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1 Corinthians 5

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

1 Corinthians 5.

Topics.

- Sexual immorality among the Corinthian church.
- Absent in body, present in spirit.
- To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh.
- A little leaven leavens the whole lump.
- For Christ, our Passover lamb has been sacrificed.
- Do not to associate with outsiders.
- God judges those outside Christ.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Paul rebuked the Corinthians for judging him and told them that no-one should judge anyone concerning the motives and intents of the heart and that he has become their father in Christ through the gospel. The chapter ended with Paul asking the Corinthians, "Shall I come to you with a rod or with love in a spirit of gentleness?"

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

- In certain chapters this letter is written as though Paul is having a conversation with the Corinthians (i.e., he asks them a question and then answers it etc.).
- Though Paul's letter is directed to the Corinthian Church the content applies to any church or believer in the same situations.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-5

Sexual immorality among the Corinthian Church.

- **1 Corinthians 5:1-5:** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans for a man has his father's wife. ²And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. ³For though absent in body, I am present in spirit and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. ⁴When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus ⁵you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

It appears that this man is sleeping with his mother, but it is more likely that she is his half mother (step mother) but either way it is behaviour that should not be tolerated amongst the Assembly of God.

Absent in body, present in Spirit: the words, "Though absent in body, I am present in spirit" means that Paul has made his decision as though he was with them in person and though he is not physically with them they are to be conscious of his attitude and judgement and act on his instructions regarding this matter as if he was present with them.

The meaning of Satan: Satan in the Hebrew and Greek language does not have a capital *S* and means an adversary, one who withstands, opposes or resists and not some kind of evil angelic powerful spirit creature. Nevertheless, it is a word that has come to symbolize everything

that is the total opposite to what is good, decent and right and that is opposed to God and His will and throughout the Bible is often personified as the arch enemy of everything that is good and right.

Satan's dwelling place: The Bible tells us that God's dwelling place is heaven, but where in the Bible does it tell us where Satan dwells? As we read Matthew, Mark, Galatians and many other books of the Bible, we discover that all of the following attitudes come from the human heart.

- Evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication's, thefts and a false witness.
- Blasphemies, covetousness, wickedness, deceit and lasciviousness.
- Pride, foolishness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation's and wrath.
- Strife, sedition's and heresies, envying, drunkenness, reveling, and such like.

The Bible says all of these abide or dwell in the human heart and that they are all the works of Satan and in the book of James we read:

- Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire" (lust in the KJV) (James 1:14).

So, the word Satan is a personification of man's own sinful desires and the mind of the flesh (self, ego, pride and greed etc.,) when a person is acting against God and His will. If Satan is the evil power in the world and all of his works proceed from the heart of man, then Satan's dwelling place must be within the human body or more specifically the heart of every human. Satan is simply the personification of self, ego, pride and greed etc., rebelling against God, His will, His plans and His purposes. In the Hebrew language Satan does not have a capital *S*, the word simply means an adversary and neither does Satan in its original meaning carry the idea that it is some kind of evil angelic powerful creature, it is simply a word that applies to anything that acts as an adversary, especially to God and His will.

The word Satan can apply to any individual human, group of people, (secular or religious), government or leaders of nations that are opposed to God and acting as adversaries to God's will and what is good, decent and right. For further information of Satan see the title:

- Satan in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

To be put out of the church: to be put out of the church during Paul's generations was a serious matter since church wasn't a once a week attendance as it is today, but a brother or sisters life, to be put out of the church meant the man would lose contact with his family and friends in Christ.

Delivered to Satan: since there are but two kingdoms i.e., the Kingdom of God (the church) and the kingdom of the world, which is regarded as being under the control of Satan the words, "Deliver him unto Satan" (v5) refers to putting the man out of the church and therefore out of God's Kingdom which is to subject him to the dominion of the other thus the one who is put out is delivered to the power of Satan, in that he is cast out of the house of God. In the book of Matthew Jesus himself said:

- If a man refuses to listen to the church let him be to you as a Gentile (heathen in KJV) and a tax collector" (publican in KJV) (Matt 18:17)

This means let him be put out of the privileges of the body of Christ, which is the church, outside of which Satan is lord and master, but the goal is not that they would utterly perish, but that they may repent and be saved to eternal life and everlasting glory.

Destruction of flesh, that his soul might be saved: the words, "The destruction of the flesh" does not mean that the man was to die under the infliction of the denunciation, for the goal was to recover him. It is evident that, whatever he suffered as the consequence of being put out, he survived it, and Paul in his second letter instructed the Corinthians to admit him again into their fellowship, (2 Cor 2:7). It is clear this punishment was designed firstly to bring the man to repentance, since the words, "That his soul might be saved" means that he might be corrected, humbled, and reformed by being put out of the church, and secondly to protect the purity and preservation of those in the church. This is because a little heaven has the potential to spread the ferment through a great lump (1 Cor 5:6) meaning the bad example of any person has the danger to spread and pollute the purity of others far and wide (i.e., one scabbed sheep infects a whole flock). This is the reason gross and scandalous sinners should be put out of the body of Christ, but never from vengeance or punishment, but always with motivation and hope that the offender will recover, repent and be saved not only from mortal ruin, but eternal loss so that they may be saved to eternal life. To bring a person to repentance was the object of all true discipline carried out by the early church and in this instance, it was effective, we know this because in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians regarding this man he wrote:

- For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow so I beg you to reaffirm your love for him" (2 Cor. 2:6-8).

