original texts. That, in my opinion, is what characterizes the Arminian exegesis of 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 10 in men such as Erickson, who is a systematic theologian.

Before turning to the exposition of the text, I want to remind the readers of this paper, and those of you who are listening in this audience, of an important doctrine. I am referring to the doctrine of common grace, for it may throw significant light on the meaning of 1 Timothy 4:10.

I'm assuming that we understand the term efficacious grace, the grace of God given to the elect that produces a saving effect. The distinction between efficacious grace and common grace is not quantitative but qualitative being the almighty power of God operating for our salvation from sin and eternal death. Christian theology, in order to explain that the world, although it lies under the curse of sin, still exhibits many evidences of the true, the good and the beautiful, expanded the doctrine of efficacious grace to explain this. Thus the term common grace or general grace came to refer to the general operations of the Holy Spirit by which he restrains sin and maintains order by human government and provides indiscriminately to man sunshine, rain, food, drink, clothing and shelter. It's a distinct possibility that 1 Timothy 4:10 refers to this latter aspect of divine grace, and we should keep that doctrine in mind when we come to the interpretation of the text.

Now I want to say a word about the context of 1 Timothy 4:10. The Bible gives its reader both the light and the dark aspects of truth, both the good and the bad, the pleasant and the unpleasant, the positive and the negative, and of heaven and hell. And the Scriptures speak most plainly of truth and error. Chapter 3, verse 16, introduced by the words (Now, I will give you the English translation), "And without controversy," frequently rendered by "common consent, confessedly, undeniably, most certainly" are

some of the renderings, turn the reader's attention to the contents of the truth that the church of the living God is to guard and defend. The incarnation, the vindication and justification of the incarnate One, his self-exhibition to the angelic world, the proclamation among the Gentiles, a person not a program, the special burden and mission of Paul, the positive reception of that truth in the world, and finally the ascension and session of the embodiment of the truth, God the Son himself. That's what Paul is talking about when he says, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

The one last climactic event, his appearing in his kingdom, is for the moment passed over. What concerns the apostle at the moment is the reverse of the truth, the error to come, the apostasy from the glorious truth that he's just set forth in 1 Timothy 3:16. So now he's thinking about the opposite of it. He doesn't hesitate to frankly picture the latter times when apostasy develops.

One is reminded of Cromwell's words to his artist who asked how he wished his picture to be painted. It's said that he replied in words to this effect, "Paint me as I am, wart and all."

Well the apostle does something of that now, because he's looking at the future, and he's going to tell us very plainly some of the things that are to come to pass. The plainness of the apostle in his warning is a lesson for the present time in which an apostasy from the truth is in process, with even the evangelical churches turning away from the exposition of the Scriptures, from doctrinal preaching, and substituting for divine truth user-friendly entertainment.

Paul's instruction for his young legit, "If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed," that's verse 6, is right on the mark for us today. Timothy's responsibility is mine, too, to preach the word.

Now, the coming apostasy comes before him in verses 1 through 5. At first he speaks of the certainty of it. There is no doubt about its coming. Paul says the Spirit speaks "expressly" about it, using an adverb that means explicitly, or without disguise. He refers either to the general tenor of the prophetic and apocalyptic passages, such as Matthew 24 and 25, or perhaps he writes from his own revelation and understanding as is found in passages such as 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

As Donald Guthrie has written, "Whenever truth flourishes, error will raise its head." The expression "the faith" is here the faith that is believed. You know, of course, you can speak of the faith as the faith – the body of doctrine which we believe, or the faith – that is the faith by which we believe that body of doctrine. Theologians usually define those terms in Latin because that's more impressive. The faith that is believed is "fides quae creditor", the faith which is believed. The body of redemptive truth, truths, the faith by which we believe is "fides qua credimus," that is, if you're a Latin student you'll recognize that immediately, the faith by which we believe, the subjective sense. One the objective, the other the subjective.

