



1 Timothy

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...of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. 1 Timothy 1:20

Paul now speaks of two people who “have suffered shipwreck” concerning the faith that he just noted in verse 19. They are Hymenaeus and Alexander. Hymenaeus is mentioned again with Philetus in 2 Timothy 2. In that letter, Paul instructs Timothy to “shun profane *and* idle babblings.” He then says that “Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.”

The name Alexander was (and still is) a common one, and it is not likely that he is the same Alexander mentioned in Acts 19. However, he may (or may not) be the same one mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:14. Regardless of that, Alexander and Hymenaeus were obviously well-known to both Paul and Timothy, being hearty heretics who, as Paul says, “I have delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

The Greek word translated as “learn” signifies training, often involving punishment. It signifies specifically “a child under development with strict training” (HELPS Word Studies). In saying that they have been “delivered to Satan,” it is indicating a saved believer. It is the same term, used only one other time in the Bible, when speaking of a sexually immoral brother in 1 Corinthians 5.

It is obvious that what Paul is speaking of here is the same as that of 1 Corinthians 5. It is a corrective measure for a wayward Christian. How is this obvious? Because he says that he has delivered them to Satan “that they may learn not to blaspheme.” If this was not a corrective

measure, they wouldn't learn anything. Satan would teach them to blaspheme, not the opposite! In other words, they are being handed over to Satan as a punitive, corrective tool. This is exactly the same as the sexually immoral believer in Corinth.

Satan is the ruler of this world, but he is defeated before Christ. He has no power over a believer; he can only afflict them as they continue in their earthly walk. The choice belongs to each believer. Will we will follow the truth or follow falsehood? It is a constant battle (see Romans 7:13-25). These believers had decided to follow falsehood. Paul has delivered them to Satan as a corrective measure. This is the intent behind the words of Hebrews 12, where the same word is used three times –

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

⁶ For whom the Lord loves **He chastens**,
And scourges every son whom He receives.”

⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father **does not chasten**? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days **chastened us** as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Hebrews 12:5-11

Paul is the Lord's instrument for the establishment of doctrine. Therefore, he is also the authorized representative to accomplish that which is spoken of here in Hebrews 12. In these words, only the doctrine of eternal salvation, not a loss of salvation, can be found. The oft-asked question is, “What will happen to a person who walks away from the faith?” The answer is right here in Paul's letter to Timothy. It is found elsewhere in 2 Peter 1:9. A person can walk away from the faith, or they can completely forget that they were ever saved, but God does not let them go, nor does He forget. If a person is truly saved at one point, they are truly saved forever. The doctrine of “loss of salvation” is proven false.

Life application: Do you have a loved one in your life who received Christ as Lord, believing in his heart that God raised him from the dead, but who has now walked away from his faith? Be assured that God has not given up on him, even if he has given up on God. The lesson of disobedient Israel as a group follows through with disobedient individuals. God may punish, but He does not cast away forever.

CHAPTER 2

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 1 Timothy 2:1

The word “exhort” falls short of a command. For Paul, it is an urging of a matter in order to ensure that what is spoken will lead to happiness and a positive outcome. With this in mind, his exhortation is concerning the communication of Timothy, and indeed all appointed ministers, with God. It certainly includes those of all people who are in Christ, but Paul’s words are more directed to the pastoral conduct of the church. That this is speaking of communication with God is seen in the words, “all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks.” Each of these is a type of communication between an individual and God.

Note that the actual meaning of the words in Greek are rather difficult to pin down, and translators have done their best to give the sense of what they believe each word is speaking of. Understanding this, the meaning of the English is explained, trusting the translators efforts here.

Supplications are types of prayers for petition. It is requesting the filling of a want or need that is on the heart of the individual. “Look upon me, O God, and be merciful to me. My sin is great, and I desire your hand of forgiveness.”

Prayers are general utterances for whatever is hoped for, desired, needed, and etc. And actually, most communication with God is a type of prayer. If we are speaking to him as our Creator in a respectful way, it is prayer because it is transcending the sphere in which we live, rising to Him.

Intercessions are petitions made on behalf of others. We can plead for their needs, hopes, health, desires, and so on. This is not a mediatorial role, which alone is filled by Christ, but it should be an active and vibrant part of the true prayer person’s life – looking out for the needs of others, and bringing them before God.

Paul then adds in, “and giving of thanks.” God gives, and so we would be truly remiss in not thanking Him for all good things that we have. We can thank Him for restored health, a pretty flower, a new job, or any and every other good thing that comes our way.

He then concludes with, “for all men.” In these words is a complete and total refutation of the Calvinist view on election and predestination. Calvinism teaches “limited atonement” is seen in the cross of Christ. In essence, He died for the elect, and He simply passes over those who

are not a part of His plan. How can it be said by Paul that we are to pray “for all men” if the scope of God’s atonement is limited? Salvation is the number one issue for all men. What is the point of praying for those who would be passed over? Of course, a Calvinist would say, “Well, I don’t know which person is elect.” Then why pray for anyone? If God’s decision to elect cannot be thwarted, then why bother praying for anything at all. Again, salvation is the highest need of all. Everything else is secondary to that. Accepting the doctrine of limited atonement is like starting a factory to build football bats. It is pointless, and it is a waste of time.

Life application: Paul tells Timothy to pray. If prayer were not effective, then there would be no point to do so. Due to the heavy stress of Paul in all of his letters concerning prayer, we should be pay heed, and make prayer a constant and vibrant part of our walk with the Lord.