

SATAN AS ADVERSARY AND ALLY IN THE PROCESS OF ECCLESIAL DISCIPLINE

THE USE OF THE PROLOGUE TO JOB
IN 1 CORINTHIANS 5:5 AND 1 TIMOTHY 1:20

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Summary

Twice in the NT Paul refers to delivering someone to Satan. In 1 Corinthians 5:5, the apostle tells the Corinthian believers to hand a man living in sexual immorality over to Satan (παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ). In 1 Timothy 1:20, Paul tells Timothy that he handed Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan (παρέδωκα τῷ σατανᾷ). Paul's language is strikingly similar to language contained in the prologue to Job. In Job 1:6-12, Satan disputes the blamelessness of Job and seeks Yahweh's permission to test Job's integrity. First, Yahweh allows Satan to attack Job's most prized possessions (Job 1:12). After the first attack fails, Satan asks for Yahweh's permission to assault Job physically. Then in Job 2:6 LXX, the LORD says to Satan, 'Behold, I deliver him to you' (Ἴδὸν παραδίδωμί σοι αὐτόν). In this paper, I argue that in both 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 Timothy 1:20 Paul draws from the prologue to Job, and he portrays Satan as an enemy of God who nevertheless can play the part of an ally in the process of church discipline.

1. Introduction

C.S. Lewis once wrote, 'There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and

unhealthy interest in them.¹ My particular interest (healthy I hope) in this paper is the way the prologue to Job shapes Paul's understanding of the role Satan plays in ecclesial discipline. Twice in the NT Paul refers to delivering someone to Satan (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20).² In both texts, Paul's language is strikingly similar to the language of Job 2:6 LXX.

Job 2:6 LXX

εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος τῷ διαβόλῳ³ Ἴδου παραδίδομί σοι αὐτόν, μόνον τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ διαφύλαξον.

And the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, I hand him to you—only spare his life.'⁴

¹ C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1942; repr., 1946) 9.

² A full discussion of the authorship of 1 Timothy is outside the purview of this paper. Most NT scholars today maintain that 1 Timothy is the product of a Pauline admirer or 'school'. See, for example, Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972) 4; Jürgen Roloff, *Der Erste Brief an Timotheus* (EKKNT; Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1988) 45-46; Lorenz Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe. Erste Folge. Kommentar zum Ersten Timotheusbrief* (HTKNT; Freiburg: Herder, 1994) xlvi; J.M. Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996) 20; Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (ECC; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000) 19-22; Paul Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007) 197-209. It seems appropriate, however, to speak of a recent resurgence of arguments for authenticity. See, for example, Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 2001) 55-99; Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006) 9-88; Ben Witherington, III, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John* (Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006) 49-75; Myriam Klinker-De Klerck, 'The Pastoral Epistles: Authentic Pauline Writings,' *EuroJTh* 17 (2008) 101-108; Claire S. Smith, *Pauline Communities as 'Scholastic Communities': A Study of the Vocabulary of 'Teaching' in 1 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (WUNT 2.335; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012) 15-30, 392. The citation of Job I find in 1 Cor. 5:5 and 1 Tim. 1:20 is short, and the import relatively complex (as I will argue below); thus, in my view, it is more likely that we have in these NT texts *one author* repeating his exegesis of Job. It remains possible, however, that instead we have *two authors* exegeting the prologue in the same way.

³ σατανᾶς occurs in the LXX only once (Sir. 21:27). διάβολος is much more common (twenty-two occurrences). In the NT, Satan is always a proper name. However, this is not generally the case in the OT. For a concise discussion of Satan in the Old and New Testaments, see Richard H. Bell, *Deliver Us from Evil: Interpreting the Redemption from the Power of Satan in New Testament Theology* (WUNT 216; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 10-23. Robert E. Moses, "'The Satan' in Light of the Creation Theology of Job", *HBT* 34 (2012) 19-34, argues that, though there is a clear development in the character, scholars need not drive a huge wedge between OT and later Jewish/Christian depictions of Satan.

⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

1 Corinthians 5:5

παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ⁵ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῆ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου.⁶

You are to *hand this man to Satan* for the destruction of the flesh, in order that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord.

1 Timothy 1:20

ὧν ἐστὶν Ὑμέναιος καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος, οὓς παρέδωκα τῷ σατανᾷ, ἵνα παιδευθῶσιν μὴ βλασφημεῖν.