Paul talks about "doctrines of demons." The doctrines of demons have their ultimate source in Satan and his demons, and they concern primarily marriage and food, suggesting their ascetic nature and hinting at incipient Gnosticism. The demonic teaching was designed to deceive by lying hypocrisy (verse 2), reminding one of Genesis 3:1-5 and the arch enemy's deceptive lies spoken in the Garden of Eden. Such talk, such teaching is pious talk, but wickedly immoral. The conscience of such false teachers will be seared with a hot iron. The Eddyism, the Armstrongism, the New Ageism, Mormonism, the Health and Wealth Gospelism, and Televangelism and other deceiving errors come to mind to us today as we seek to parallel the things that Paul is talking about.

In verse 3 through verse 5, he speaks specifically about the content of this apostasy. The ascetic character of their teaching is clear from verse 3, "forbidding to marry, commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with

thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth." The antidote to the lies of the future, Paul says, is found in the words, "believe and know the truth." Only they can really give thanks properly.

In verse 4, the common grace of God emerges in that He is the giver of created things, and they are good. They come from no grudging heavenly Father, and they come lavishly. The sanctification of our food is through powerful words of thanksgiving. Eating and drinking are not secular activities for the Christian; they come from God's common grace to us. At stake even in our eating is our conception of God.

Now, in verse 6 through verse 10, he continues, and here he deals with the conduct that is in harmony with godliness. Doctrinal study first of all. The faith and the excellent doctrine will enable Timothy to suggest, (the New King James Version has "instruct;" but the word is better rendered by suggest, fitting for a young man) to his listeners the dangers of the coming apostasy. The words of faith and the excellent doctrine he has been taught have prepared him for becoming an excellent minister of Jesus Christ.

And now, the ethical practices, verse 7 through verse 10. I'm giving all this because we need the context when we come to our problem in verse 10. Avoiding the profane and nonsensical fables, Timothy is to give himself to exercise toward godliness. The dogma he has been taught is to lead to discipline. The "for" of verse 8, which is "For bodily exercise profiteth a little" explains why godliness is the most important kind of exercise we can engage in. While bodily exercise is profitable to a limited extent, godliness is profitable for all things, and it even reaches into the future.

The "faithful saying" of verse 9 confirms the previous statement and forms a nice introduction to verse 10, the text that is the principal subject of this study. Verse 10 begins with the words, "For to this end." That expression, as both Barrett and Kelly indicate, looks back to verse 8, explaining that the labor and striving is with a view to the

promise of life mentioned there. The struggling of the apostle and his company is further supported by a subjective reason – the continued hope in the living God.

The last relative clause of verse 10 is the problem text, to which we must devote the rest of this paper. For the sake of simplicity, I want to discuss the text under two heads, namely, those interpretations which may be called soteriological.

Now for some who may not understand that term, the Greek word for salvation is *soteria*. Soteriological is an adjective based upon that word. *Soteria* means salvation, soteriological is truth that has to do with the doctrine of salvation, soteriological.

Two heads, those interpretations that may be called soteriological, that is, that understand the term "savior" to refer to God as savior from the guilt and condemnation of sin, and interpretations that may be called non-soteriological, that is, that don't have to do with the doctrine of salvation, and that is that understand the term "savior" to refer to God as deliverer or preserver from the devastating influence of sin in the world.

Louis Berkhof, who has written a very significant systematic theology, defines common grace in this way: First, “Those general operations of the Holy Spirit whereby he, without renewing the heart, exercises such a moral influence on man through his general or special revelation, that sin is restrained, order is maintained in social life, and civil righteousness is promoted. And B, Those general blessings, such as rain and sunshine, food and drink, clothing and shelter, which God imparts to all men indiscriminately where and in what measure as seems good to Him.” I want to keep that in mind. I repeated that twice, of course.

Now, we want to look at the soteriological views first, that is, those views that take the word "savior" to refer to salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin. You would think that when Paul says "who is Savior of all men" that he is referring to salvation from the guilt and power of sin, "Savior of all men, especially of those who believe."

First of all, the text might be thought to refer to universal salvation, or universalism, for Paul writes he is the "Savior of all men." Since salvation, however, is not

a work of God in Christ that is accomplished in differing degrees, the term “especially” would be seem to be meaningless by that interpretation. "Savior of all men," but if that's universalism, there's no need to add "especially of those that believe." So obviously, that's not Paul's thought.

Second, it has been thought that one might escape universalism, or universal salvation, that is, that Christ has died for all persons without exception, by taking the “all” in the sense of all kinds of men, that is, Jews and Gentiles. In this context, however, there doesn't seem to be anything that might support such a view. There is something that would support that view in chapter 2 and the problem there in the 4th verse.

