

Mark 9:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Analysis

Jesus repeated: 'if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched' (ἐὰν ὁ πούς σου σκανδαλίζῃ σε, ἀπόκοψον αὐτόν· καλόν ἐστὶν σε εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ζωὴν χωλὸν ἢ τοὺς δύο πόδας ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γέενναν, εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον). After addressing hand (v. 43), Jesus turns to foot—whatever leads into sin must be radically eliminated. The foot represents our path, direction, places we go. If certain locations, activities, or relationships lead to sin, eliminate them. Better to limp through life avoiding sin than walk smoothly into hell. The stark choice—'enter life halt' versus 'be cast into hell'—allows no middle ground. The passive voice 'be cast' indicates divine judgment. Hell is eternal punishment, not self-chosen separation. Jesus' hyperbolic language emphasizes that no earthly loss compares to eternal damnation.

Historical Context

Ancient world had no prosthetics or accessibility accommodations—being 'halt' (chōlon, χωλὸν, lame/crippled) meant severe hardship, likely begging for survival. Yet Jesus said even this is 'better' (kalon, καλόν, good/preferable) than hell. This demonstrates hell's incomparable horror—any earthly suffering is preferable. First-century Judaism recognized hell (Gehenna) as punishment for the wicked. Pharisees believed in bodily resurrection and judgment (Acts 23:8); Sadducees denied both. Jesus' teaching on hell was extensive and explicit, contradicting

modern claims that hell is later Christian invention. Paul taught eternal destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:9), Revelation depicts eternal torment (Revelation 14:10-11; 20:10), and Hebrews warns of judgment (Hebrews 10:26-31). Hell's reality motivated early Christian evangelism and holiness.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' willingness to use shocking imagery (cutting off feet) demonstrate the urgency of dealing radically with sin?
2. What does preferring lifelong lameness over hell reveal about eternal punishment's severity?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| καὶ | ἐὰν | ὁ | πόδας | σου | σκανδαλίζῃ | σε | ἀπόκοψον |
| And | if | | feet | thy | offend | thee | cut |
| G2532 | G1437 | G3588 | G4228 | G4675 | G4624 | G4571 | G609 |
| αὐτόν· | καλόν | ἐστίν | σοι | εἰσελθεῖν | εἰς | τὴν | ζωὴν |
| it | better | it is | for thee | to enter | into | | life |
| G846 | G2570 | G2076 | G4671 | G1525 | G1519 | G3588 | G2222 |
| χωλὸν | ἢ | τοὺς | δύο | πόδας | ἔχοντα | βληθῆναι | εἰς τὴν |
| halt | than | | two | feet | having | to be cast | into |
| G5560 | G2228 | G3588 | G1417 | G4228 | G2192 | G906 | G3588 |
| γέενναν | εἰς | τὸ | πῦρ | τὸ | ἄσβεστον, | | |
| hell | into | | the fire | | that never shall be quenched | | |
| G1067 | G1519 | G3588 | G4442 | G3588 | G762 | | |

Additional Cross-References

Mark 9:43 (Parallel theme): And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Matthew 18:8 (Parallel theme): Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

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