Among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, *whom I have handed to Satan*, in order that they might be instructed not to blaspheme.

In his seminal study, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, Richard Hays formulates seven criteria for testing claims about the presence of scriptural echoes. 1) Availability. Was the proposed source at the disposal of the author? 2) Volume. What is the degree of explicit repetition of words or syntactical patterns? 3) Recurrence. How often does Paul elsewhere allude to the same source? 4) Thematic coherence. How well does the alleged echo fit into the argument Paul is developing? 5) Historical plausibility. Could the apostle have intended the alleged meaning effect, and could his original readers have grasped it? 6) History of interpretation. Have other readers heard the same echo? 7) Satisfaction. Does the proposed reading illuminate the discourse?⁷

Our alleged echoes pass the tests of availability, recurrence, and historical plausibility. Paul references the book of Job throughout his letters, and he does so in a number of ways.⁸ It is not at all improbable that in both 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 Timothy 1:20 Paul intended an allusion to the prologue of Job, though we cannot say whether his

⁵ In the NT, Satan is referred to usually by the terms διάβολος (thirty-seven times) and σατανᾶς (thirty-six times). The terms are interchangeable, as demonstrated by Matt 4:10-11: 'Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan (σατανᾶς) ..." Then the devil (ὁ διάβολος) left him ...' Paul uses both terms, though he prefers σατανᾶς (undisputed: Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11, 14; 12:7; 1 Thess. 2:18; disputed: 2 Thess. 2:9; 1 Tim. 1:20; 5:15).

⁶ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου is to be preferred over the expansions of ⚭ and D. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994) 485.

⁷ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) 29-32.

⁸ Robert E. Moses, 'Physical And/or Spiritual Exclusion? Ecclesial Discipline in 1 Corinthians 5', *NTS* 59 (2013) 183, cites Rom. 1:20 (Job 12:7-9); 8:34 (Job 34:29); 9:20 (Job 9:12); 11:33 (Job 5:9; 9:10); 11:34 (Job 15:18); 11:35 (Job 41:11); 1 Cor. 1:20 (Job 12:17); 1:24 (Job 12:13); 2:10 (Job 11:7); 3:19 (Job 5:12-13); 4:4 (Job 27:6); 2 Cor. 4:6 (Job 37:15); Gal. 6:7 (Job 4:8); Phil. 1:19 (Job 13:16); 1 Thess. 5:8 (Job 2:9); 5:22 (Job 1:1, 8); 2 Thess. 2:8 (Job 4:9). I add 1 Tim. 6:7 (Job 1:21).

readers in Corinth and in Ephesus would have heard the echo. We are on less certain ground regarding the tests of volume and the history of interpretation. The citation is rather short, though it is worth noting that Job 2:6 is, to my knowledge, the only verse in the LXX that references a person being handed over (*παραδίδωμι*) to the principal adversary (*διάβολος*). As for the history of interpretation, the reference has only occasionally been given an appropriate amount of attention.⁹ Two of the most notable recent studies are those of Sydney Page (2007)¹⁰ and Robert Moses (2013).¹¹ Page provides an analysis of a variety of OT and NT texts in which Satan is portrayed as a servant of God. He furnishes us with an insightful reading of the prologue to Job, a reading I will build on below. The wide scope of Page's article, however, prevents him from attempting a thorough exegesis of 1 Corinthians 5:5 or 1 Timothy 1:20. Moses, on the other hand, demonstrates his exegetical acumen with a cogent interpretation of the echo of Job 2:6 in 1 Corinthians 5:5. He, however, has little to say about 1 Timothy 1:20. Page and Moses have made significant contributions, though, I suggest, there is more to be heard. Finally, with respect to thematic coherence and satisfaction, the verdict must await the exegetical and theological defense. To this defense we now turn.

I state my thesis plainly: in both 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 Timothy 1:20, Paul draws from the prologue to Job and depicts Satan as an adversary of God who nevertheless can play the part of an ally in the process of ecclesial discipline. My argument will unfold as follows. I will first provide a synopsis of the prologue to Job, highlighting a number of key theological points within the narrative. I will then offer an exegetical analysis of both 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 Timothy 1:20, attempting to show how in each text Paul appropriates the key points from the prologue to Job.