Further, and more important, this view is also unsuited to “especially” those that believe. As a matter of fact, God saves only believers. Further, we have not yet considered the meaning of Savior, that is, whether it really has the sense of to save from the guilt and penalty of sin.

And third, relying on the opening clause of chapter 2, verse 4, one might conclude that Paul is simply suggesting that the living God wishes to be the Savior of all men. This lofty aim, however, finds resistance from man's will. The will of man is in bondage to sin and cannot of itself respond to the gospel. We don't have any doubt with that, do we? "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; it's not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." That's very plain, very clear. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, they are spiritually discerned."

Concerning this Arminian view, Warfield has written, “But they suppose that, though dead in sin, man can resist, and successfully resist, almighty grace. Resistance is, however, itself an activity: and the successful resistance of an almighty recreative power, is a pretty considerable activity – for a dead man. It all comes back, therefore to the Pelagian ground that, at the decisive point, the salvation of man is in his own power: men are saved, or men are not saved, according to natural differences in men. Thus the grace

of God is fundamentally denied and salvation is committed, in the last analysis, to man himself.” So, B. B. Warfield.

The text, of course, doesn't say that He is a salvation-desiring God. It says he is a saving God. This salvation is a foreordained salvation, provided by a God who cannot be frustrated in His purposes, a salvation whose obstacles have been removed by the son's substitution.

Fourth, it has also been maintained that the Savior referred to here is a savior provided for all in the potential sense. As Fausset puts it, “He is the Savior of all sufficiently and potentially; of believers alone efficiently and effectually.”

The text, however, says that he “is the Savior of all men.” According to the text the salvation referred to is neither potential nor provisional; it is an effectual work for all men. Since it is plain that the Scriptures do not countenance universalism, we must look for another explanation.

Steven M. Baugh, who is a young professor at Westminster Seminary in the west, in an excellent short study has illustrated the Arminian dilemma in this way, and I'm quoting him, “The Arminian position teaches that Christ's atonement was made for all of mankind, but only those who exercise their free volition to receive it are actually forgiven and saved. This is like a lifeguard who throws life rings to two drowning men. One man takes the life ring and is saved, and the other refuses the life ring and drowns.” Baugh asks, “In what sense is the lifeguard the savior of both men, but especially of the one who lived. How is the lifeguard the ‘savior’ of the drowned man?”

Well now, we could enter into a discussion of whether you can use the term lifeguard for a man who fails to save someone, that's possible. But the Greek text doesn't allow that that idea, that is, that the term savior is given to a person who doesn't really save. He tried to, but he failed, but he's still the savior, like we look at a lifeguard who may have failed to save someone from drowning, but we still call him the lifeguard

because he has the office of the lifeguard. No need to go into further detail there, but the Greek text does not substantiate that.

Now, let's look at the interpretation that contends that the term "savior" is used here in a non-soteriological sense, that is, in the sense of deliverer or preserver. There are basically four things that may be said in support of this view.

First, the sense of the words to save, savior and related words. It's clear from the Old Testament that the verb translated "to save" which is the Hebrew word *yasha'* (You could spell that y, a, s, h, a, in your notes if you like and put an apostrophe, and people would think if they saw your notes, you were a Hebrew scholar.) But anyway, the verb *yasha'* – its essential meaning in the Old Testament is to deliver from external evils, such as in battles, and only rarely from moral troubles. Physical rescue is prominent in its usage. You might compare passages like Psalms 36:6.

In New Testament times, the same sense is often found in the literature, although in the New Testament the spiritual sense is the more common. Naturally, we're talking about spiritual things in the New Testament. It is not surprising, then, that so many commentators give “savior” the sense of preserver or something very similar in our text.

Just to give you an example of them, I have quite a few of them, seven or eight of them, I'll just mention a few of them. For example, C. K. Barrett in his commentary on the Pastoral Epistles expands the term savior to “whom he preserves in life, making the sun to shine and the rain to fall on good and bad alike.”