NOTE: some affirm that this man's punishment was tortuous sickness's inflicted on his body by apostolic miraculous power given by Paul to the Corinthian church, but there is no mention of any disease or sickness in this story and therefore this theory can only be viewed as a speculation added to this Paul's words, "He may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow" Show that this man was wounded not by sickness but by the loss of his fellowship with those who loved the Lord and who he obviously regarded as friends.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:6-8

A little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump.

- **1 Corinthians 5:6-8:** Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸Let us therefore celebrate the festival not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Leaven: carries the idea of something small spreading throughout a much larger object and infecting it so that its natural character is changed. It is a substance used to ferment dough (for example yeast), or fermented dough itself. In Judaism, it is forbidden to eat leaven, or even to have it in one's home, during the festival of Passover. This proscription is derived from the biblical account of the exodus from Egypt (see Exodus 12:14-18), which the festival commemorates: in their haste to flee Egypt, the Israelites did not have time to leaven their bread. Rabbinical Judaism prohibits leaven in any substance whatsoever on Passover, terming it *hametzdig*, or unfit. At the start of Passover, a solemn search is conducted in order to remove all remaining leaven from the house. For the duration of the holiday Orthodox Jews then consume unleavened bread, usually in the form of matzo. Jesus said, "Beware of the leaven (that is, the doctrine) of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matt 16:6, 12). The Sadducees were a Jewish aristocratic party that acknowledged only the written Torah as binding and who did not believe in the resurrection, personal immortality and denied angels and spirits, while the Pharisees were legalist who held the smallest detail of the law above love, compassion and mercy.

Old leaven: in the context of these verses refers to the Corinthians boasting of their gifts and success, their exaltation of each other and their tolerating gross sinful behaviour in their midst. It should be noted that the Corinthian's are not boasting as some think about the son sleeping with his mother, but their gifts and spiritual positions of importance (see previous two chapters).

For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed: the words, "Let us therefore celebrate the festival" (v8) refer to the Jewish Passover celebration, notice Paul tells the Corinthians they are unleavened, because of the death of Christ the Passover Lamb, meaning before God they are counted righteous not because of their self-efforts but because of Christ's death, this is because God counts our faith in His Son as our righteousness and not our self-efforts to attain to it, nevertheless that does not mean we should continue in a lifestyle that would be offensive to God or bring a bad testimony to the name of Christ. Thus the reason Paul tells the Corinthians to put off malice, wickedness, boasting etc., and put on sincerity as opposed to hypocrisy, pretence and deception and truth referring not only to the words of Christ, but also living our lives with forgiveness and compassion toward others, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ and with the aim to live in a manner that reflects the character of Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:9-13

Do not to Associate with Outsiders.

- **1 Corinthians 5:9-13:** I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people ¹⁰not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. ¹²For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? ¹³God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."

This is a good principle to remember, those who belong to Christ should only be focused on judging and disciplining those in his family, since outsiders are not part of Christ family we have no right to impose our morals and standards onto them, rather our goal should be to invite them into the family in spite of their muddy garments, since it is only when a person is connected to the love of God through faith in Christ that the desires of the heart are changed and there is a natural willingness to live in a manner that honours God.

When we impose our moral and religious standards onto the secular world, we turn them against us since we appear to the unsaved to be self-righteous, especially since even our family is full of flaws and sinful dysfunctions and aberrations. If still in doubt about imposing our religious standards onto the secular world, ponder for a moment how you would feel if your next door neighbour came over and attempted to force or impose on you their methods of raising your children, most would tell these kind of neighbour's to get out of their house very quickly especially when they have observed that not all their children are a perfect example.

Christians and communes: there is another good lesson we can learn from these words of Paul, some in the Christian faith feel they need to escape the world and live in Christian communes, but this is not what Paul is teaching, rather he is saying in the world you will be living amongst, sexually immoral people, the greedy, swindlers, idolaters, reviler (those who insult and abuse) and drunkards thus living in the world is normal Christian life, but amongst the family of Christ there should be a much higher standard.

The best testimony: the best testimony we can be to the fallen and lost world is not to impose our standards and morals on them, but to live them ourselves. Ponder for a moment, how many times have you seen polite and well-mannered (howbeit not perfect) children and thought, "What good parents they must have."

God judges those outside Christ: Paul makes it very clear that, God judges those outside the global body of Christ our calling is not to change the world, but invite them into the family of Christ and encourage, nurture and discipline those within it as they grow from a spiritual infant acting in a human manner unto a mature brother or sister in Christ.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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