⁹ Recent works on the use of the OT in 1 Timothy have not included discussions of the echo I suggest here. See Philip H. Towner, '1-2 Timothy and Titus', in *Commentary on the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament* (ed. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007) 891-918; B. Paul Wolfe, 'The Sagacious Use of Scripture', in *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles* (ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Terry L. Wilder; Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010) 199-218. The echo is mentioned en passant by Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, '1 Corinthians', in *Commentary on the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament* (ed. Beale and Carson) 695-752.

¹⁰ Sydney H.T. Page, 'Satan: God's Servant', *JETS* 50 (2007) 449-65.

¹¹ Moses, 'Physical And/or Spiritual Exclusion?', 172-91.

2. Job 1–2

The story of Job begins: ‘A man there was in the land of Uz. Job was his name. That man was true, blameless, righteous, and God-fearing, abstaining from everything evil’ (1:1). The first sentence of the prologue firmly establishes Job’s character: he is a man of both integrity and loyalty. Immediately following the introductory description of Job is a tally of his most prized possessions. Job was indeed ‘the greatest of all the people of the east’ (1:3). Having painted this blissful earthly picture, the author shifts the setting to heaven. In heaven, a council convenes, not once, but twice before God (1:6-12; 2:1-6).¹² These council scenes are for us the most pertinent parts of the prologue.

Included among the host of heaven is Satan, who is singled out by God (1:6-7).¹³ God displays an interest in the recent whereabouts of Satan, and Satan offers a cryptic report of his earthly endeavors. Then, in Job 1:8, God directs Satan’s attention to Job: ‘Have you applied your mind to this faithful one of mine?’¹⁴ God announces his confidence in the integrity of Job, but Satan is not convinced. ‘Send out your hand,’ Satan says to God, ‘and touch everything he has, and surely he will curse you to your face’ (1:11).¹⁵ Thus, the basic question of the prologue is raised: Can a man hold on to God when there are no physical benefits attached?¹⁶ God accepts the challenge.¹⁷ Satan is

¹² Most commentators assume God’s court assembles in heaven, though there is nothing in the text of Job about the location of the levy.

¹³ Scholars dispute whether or not Satan has a rightful place in the divine court. Marvin H. Pope, *Job* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965) 10, suggests Satan is a member of the court and comes with other attendants to report on the fulfillment of his duties. Pope pictures Satan as a kind of spy roaming the earth and reporting to God on the evil he uncovers. This view has been recently articulated by John Gray, *The Book of Job* (The Text of the Hebrew Bible 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010) 32, 126-27. Francis I. Andersen, *Job* (TOTC; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1976) 82, on the contrary, argues that Satan is an intruder: ‘It is because the Satan has no right to be there that he alone is asked his business.’ Page, ‘Satan: God’s Servant’, 450, rightly points out that, whether Satan is a member or an intruder, the narrative emphasizes that he is inferior to God.

¹⁴ This is my paraphrase.

¹⁵ The final part of v. 11 in the LXX reads: εἰ μὴν εἰς πρόσωπόν σε εὐλόγησει. The writer or scribe has substituted the word ‘curse’ with the word ‘bless’ to avoid the inappropriate idea of cursing God.

¹⁶ Andersen, *Job*, 84-85.

¹⁷ Many interpreters refer to the arrangement between God and Satan as a ‘wager’. See, for example, Moses, “‘The Satan’ in Light of the Creation Theology of Job”, 21.

granted permission to do what he wishes to Job's property, but Job's person is to remain unharmed (1:12).

God's servant proved his mettle. Upon losing his most prized possessions, Job cries out: 'The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away ... blessed be the name of the Lord' (1:21). So Satan asks for more. The heavenly council convenes for the second time, and the procedure is identical to the first meeting. This time, however, when Satan is allowed to speak freely, he appeals to God: 'But send out your hand now and touch Job's bones and his flesh, and surely he will curse you to your face' (2:5). At this point in the narrative, God delivers Job's person to Satan, with only one restriction—'spare his life' (2:6).