Patrick Fairbairn, you might expect this of Fairbairn; he was a strong believer in sovereign grace. He defines the term as “the deliverer and preserver of life.” Donald Guthrie, "The 'Savior' must be understood in the common meaning of 'Preserver.'" And J. N. D. Kelly repeats the thought, “It is affirmed that God wills the salvation of all men.” He has a different view.

William Kelly takes the term “savior” to refer to preserver, elaborating, “It is of the living God as such that the apostle speaks,” of God in his character a preserver of men, as also Job's speaks, God's providential care.

There are a number of other men. I don't think it would do us good to read all of these quotations. But suffice to say, there are a number of people who take it in that sense.

In addition to Psalm 36:6, a text which in its context is written with Noah and the beasts of the flood in mind, to which reference is made previously here, one might refer to Judges 3:9, where the term “deliverer” is referred to Othniel, who was one of the judges, and in fact, the term that is used for deliverer there of the judge Othniel is *moshia* which is the Hebrew word *yasha'*, participial form.

The same sense of God's kindness, his love and mercy to His creation is found in the New Testament in various passages. You might for looking up a passage, look at Acts 17, verse 25, verse 28. It's surely agreed that the common secular sense of the terms to save and savior refer to the secular meaning of to deliver or to preserve, if the saving is an extended saving.

Does the context of 1 Timothy then support the sense of to preserve or to deliver? I certainly believe so. The context deals with the apostasy to come “in latter times” (verse 1) characterized by the activity of “deceiving spirits”, who are mentioned in verse 1, and demonic doctrines. Hypocritical “lies” (verse 2) are the words of the apostates and their aides as they speak from “seared” consciences. Among their teachings are attacks upon the providential care of the creator God, for they command abstention by believers (verse 3) from His provision of food. All of our Creator God's created things are good, and should be received with thanks (verse 4).

The brethren should be so instructed (verse 6). “Fables” are to be rejected, and one's exercise should be toward “godliness” (verse 7), which has promise for the present life as well as the future – a trustworthy saying. The apostle speaking for the saints, says

we "labor and suffer reproach" from the worldlings, since our trust is in “the living God”, the latter a term of broad significance, which includes His work of saving in restraint of sin from the perils of life since the Fall, the living God. The living God is the Preserver of all men, even the ungodly, but He is such “especially for those who believe.” It's clear that the context is broad and inclusive of all God's saving and preserving work as “the living God.”

Now a second point. How shall the interpreter handle the words, “all men”? It's likely that the expression in chapter 2, verses 3 and 4, (we referred to that previously) where it occurs two times, refers to all men without distinction, not all men without exception. That note of distinction is sounded in verse 1. If you look back there for just a moment, verse 1 of chapter 2 of the epistle, he says, "Therefore exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, and intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men." All men, there's the thought of the distinction, all men without distinction. Verse 2, "For kings and all who are in authority." In other words, kings and then others, so the idea of different – all men without distinction is obviously in the context.

And the concluding verse of the section, in verse 7, the apostle says, "For which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle – I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying – a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth." So again, all men without exception, inclusive of Gentiles, inclusive of the other distinctive statements that are made there, such as kings and those who are in authority and so on. So, that suits 1 Timothy 2, but does the context of 1 Timothy 4 support the sense of to preserve and to deliver? (I want to be sure I have not read something twice for you here. But anyway.)

The apostle goes on to say the strength of the opposing argument, namely that Christ died for all without exception, lies in the ambiguity of the word all. We, in dealing with questions of these matters, have a problem with words that have to do with measures, things like that.

John Owen says somewhere, "That all or all men do not always comprehend all in every man that were, are or shall be, may be made apparent by near five hundred instances from Scripture. Taking, then, all and all men distributively, for some of all sorts, we grant the whole; taking them collectively, for all of all sorts, we deny the minor – namely, God will have them all to be saved."

The argument he's referring to comes from the Acts of the Arminian remonstrance who said "If God will have all men to be saved, then Christ died for all. But God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, therefore, Christ died for all men."

But adjectives like "all" are ambiguous. For example, all the angles of a triangle are equal to what? One eighty degrees? All of the angles of a triangle are less than one hundred and eighty degrees. Isn't that right? It's speaking a little differently though, aren't we? When we speak collectively, we say all the angles of the triangle are one hundred and eighty degrees. But if we speak distributively, all the angles of the triangle are less than that, then we know, of course, we have a truth as well.

