

Thursday Evening Bible Class.**1 Corinthians 5:5****Additional contributions to supplement Brother Russel's
Introduction 13th October 2022****“Deliver Unto Satan”****Passage Under Consideration:**

To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Context in NET Bible:

It is actually reported that sexual immorality exists among you, the kind of immorality that is not permitted even among the Gentiles, so that someone is cohabiting with his father's wife. 2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you have been deeply sorrowful instead and removed the one who did this from among you? 3 For even though I am absent physically, I am present in spirit. And I have already judged the one who did this, just as though I were present. 4 When you gather together in the name of our Lord Jesus, and I am with you in spirit, along with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

This is, on the surface, a difficult passage to understand, - because immediately, the phrasing makes the reader to ask questions: Who is Satan? Why does the Apostle Paul speak like this? How is the flesh destroyed? Does this mean this fellow is going to hell? Though some people might in their confusion think so, Paul is not suggesting that brothers who misbehave should be sent to the fiery doom of destruction with the devil and in his angels in the depths of hell, as the Catholics and many other denominations believe. But still, it may seem a strange way to say things.

Maybe not.

We recall that Satan in the New Testament is simply transliterated from the Hebrew, and in Hebrew, means adversary or accuser, and comes from the verb to obstruct or to oppose.

Let us hold that thought for a moment, and consider what was happening in the Ecclesia at Corinth. It was struggling with the aspect of discipline, having a large number of converts from Gentile paganism, as well as some from the Jewish persuasion. The Roman world at this time was pagan. Corinth was a large flourishing city with great wealth, and a lot of vice.

The Ecclesia being young was a little out of control, and Paul's letters, two of which are recorded for us, were designed to instil discipline, and instruct on how to maintain the purity of the faith in doctrine and practice. He deals with various aspects of bad behaviour, but in this chapter highlights how bad behaviour and blatant sin was tolerated, and even sniggered at, made the butt of jokes.. They were puffed up, proud about it! Proud, in being liberal, in tolerating sin? Proverbs 14:9 *Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.* Sin is not something to be proud and boasted about, as if it shows some kind of advanced society, It is strange how people are labelled liberal because they are tolerant of sin and sinners, but they in no way tolerate Christians, or anything to do with the Bible – oh no! That is hate speech! We can see how upside down the world in which we live in the West has become. (See recent news about Caroline Farrow for example). Perhaps it was a bit like that in Corinth.

Anyway, Paul did not hold back. He made it clear that this individual should be delivered to Satan, that the flesh be destroyed.

What did he mean?

Well, as we read through the chapter, he makes it quite clear.

- Verse 2 .. *he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

- Verse 6,7 *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven*
- Verse 9 *I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:*
- Verse 11 *But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicate...; with such an one no not to eat.*
- Verse 13 *Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*

So five times in this chapter he is telling the ecclesia to disassociate themselves with this fellow, and those like him. He explains the reason – to stop the whole lump being leavened, or infected with the yeast, that which puffs up, causes pride – the lust of the flesh. To stop the rest of the ecclesia being infected with this lustful and arrogant attitude. But not only that! Paul says alongside these five warnings to reject the company of this man, that he should be delivered to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh. This is another reason then... to destroy the flesh. Did Paul mean the man's flesh to be destroyed literally, as in that he should be killed? Really? Does not the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse from all sin, if it is repented of? Of course it does, and there is no grading of sin. Sin is sin, even if it involves immoral sexual practices, - lying, and covetousness, jealousy, all is just as bad.

Destruction of the Flesh

Elsewhere Paul talks about the destruction of the flesh only using different words in

- Galatians 5:24 *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*
- Romans 8:13 *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

- Colossians 3:5-8 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness,...

Crucify, mortify, means to kill, to destroy. This is Paul writing explaining exactly the same thing, how the destruction of the flesh is to take place – not literally, but the killing of sin in our bodies, by stopping the actions. This then is what Paul means by “the destruction of the flesh”.

It is not just for the benefit of the ecclesia, to maintain the purity of doctrine and practice, but also for the benefit of the unrepentant sinner, so that in due time and process his deeds of the flesh might be destroyed.

How?

Paul explains in another letter:

2 Thessalonians 3:14

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. The oxygen of attention is removed, the audience no longer there, the delusion of being in The Truth, “but doing evil that grace may abound” is taken away. The stark reality of censure, of disapproval in no uncertain terms is designed to shock a person into repentance if they do have a heart which is soft and pliable – take for instance David, the King of Israel, who was censured and confronted – *Thou art the man*. He had condemned himself to death, and now his own words haunted him. How he loathed himself afterwards. People like that can be saved from their sins, so telling them to stand aside, and not attend the meetings is what Nathan did to David, as he took him to one side and explained to him the terrible situation he was in. David laid on the floor in prayer for seven whole days – until the flesh was destroyed. In his case it was not only his evil deeds that were stopped in their tracks, but also his new born son. The feeling of shame is what David experienced, and it did him good. Later he wrote in Psalms 83:16 *Fill their*

faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD. He knew what he was talking about.

So what did Paul mean by deliver unto Satan?

Well, if he describes the action to be taken against the man, in the same chapter five times, as separating from their company, one can assume that perhaps delivering to Satan is the same thing.

Does Paul explain what action has to be taken against unrepentant sinners in other letters he has written? Yes:

- 2 Thessalonians 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.
- 2 Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.
- Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.
- Titus 3:10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

What is life – if it is not with Christ? It is against Christ. If you are against Christ, you are his enemy, you are his Satan. What is life it is outside of the Truth? It is death, it is hopeless, empty, it is against everything the gospel stands for. There are only two standards. Truth, lies, Life and death. There is no in between. Hope, Hopeless.

The brother who is unrepentant, after several stages of admonition – see Matthew 18 and Titus 3, will find that he has taken himself outside of the fellowship. He is now in a situation against Christ. He has been delivered to Satan. Ultimately, such a withdrawal may cause him to be ashamed.

The world without the Corinthian Ecclesia was Roman Paganism. That pseudo religion allowed any sordid behaviour. In the book of Revelation prophecy describes how the Pagan Roman Empire, would be eventually overthrown, and the influence of Christianity prevail across the Empire. This is described as 12:9 *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.* Yes, we can see how the world at large, that which was opposed to the Truth was described as Satan. Also, in 1 Peter 5:8 we can read: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary [or your satan] the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:* Again this is the influence of the world at large those things which oppose and are contrary to the mind of Christ.

See 1 Timothy 5:14: *I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary [no occasion for the satan] to speak reproachfully.*

Conclusion

We can see how then how the Apostles use the term adversary, and Satan simply means the same, as those who are opposed to the Doctrine and Practice of Christ Jesus.

So Paul in directing that an unrepentant believer be delivered to Satan, is simply another way of saying what he said 5 times in the same chapter, that the individual be avoided, until he is ashamed, and his deeds are mortified, or crucified, put to death through repentance and seeking forgiveness from the Almighty God.

We are most grateful for this merciful provision.

Brother Terry