Having briefly rehearsed the story of Job, I will now underscore several points from the prologue that should illuminate both 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 Timothy 1:20.¹⁸ First, it is important to note that in the prologue to Job God is the orchestrator of the consignment. Interestingly, it is God, not Satan, who initiates the conversation about Job (1:8; 2:3). God wants Job on the agenda, presumably because his plan is to validate his servant's integrity. All along, God has a good purpose in mind for his servant. Second, the narrative repeatedly emphasizes Satan's subservience to God. It is clear from the story that Satan does not have the power to act independently of the will of God. For Satan to touch Job, God must remove the protective hedge he has placed around his servant (1:9-12).¹⁹ Moreover, once God has granted Satan access to Job, Satan must abide by the regulations God devises. Thus, following the first heavenly assembly Satan cannot advance beyond an attack on Job's possessions (1:12), and following the second assembly he cannot take Job's life (2:6).

Third, there is in the prologue a collision of intentions. Again I state the basic question of the prologue to Job: Can a man hold on to God when there are no physical benefits attached? God's purpose seems to be to demonstrate that Job can. Satan, on the contrary, hopes the

This seems to go beyond the evidence of the text. No stakes (such as the soul of Job) are indicated.

¹⁸ Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997) 85, avers that the faint echo of Job does not give interpreters much help in understanding the 1 Corinthians passage. On the contrary, I understand the echo of Job to be a helpful key to shed light on both these NT texts.

¹⁹ Both Page, 'Satan: God's Servant', 451, and Moses, 'Physical And/or Spiritual Exclusion?', 186, emphasize this point as well.

torment will be too much for Job to bear.²⁰ It is his *aim*, not his *activity as afflicter*, which makes Satan God's adversary in the challenge. Indeed, there is ambiguity in the prologue with respect to who actually afflicts Job. Note the use of the term 'hand' in the conclusion of both heavenly assemblies:

Satan to God (Job 1:11 LXX)

ἀλλὰ ἀποστείλον τὴν χειρὰ σου καὶ ἅψαι πάντων, ὧν ἔχει· εἰ μὴν εἰς πρόσωπόν σε εὐλογήσει.

But send out *your hand*, and touch all that he has, and surely he will curse you to your face.

God to Satan (Job 1:12 LXX)

Ἴδοὺ πάντα, ὅσα ἔστιν αὐτοῦ, δίδωμι ἐν τῇ χειρὶ σου, ἀλλὰ αὐτοῦ μὴ ἅψῃ.

Behold, I give into *your hand* all that he has, but do not touch him.

Satan to God (Job 2:5 LXX)

οὐ μὴν δὲ ἀλλὰ ἀποστείλας τὴν χειρὰ σου ἅψαι τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτοῦ· εἰ μὴν εἰς πρόσωπόν σε εὐλογήσει.

But send out *your hand* now, and touch his bones and his flesh, and surely he will curse you to your face.

God to Satan (Job 2:6 LXX)

Ἴδοὺ παραδίδωμί σοι αὐτόν, μόνον τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ διαφύλαξον.

Behold, I *hand/deliver him to you*—only spare his life.

Job is finally handed over to Satan (1:12; 2:6), so it seems that Satan is the one who afflicts him. But God is the one who removes the protective barrier, allowing Satan access to Job (1:9-11), so ultimately Job's afflictions can be traced back to God. This is certainly how Job interpreted his tribulations: '*The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away*' (1:21). In essence, both God and Satan are represented as being responsible for Job's suffering.²¹ Both are behind the afflictions, but each has his own purpose. The epilogue indicates that it is God's objective that is achieved. Job does not curse God, as Satan had hoped (1:11; 2:5). Therefore, the Lord blessed the final days of Job more than the former (42:12). Despite Satan's best efforts, the effect of the

²⁰ Page, 'Satan: God's Servant', 452, writes: 'Yahweh clearly affirms his confidence in the integrity of Job (Job 1:8; 2:3) and presumably wants Job to pass the tests he undergoes. It is hard to imagine that the author believed that Yahweh desired that Job curse him to his face! The Satan, on the other hand, contends that Yahweh's confidence is misplaced and clearly expects (wants?) Job to fail the tests to which he subjects him.'

²¹ With Page, 'Satan: God's Servant', 451-52.

affliction was positive.²² Thus, we may say that in Job's story Satan is unintentionally instrumental in bringing about God's good purpose.