So, "all" is ambiguous. We must understand the context in which it is given. It's very simple, you know, but it's important to realize in some of these arguments that these are the root of our difficulty.

In our text the argument does not turn on the sense of all as being all without distinction as it does in chapter 2, verse 3 through verse 7, that is, some of all sorts. We may take the “all men” here to mean all without exception, that is, all of all sorts in the light of that fact that the text speaks of God’s common grace, His care and provision for all His creation.

Now we must also deal with a third point. What is the sense of the adverb “especially”, *malista*? The English word, “especial,” with its synonym of “particular,” denotes a distinctive among other examples of the same general category: notably unusual (this person suffers from the measles of unusual severity, one might say, that is,

especially), or an individual member of a subclass in logic, that's the meaning of that word. If this meaning is the meaning of “especially,” then believers belong to a subclass of “all men.” The living God is the Savior of all men, among whom are those who believe.

There is an impossible difficulty here. In the sense in which God is the Savior of believers, that is, giving in grace eternal life to them through the Son's atoning sacrifice, he is not the Savior of any others. If he's the Savior of believers, he's not the Savior of any others who are not believers, is he? He only saves believers in that sense.

Ralph Wardlaw, who wrote a very good three-volume theology from the Amyraldian standpoint, and incidentally was Dr. Chafer's of Dallas Seminary favorite theology. I don't know that he ever says that, but if you will look at his writings, you will see when he comes down to points on which there is argument, he generally falls on the side of Ralph Wardlaw, who was a Calvinist, a moderate Calvinist, an Amyraldian. As Ralph Wardlaw says in his theology, “He saves none but them that believe. He does not save them especially and others partially or conditionally: He saves them exclusively.”

In the realm of divine care and preservation of His creation there is an “especially,” but not in the realm of salvation. Especially does not work in salvation. If you're talking about that, “Savior of all men,” you cannot say especially of believers, saves only believers. But if we're talking about salvation in another sense, such as preserving, then there is an especially that is useful there, in fact, necessary. So in the realm of divine care and preservation of his creation, there is an especially. The living God preserves and cares for His whole creation in common grace, but especially extends such care to His eternally beloved saints, the lovers of His Son, the justified ones.

It's clear from the adverb “especially,” that “savior” cannot be given the sense of eternal salvation from guilt and penalty of sin. Calvin is right, God's. Well, we expect Calvin to be right, shouldn't we? Not always, not always. We throw the term around. It's rather unfortunate in one way, because most people who throw the term Calvin around

have read very little of Calvin. He wrote an awful lot. I haven't read everything he's written. I recommend that everyone read the "Institutes", the two marvelous volumes. And what is so interesting about them is they were written in the 17th century, and they sell more books. They are sold more often today than they were then. Kind of interesting. And you have fine editions of them, that are well worth your purchase and your reading.

But Calvin said God's kindness extends to all men, and “if all share in God's kindness, how much more shall the godly know it. In short, will He not keep them in all things safe to the end?”

Finally, what does history have to say concerning this text and its interpretation? First, a comment concerning the relation of the text to secular history. The term "savior" "soter" was in common use in both classical Greek and Koine Greek as a title of the heathen gods. Zeus was called "soter". Apollo, Hermes, Asclepius, and others had the title attached to them. Of the Roman emperors, they were called "soters" and many leading officials. They were viewed as delivering men from calamities and supplying physical and spiritual needs, man's general well-being.

It's striking that Paul uses the term *soter*, "savior" of God the Father only in the Pastorals. Elsewhere the term is referred to Jesus Christ. It seems clearly possible that the more Paul came into contact with the Roman world, the more likely he might be to use the term *soter*, "savior" in the sense in which it was commonly used, that is, of God as the God of common grace, the preserver and deliverer of his creation, “both man and beast” as the psalm says and as Acts 17 says.

Steven Baugh is of the opinion that 1 Timothy 4:10 is “a polemical aside aimed at the false veneration of men who were no longer living,” the “gods” and the “saviors” of ancient Ephesian inscriptions, because it's likely Timothy was in that area, so he reminds Timothy that it is the living God who is the "soter" of all men, "especially of those who believe."

