

1 Timothy 1:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Analysis

Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. Paul names two specific individuals who shipwrecked faith by rejecting good conscience: Hymenaeus and Alexander. Hymenaeus appears again in 2 Timothy 2:17-18 as teaching that the resurrection had already occurred, overthrowing some people's faith. Alexander may be the coppersmith who did Paul great harm (2 Timothy 4:14), though this was a common name. Both represent actual persons whose public doctrinal error required public discipline.

Paul states he "delivered unto Satan" (paredōka tō Satana, παρέδωκα τῷ Σατανᾷ) these men. This phrase appears also in 1 Corinthians 5:5 regarding the incestuous man. It refers to formal excommunication from the church, removing them from the spiritual protection and blessing of the Christian community and placing them back in Satan's domain (the world outside the church). This isn't vindictive but remedial—designed to produce repentance.

The purpose clause "that they may learn not to blaspheme" (hina paideusōsin mē blasphēmēin, ἵνα παιδευθῶσι μὴ βλασφημεῖν) reveals discipline's redemptive intent. The verb paideuō (παιδεύω) means to train, discipline, or instruct—often through corrective suffering. "Blaspheme" (blasphēmēin, βλασφημεῖν) likely refers to their false teaching which dishonored God and Christ. Church discipline aims at restoration, not merely punishment, though the process may be severe.

Historical Context

Church discipline was standard practice in early Christianity, grounded in Jesus' instructions (Matthew 18:15-20) and apostolic teaching (1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15). The church was to maintain purity by confronting sin and, when necessary, removing unrepentant members. This discipline served three purposes:

1. restoring the sinning individual
2. protecting others from doctrinal or moral infection,
3. maintaining the church's testimony before the watching world.

Excommunication was serious in the ancient world where identity, community, and livelihood were closely intertwined.

Being expelled from the church meant social isolation, loss of fellowship, and exclusion from communal support. This severity reflected both the seriousness of sin and the preciousness of church membership. Modern Western individualism makes such discipline's impact harder to appreciate.

The willingness to name names publicly—identifying Hymenaeus and Alexander specifically—contrasts with contemporary hesitancy to call out false teachers. Paul understood that protecting the church sometimes requires publicly identifying those who spread destructive error. While general warnings suffice for many situations, sometimes naming individuals is necessary to prevent their influence from spreading.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How can your church practice biblical discipline with both necessary firmness and redemptive love?
2. What specific situations warrant public identification of false teachers, and how should this be done biblically?
3. How do you balance extending grace to struggling sinners while maintaining standards for church membership and leadership?

Interlinear Text

οὓς	ἐστιν	Ὑμέναιος	καὶ	Ἀλέξανδρος	οὓς	
Of whom	is	Hymenaeus	and	Alexander	Of whom	
G3739	G2076	G5211	G2532	G223	G3739	
παρέδωκα	τῷ	Σατανᾶ	ἵνα	παιδευθῶσιν	μὴ	βλασφημεῖν
I have delivered	G3588	unto Satan	that	they may learn	not	to blaspheme
G3860		G4567	G2443	G3811	G3361	G987

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 11:32 (Parallel theme): But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

2 Timothy 2:17 (Parallel theme): And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

2 Thessalonians 3:15 (Parallel theme): Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Revelation 3:19 (Parallel theme): As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Acts 19:33 (Parallel theme): And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