3. 1 Corinthians 5:5

In 1 Corinthians 5:5, Paul draws from the prologue to Job. First Corinthians 5 deals with the process of ecclesial discipline. Paul has received a startling report: a member of the Christian community in Corinth is committing a grotesque form of sexual immorality that is not even found among the Gentiles (5:1). With the promise that he will somehow be present with the Corinthian believers when they carry out his orders (5:3-4),²³ Paul issues the sentence against this immoral man: 'You are to hand this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, in order that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord' (5:5).

As in Job 2:6 LXX, a man is delivered (*παραδίδωμι*) to the adversary. But it is important to note that the point of contact is not between the Corinthian man and Job. Job is handed over to Satan because he abstained from everything evil (Job 1:1). Not so the Corinthian man. He is a specimen of sexual sin. Rather, the points of contact lie in the role Satan plays in the texts, and in the role God plays in Job, which is assumed by the church in Corinth.²⁴ Akin to the story of Job, Paul, together with the Christian community in Corinth, authorizes the consignment (5:4). The church, as God's representative, is to hand the erring Corinthian over to Satan.²⁵ This most likely means

²² James T. South, 'A Critique of the "Curse/Death" Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5.1-8', *NTS* 39 (1993) 560, writes: '[Satan's] efforts to destroy Job are turned in a positive direction, so that Job ends up with a deeper sense of God than he had prior to his sufferings.'

²³ Hays, *First Corinthians*, 84, rightly points out that Paul, who certainly had mystical convictions (e.g., 2 Cor. 12:2), probably thought of his own spirit as being transported to Corinth to participate in a mysterious yet real way in the church's disciplinary action.

²⁴ With Moses, 'Physical And/or Spiritual Exclusion?', 185.

²⁵ On a canonical reading, we can say that the church publishes the divine decision. According to 1 Cor. 5:4, it is when the Christian community is assembled, and with the power of the Lord Jesus, that discipline is to occur. This is consistent with Matt 18:18-20, where the gathered community confirms a preceding divine denunciation/absolution. The NRSV is imprecise here; the combination of the future and the perfect is better translated as follows: 'Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth *shall have been bound* in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth *shall have been loosed* in heaven' (v. 18). Jesus is not giving the church the right to make decisions that will then become binding on God. Quite to the contrary, he is asserting that, when the church excommunicates a member, that action of 'binding' the member in sin and under

that the so-called brother is to be excluded from the fellowship of believers.²⁶ Paul declares elsewhere that those within the body of Christ have been delivered from the domain of darkness; they have been transferred to the kingdom of the beloved Son (Col. 1:13). It is those outside the church who are subject to ‘the god of this world’ (2 Cor. 4:4). Accordingly, the Corinthian man must be excluded from the fellowship of believers for Satan to have jurisdiction over him. The protective hedge the Corinthian enjoys by being within the Christian community is removed.²⁷ He re-enters the domain of darkness as a lone individual who is vulnerable to the forces of destruction.²⁸

But what did Paul expect would happen to the man once he had been excluded from the fellowship? The man is handed over to Satan, Paul says, ‘for the destruction of the flesh’ (εις ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός). It is commonly argued that Paul here enjoins the pronouncement of a curse on the immoral Corinthian that will lead to death.²⁹ However, if Paul is in fact echoing Job 2:6 LXX, it seems unlikely that he would imply precisely the opposite of what is stated in Job: ‘Behold, I hand him to you—only *spare his life*.’³⁰ While it is not necessary for my argument to provide a definitive interpretation of the phrase ‘destruction of the flesh’, a few comments are in order.

As I see it, two interpretations are plausible, though neither is without difficulties. The first option is that σάρξ refers to the physical body, as it does in Job. Paul here envisions the physical and

discipline has already occurred in heaven. See the discussion in Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 181-90.

²⁶ With a number of commentators, including Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987) 208-209; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Yale Bible; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) 238.

²⁷ Here I am heavily indebted to Moses, ‘Physical And/or Spiritual Exclusion?’, 186-87.

²⁸ Anthony C. Thiselton, ‘The Meaning of ΣΑΡΞ in 1 Cor 5:5: A Fresh Approach in the Light of Logical and Semantic Factors’, *SJT* 26 (1973) 225.