A comment from sacred history concerning the text's interpretation might help. Turretin, those of you who have studied Calvinism know that one of the strongest of the Calvinists was the French-Swiss scholar Turretin whose volumes of systematic theology were the theological texts of the Presbyterian seminaries for a long time in this country. For example, at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond Virginia, Turretin was studied in the Latin text. Incidentally, it has been reprinted. You can get it, and you can become a good theologian if you read it and study it, not in every point, but in Calvinistic thinking you could. But Turretin points out, and I wanted to go on and say that in Richmond, the men who studied theology at Union Seminary in the 19th century and the early 20th century had to read Turretin in the Latin text. Robert L. Dabney, for example, assigned ten pages a week, I think it was, for them to read, and then they would come in and recite from it, and he would quiz them, but the text was the Latin text of Francis Turretin's systematic theology. Men, their were giants in the world in those days. But today, it's quite different. Some of our students don't even know these books exist.

Turretin points out that Chrysostom, Oecumenius, Primasius and Ambrose (ancient students) say, “He is the Savior of all at present,” (that is, as far as regards the present life), but of believers only ‘in the future’ and as to eternal life. Thomas Aquinas on the passage says, ‘who is Savior of the present and future life because he saves with bodily salvation as to all, and thus he is called the Savior of all men. He saves by a spiritual salvation also as to the good and is hence said to be the Savior especially of them that believe.’” This interpretation, then, has had a wide acceptance in various forms.

So in conclusion, I conclude that 1 Tim. 4:10 does not have to do primarily with universal atonement or redemption, but with God's universal care with what Wardlaw calls "a speciality of providential care extended by the universal preserver over his own people, the fearers of his name, the lovers of his son, the righteous." And Simpson, thinking of verse 8 and Paul's words there "Of the life that now is and that which is to come," adds to Wardlaw's words an important postscript, “The proximate mercy of

preservation is in its case eclipsed by the glorious visits of everlasting salvation lying ahead. "

So, he's the Savior of all men, especially of believers, preserver in that sense, preserver of all men, especially believers whom he preserves on into the life that is life indeed.

Well, we mentioned Calvin, so I'm just going to let him have the last word by way of application. This comes incidentally not from the "Institutes" but from his sermons on the Epistles to Timothy and to Titus, a book now, a big book that is now available. And if you want to read what Calvin did from during the days of the week in Geneva, you can get a general idea of why people in those days had a great deal more understanding of the Christian doctrine than we have in our day. But in his exposition, this is what he says on this text: "It is a reason taken of that (that is, the text) that we see before our eyes that God maintaineth all creatures, although they be not so precious to him as his children which he hath adopted. For this word "savior" is not taken here in its proper signification, as they call it, in respect of everlasting salvation, which God promiseth his elect, but for a deliverer and defender.

Now we see that God defendeth the very infidels, as it is said that he maketh his son shine upon the good and the evil, and we see that all are fed by his goodness. All are delivered out of many dangers. And thus is he called here a savior of men, not in respect of the spiritual salvation of souls, but because he maintaineth all creatures. Even so it is said that he saveth the very beasts, that is to say, he keepeth them. If our Lord caused not the grass to grow for the food of beasts, in what case were they? Yea, and though there be nourishment for beasts, yet they cannot live unless God give them strength from heaven as it is said in the 104th Psalm, that so soon as God taketh away his Spirit, all things decay, and again, when he powereth out his virtue, all the earth is renewed with creatures and they gather strength. Thus, is our Lord a "Savior of all men," to whit, because his goodness stretcheth to the various varlets. (We have lots of varlets

today.) And it stretches even to the various varlets that are farthest off from him and deserve to have no acquaintance with him, but should rather be cut off from amongst the creatures of God and utterly cast away. And yet see how God stretcheth out his grace even so far, for the life that is given to them is a witness of his goodness.

And therefore, seeing God hath so great care over them that are as it were strangers to him, what shall we think of ourselves that are of his household? Not that we are better or more excellent than they which are cast away, but it proceedeth wholly of his free mercy in that he reconcileth himself unto us in our Lord Jesus Christ when he called us to the knowledge of the gospel. And then he ratified and sealed his good will to us insomuch that we cannot but be persuaded that he is our Father and taketh us for his children. And therefore, seeing we see that he nourisheth them which are far off from him, let us go and hide ourselves under his wings, for when he taketh us into his protection, he showeth that he will be a Father to us. Shall we think then that he hath cast us off and that we are so beset on all sides with miseries that we shall not be delivered in the end? Shall not we look for a good and a happy issue of the goodness of our God seeing we see and behold it stretched out even to the wicked and brute beasts?"

He's the Savior, preserver of all men. Just look around. He is the preserver of all men, but especially of believers, and the context beautifully supports it.

Many years ago, well it's not many, maybe ten year ago or fifteen years ago, I read an article by Irving Kristol. Mr. Kristol writes a column in the Wall Street Journal on the editorial page, maybe once every three months. He's one of their editors. He was the editor of a quarterly called *The Common Interest*. It had the Interest in it; I've forgotten the title. A very prominent intellectual, a neo-conservative, Jewish man. A Jewish man who has turned conservative in his political thinking. His son is William Kristol. And William Kristol was the manager of vice president Dan Quayle's campaign. He's the editor of a new magazine called *The Weekly Standard*, which I take. It's a very simple little, small magazine, but it's a very useful magazine. Well, Bill Kristol is a prominent

man. You'll see him on TV from time to time. And William Kristol, Irving Kristol is his father. He once said something that has stuck with me through all of my discussions with people. And occasionally, I throw it out and usually people say they stop at that point. This is what he said, and this I say to some of my Arminian friends, "When we lack the will to see things as they really are, there's nothing so mysterious as the obvious." "When we lack the will to see things as they really are, there's nothing so mysterious as the obvious."

This text is not an Arminian text. This is a Calvinistic text. As a matter of fact, this is the biblical text of our great Father in heaven who cares for all of his creation, but he cares particularly for those who belong to him and to his son.

Now, if there is a question or two, I'll be glad to try to answer it.

[Question from audience member] Do you see a parallel in the second chapter that would match with the exposition you just gave us in women bearing children? That there's a preservation of divine intervention for women in preserving them in childbearing, but especially women who are continuing in the faith.

[Johnson] Well, I would think, I'm speaking without a whole lot of thought, obviously, because I don't remember the question ever being asked me before, but I would say it would be an obvious application. If God is a preserving God, if that's what this means in the text of Scripture, and other passages of Scripture seem plainly to make it, then of course, that would apply. All the experiences of life. Perhaps, I've missed the point that you were trying to make. What specific?

[Comment from the same audience member] In the analogy of preservation, in 1 Timothy 2:15 where women are preserved from dying, but there's a special, it seems, oversight divinely over women who are believers.

[Johnson] Well, I think that it would be true to say that women believers may expect the particular care of God in the bringing forth of their children, that it would apply to them. But if you were suggesting that they wouldn't die in childbirth, then of course, I couldn't say that that always apply to that, because there are experiences that happen to individuals who are bad experiences physically, but this is a text that speaks of God's general care of our saints. And I'm quite sure, at least, I'm sure, I don't know whether this necessarily follows, but I'm quite sure that everyone who is the victim of what appears to us as being a accident that suggests maybe God was not caring for the person at that particular point, when we get to heaven, we'll discover that there's another explanation. Come on David.

[Question from audience member] I wanted to ask you, I know your background in Greek is immense.

[Johnson] No, it's not immense. He's going to pull out some rare text that I haven't, [Laughter] that I may never have looked at, but I may have looked at forty years ago.

[Comment from the same audience member] Actually, it's something more recent. An article appeared in the Journal of Theological Studies some years ago. The author of it was not committed to the Pauline authorship of the pastorals, but he indicated that in the post-apostolic literature there was a shift in the meaning of "malista", the word that is translated "especially".

[Johnson] I know that, I know that article. It's written by T. S. Skeets, T. Skeets. And what he sought to show was that the "malista" in that instance meant something like "to be sure" or

[Comment from the same audience member] et est, that is.

[Johnson] "That is" was a suggestion.

[Comment from the same audience member] And the idea that those who believe are not a subset giving specificity to all men, but rather identity. He's the Savior of all men, I mean, or that is, all who believe. What would your response be as far as the usage?