²⁹ The curse/death interpretation has been most recently defended by David Raymond Smith, *Hand This Man Over to Satan’: Curse, Exclusion and Salvation in 1 Corinthians 5* (LNTS 386; London: T&T Clark International, 2008). Smith interacts with South, ‘A Critique of the “Curse/Death” Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5.1-8’, and concludes that the curse/death interpretation should be re-formulated rather than rejected outright (45-50, 115-80).

³⁰ With South, ‘A Critique of the “Curse/Death” Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5.1-8’, 551; Moses, ‘Physical And/or Spiritual Exclusion?’, 176. Contra Smith, *Hand This Man Over to Satan*, 159.

psychological suffering of the immoral man.³¹ But this view encounters a lexical difficulty. While Paul uses the noun σάρξ abundantly in his letters (ninety-one times), and in a wide range of ways,³² when σάρξ is set in contrast to πνεῦμα ('spirit'), it almost invariably refers to the corrupt, fallen, and rebellious condition of the human being.³³ For this reason, some interpreters opt for a different reading.

A second option is that Paul envisions the destruction of 'the "fleshly" stance of self-sufficiency.'³⁴ If this is the correct interpretation of 'the destruction of the flesh' in 1 Corinthians 5:5, then Paul does not employ σάρξ the way it is used in the prologue to Job; rather, he exercises his 'imaginative freedom'.³⁵ But this view seems to encounter a theological difficulty, which Moses points out:

In Paul, Satan is never the agent through whom the fleshly nature is overcome. It is actually the reverse: Satan seeks to entice and revive the fleshly desires. That is why Paul refers to Satan as the 'Tempter' (ὁ πειράζων) in 1 Thess. 3:5; and only two chapters after our pericope, Paul admonishes married couples not to deprive each other of sex, so that Satan will not tempt (πειράζω) them (1 Cor. 7:5). On the contrary, it is the Holy Spirit who aids believers in their struggle to curb the desires of the flesh (Rom. 7–8; Gal. 5–6). Thus, it is exegetically unsupportable and theologically unwarranted to posit Satan as the agent of destruction of the incestuous man's fleshly desires.³⁶

As a way forward, I suggest that Paul here uses σάρξ in the sense of 'fleshly desires', and that we find in this text the same ambiguity we found in Job. We recall that in the prologue it is not entirely clear who is responsible for Job's afflictions. I have argued that, since God is the one who removes the protective barrier, giving Satan access to Job, *ultimately* Job's afflictions can be traced back to God. Here in 1 Corinthians 5:5 the church, speaking on behalf of God,³⁷ hands the

³¹ See, for example, Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 239; Moses, 'Physical And/or Spiritual Exclusion?', 178-91.

³² See the discussion in James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998) 62-70.

³³ Thiselton, 'The Meaning of ΣΑΡΞ in 1 Cor 5:5', 214-15.

³⁴ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000) 396. See also Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010) 208.

³⁵ Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005) ix.

³⁶ Moses, 'Physical And/or Spiritual Exclusion?', 178.

³⁷ See my comments above on discipline as the publication of the divine decision (note 25).

rebellious man over to Satan. Thus, we can say that, *ultimately*, the destruction of the fleshly desires can be traced back to God.

Moses rightly draws attention to the fact that Paul elsewhere pictures Satan as the one who ‘seeks to entice and revive the fleshly desires’, and we will return to this thought momentarily. For now we proceed to the interpretation of the final part of verse 5, which is imperative for my argument. The purpose of the consignment, Paul says, is ‘so that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord’ (ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῆ ἔν τῃ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου). Some scholars suggest that τὸ πνεῦμα here refers to the Holy Spirit, who resides within the Christian community.³⁸ But nowhere else does Paul speak of the Holy Spirit as needing to be saved. Additionally, in 1 Corinthians Paul regularly uses σῶζω to refer to the eschatological deliverance of human beings (e.g., 1:18, 21; 3:15; 7:16; 9:22; 10:33; 15:2).³⁹ That σῶζω carries its usual theological weight here in 1 Corinthians 5:5 is evidenced by the fact that salvation is said to occur ‘in the day of the Lord’, a phrase which in the Pauline corpus refers to the inevitable appearance of the transcendent and righteous judge.⁴⁰ Given this sense of σῶζω, τὸ πνεῦμα probably refers to the Corinthian man, with an emphasis on his orientation toward God.⁴¹ For Paul, then, the Corinthian man re-enters the realm of darkness where he will be susceptible to Satan, but the hope is that this man will experience salvation.⁴²

To sum up, it is clear in 1 Corinthians 5:5 that Satan has a role to play in the process that Paul hopes will lead to the immoral man’s salvation. The church, as God’s representative, initiates this process. The Corinthian man is excluded from the fellowship of believers; the protective hedge is removed for Satan to access the offender. Despite the way Paul writes of Satan elsewhere, he thinks of Satan here as an instrument of God. This is not to suggest, however, that even for a

³⁸ See, for example, Adela Y. Collins, ‘The Function of “Excommunication” in Paul’, *HTR* 73 (1980) 260; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 239-40.

³⁹ Hays, *First Corinthians*, 85-86.

⁴⁰ See Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1975) 530-31.

⁴¹ See the discussion in Thiselton, ‘The Meaning of ΣΑΠΕ in 1 Cor 5:5’, 226.

⁴² With Judith M. Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away* (WUNT 2:37; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1990) 113-20; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 399-400; Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 209. Ciampa and Rosner point out that Paul does not answer the question of whether the man is presently saved.

moment Satan ceases to be an enemy of God.⁴³ It is important to note that Paul says nothing of Satan's intentions, and, based on other NT texts, we may presume that once Satan gains full access to the offender he has his own sinister scheme. However, Paul seems confident that, in spite of Satan's ploy, God's good purpose of salvation will be achieved.⁴⁴

4. 1 Timothy 1:20

Much of 1 Timothy 1 is devoted to a discussion of a group of opponents who were promulgating deviant doctrine in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3-7, 8-11, 18-20). In 1 Timothy 1:19, Paul states that these opponents have 'suffered shipwreck so far as the Christian faith is concerned.' Then in verse 20, he rather unusually singles out two men: 'among [the shipwrecked] are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed to Satan, in order that they might be instructed not to blaspheme.'

Again, Paul echoes Job 2:6 LXX: Hymenaeus and Alexander have been delivered (παραδίδομι) to the adversary. Once more the point of contact is not between the deviant ones and Job. Job was a God-fearer (Job 1:1). Hymenaeus and Alexander are blasphemers. When speaking of opponents in 1 Timothy, Paul usually employs the indefinite pronoun (1:3, 6, 19; 4:1; 5:15; 6:10, 21). It is unclear what made these two men worthy of special attention, but since Timothy's charge is the focus of this pericope (1:18-20), Paul probably mentions Hymenaeus and Alexander synecdochically.⁴⁵ Paul wants his delegate to know the appropriate way of dealing with false teachers in the church.

⁴³ Timothy C.G. Thornton, 'Satan: God's Agent for Punishing', *ExpTim* 83 (1972) 151, argues that Satan is *not* thought of as God's enemy, *but rather* as God's agent. He goes too far.

⁴⁴ Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 191-92, states with confidence that 2 Cor. 2:6-11 refers to the man from 1 Cor. 5:5, providing us with evidence that the man did go on to repent. The commentators are less certain. See Victor P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1984) 160-68, for a discussion of the views. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 86, notes that even if 2 Cor. 2 does not refer to the same case, it still illuminates 1 Cor. 5 by showing us that Paul does indeed think discipline can lead to repentance and reintegration into the community.

⁴⁵ Roloff, *Der Erste Brief an Timotheus*, 106: 'Die Kirchenzuchtmaßnahmen, die Paulus in einsamer Autorität gegen die beiden getroffen haben soll, wollen ein konkretes Modell für das Verfahren der Gemeindeleiter gegenüber Irrlehrern setzen.'

The proper procedure, it seems, is to exclude them from the church.⁴⁶ For Satan to have full access to Hymenaeus and Alexander, they must be returned to the sphere where he holds sway, the world. The first person singular form, παρέδωκα, could indicate that Paul alone authorized the consignment. Another option is that Paul emphasizes his presence with the Christian community that consigned these men to Satan.⁴⁷ Either way, it was God's representative, invested with divine authority, who delivered the false teachers to the territory of the adversary.