[Johnson] Well, my response to it is that it's a very rare meaning. And I looked up. I don't want you to get a false idea. You might think, My, he is so learned, he can pick up a little, this is a small article about that long that appeared in The Journal of Theological Studies. It's a British publication, and it's very scholarly. All the Anglicans love Journal of Theological Studies. And you will think, Boy, he really has a vast knowledge. That is not the case. I happened to, I taught the Greek text of the pastorals for a number of years, but that's something somewhat more relevant to the present time. But I happened to have read that, and furthermore, in rereading John Stott's treatment of this, which is a recent publication of Stott, he makes reference to that, too. He doesn't commit himself to that, David, but he suggests that's a possibility. But before I read Stott, I had read that, and in my notes on the exegesis of the pastoral epistles, I saw in the margin a "See the treatment by Skeets". I may even have it with me here. But I looked it up, and in looking it up, I thought, well, the thing to do is to look at all the instances of "malista". And I looked at all the instances of "malista" in the New Testament. And I could not, myself, be persuaded of what he was talking about. It just didn't seem to be the sense. And I notice even Stott doesn't really fully commit himself to that. So, I can only say that's a possible interpretation, but I don't think it suits the thrust of this general

paragraph in which the reference to the problems that Timothy is to face, as Paul sets them forth, the term preserve is especially relevant for the preceding context. So, I would respond in that way to that.

It's not often that a person happens to have read something that a student has just read. I shouldn't have said anything about it. I should've just let you think that, well, yeah, I have my hand on all of the literature that is written [Laughter]. But I felt a little guilty by even thinking of that. In the old days, I might have done that. Yes, yes, I've pondered that.

[Question from audience member] Thank you, Dr. Johnson, for your teaching. I feel like I'm getting extra credit in seminary in a winter or something. I appreciate it. My question is, I've always taken the "soterios", well, the savior, in a non soteriological and then with the "especially" shading into a soteriological sense. Is that, you're saying that it should be taken completely in a non soteriological?

[Johnson] Yeah, I prefer that.

[Comment from the same audience member] Okay, then would you respond to the question that arises then: In what sense in life as we live it out in this life, are we especially preserved as distinct from an unbelievable?

[Johnson] You're still living in good health, aren't you? [Laughter]

[Comment from the same audience member indistinct]

[Johnson] But I think it's generally true that the body of the believing saints enjoy the special providential care of a Father in heaven. It's a reality. And I can only answer it

in that way. I would say that I believe that that's characteristic of the body of the believers, that they enjoy the blessings of life. And they are blessed physically, materially, intellectually, that that is something that characterizes the people of God. So I have to leave it at that. But we all have, of course, exceptions to this. And we know some grievous, apparent exceptions. That happens to be my view.

[Question from audience member] Two things, one's more difficult than the other one. The more difficult one is, would you repeat that quote so my wife can write it down?

[Johnson] Does she want to use it against you?

[Comment from the same audience member] Yeah.

[Johnson] When we lack the will?

[Comment from the same audience member] Yeah, "If we lack the will to"

[Johnson] "To see things as they really are, there is nothing so mysterious as the obvious."

[Comment from the same audience member] Now, the easy one is: Would you comment on the, or is there any relationship between the work of Christ on the cross and common grace?

[Johnson] Well now, that is a, I'm going to just answer that to reveal my possible ignorance of things. I think, I think there is. I think that the common grace that is

manifested to us is a byproduct of the work of the Redeemer ultimately. I'm not sure I could defend that on the spur of the moment. I'd have to go looking, but that is my view. That's why it's called grace, and so in that sense, I would say that it is. In the New Testament, the things that are referred to as gracious acts of God are, I think, ultimately in the New Testament, related to the work of Christ, his person and his work. But again, I'd have to answer that only tentatively. How about an easy question?

Well, I guess it's time then for us to close. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for this time together. We praise Thee for the ministry of the word of God to us and we thank Thee for the confidence we have that the difficulties of human life, all of the things of the present life, and all of the things that have to do with the ultimates of human existence find their solution in the word that has been given to us. We pray for diligence and faithfulness to the word of God in a day in which there seems to be a departure from the teaching of that word and for the promise of that word in the life of the believers and in the life of the believing body, the church of Jesus Christ. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.