Not only does God's representative authorize the consignment, but, as in Job, the consignment is for a good cause. Paul writes that he delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan 'so that they might be instructed not to blaspheme' (ἵνα παιδευθῶσιν μὴ βλασφημεῖν). Rather than σῶζω (1 Cor. 5:5), Paul here uses παιδεύω, a verb he employs only five times (undisputed: 1 Cor. 11:32; 2 Cor. 6:9; disputed: 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 2:12). The term refers to a process of education or correction.⁴⁸ In 2 Timothy 2:25, Paul urges Timothy 'to educate (παιδεύω) the opponents' with the understanding that 'God may grant them repentance to a knowledge of the truth.' Here in 1 Timothy 1:20, Paul states that Hymenaeus and Alexander need 'to be educated (παιδεύω)'; they must learn 'not to blaspheme (μὴ βλασφημεῖν).' Since the fundamental sin in view is false teaching, βλασφημέω should be understood in the religious sense; it refers to slander or misrepresentation of the Christian faith.⁴⁹ Paul's expectation appears to be that by placing these two men outside the church and into the hands of Satan they will repent of their sin and become 'former blasphemers', like Paul himself (1 Tim. 1:13).⁵⁰ He hopes for the alignment of these two men with the apostolic gospel.⁵¹ Interestingly, then, when we combine 1 Timothy 1:20 and 2 Timothy 2:25, we get a picture of Satan and Timothy actually working together for the education of the opponents in Ephesus. Through exposure to diabolical

⁴⁶ With Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (NIBCNT; Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988) 59; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 161.

⁴⁷ I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999) 414, rightly notes that we simply cannot know from this text alone the community's level of involvement in the consignment.

⁴⁸ BDAG, s.v. παιδεύω.

⁴⁹ Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 415.

⁵⁰ Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 186.

⁵¹ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 162.

onslaughts in the realm of Satan, the excommunicated person is prompted toward self-examination, confession, and repentance.⁵² In this respect, expulsion is a ‘learning experience.’

Again it is clear that Satan has a role to play in a process that Paul hopes will bring about a good result. In the case recorded in 1 Timothy 1:20, two false teachers are excluded from the Christian community; the protective barrier they once enjoyed by participating in the body of Christ is lowered for Satan to have full access to them. In the same way that Satan is portrayed as God’s instrument in the prologue to Job, Satan is pictured here as a pedagogue who functions alongside Timothy in the task of correcting false teachers. Paul says nothing about *how* Satan exercises his educative influence. Maybe the apostle is uninterested. Perhaps he is unaware. Paul was not ignorant of Satan’s designs, but this does not necessarily mean that his knowledge of Satan was comprehensive. It is difficult to pin down an adversary who disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). Paul is also silent on Satan’s intentions, though again we may presume that what Satan does to Hymenaeus and Alexander he hopes will be to their detriment. But Paul’s projection is positive. Whatever Satan believes he is doing, he is actually functioning⁵³ as God’s disciplinary rod, applied to the backs not of schoolboys but of false teachers who will not otherwise stop promulgating doctrine that is insulting to God.⁵⁴

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have drawn attention to the lexical similarities between Job 2:6 LXX and both 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 Timothy 1:20. Additionally, I have unearthed some of the key theological points from the prologue to Job, and I have endeavored to show how Paul appropriates these points both for the Christian community in Corinth and for his delegate in Ephesus. Simply put, I have suggested that Paul

⁵² Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 193.

⁵³ Calvin helpfully distinguishes between what Satan believes he is doing and what he actually carries out. He writes: ‘From himself and his own wickedness, therefore, arises his passionate and deliberate opposition to God. By this wickedness he is urged on to attempt courses of action which he believes to be most hostile to God. But because with the bridle of his power God holds him bound and restrained, he carries out only those things which have been divinely permitted to him’ (*Inst.* 1.14.17).

⁵⁴ Quinn and Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 158.

reads the prologue to Job *for the church*. Provoked by two unique problems in the church, Paul delivers the responsible parties over to Satan. I have argued that, just as in the prologue to Job Satan is unintentionally instrumental in bringing about God's objective, so in these cases of ecclesial discipline Paul pictures Satan as one who opposes God, and yet as one who serves God's good purposes. The devil never defects, that is, he never ceases to be an enemy of God. But Paul trusts that the actions of the principal adversary will produce good results. Satan has a role to play in the process that Paul hopes will lead to the salvation of the immoral Corinthian man. Furthermore, Satan is involved in the education of the false teachers in Ephesus. In sum, Paul finds in the prologue to Job an unwitting protector of the purity of Christ's church.