



Ezekiel - Lesson 22

Chapter 22

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- Throughout this first half of Ezekiel, the Lord has spoken repeatedly to the exiles about their sins
 - Much of that time, the Lord has defended the need to bring judgment against a people that were in denial
 - So the Lord's patiently reminded them of Israel's history of idolatry and depravity
 - And at other times He's reviewed the offenses of their past leaders who dragged the people into their sin
 - Still, the people seem to believe that they are being treated unfairly by God
 - So as we approach the end of the first half of the book, the Lord begins to increase the pressure on this generation
 - He gets more specific and more graphic in describing their sin
 - Because as He recounts their sins in increasing detail, He also gives added justification for the radical and dramatic judgment that is coming
- So tonight, Chapter 22, the Lord returns to a focus on the nation's leaders as He did last week in Chapter 21
 - This chapter looks again at the culpability of the current leaders
 - In the next chapter, the Lord uses another allegory to explain Israel's sins
 - And in the final chapter of this section the Lord pronounces a final devastating judgment on the people using a parable
 - We will do Chapter 22 this week, and we will move rapidly through Chapters 23-24 next week to conclude part 1
 - So let's look at the bloody guilt of the present generation of Israel

Ezek. 22:1 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

Ezek. 22:2 “And you, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Then cause her to know all her abominations.

Ezek. 22:3 “You shall say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “A city shedding blood in her midst, so that her time will come, and that makes idols, contrary to her interest, for defilement!

Ezek. 22:4 “You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed, and defiled by your idols which you have made. Thus you have brought your day near and have come to your years; therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations and a mocking to all the lands.

Ezek. 22:5 “Those who are near and those who are far from you will mock you, you of ill repute, full of turmoil.

Ezek. 22:6 “Behold, the rulers of Israel, each according to his power, have been in you for the purpose of shedding blood.

Ezek. 22:7 “They have treated father and mother lightly within you. The alien they have oppressed in your midst; the fatherless and the widow they have wronged in you.

Ezek. 22:8 “You have despised My holy things and profaned My sabbaths.

Ezek. 22:9 “Slandorous men have been in you for the purpose of shedding

blood, and in you they have eaten at the mountain shrines. In your midst they have committed acts of lewdness.

Ezek. 22:10 “In you they have uncovered their fathers’ nakedness; in you they have humbled her who was unclean in her menstrual impurity.

Ezek. 22:11 “One has committed abomination with his neighbor’s wife and another has lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law. And another in you has humbled his sister, his father’s daughter.

Ezek. 22:12 “In you they have taken bribes to shed blood; you have taken interest and profits, and you have injured your neighbors for gain by oppression, and you have forgotten Me,” declares the Lord GOD.

- The Lord repeatedly describes the various abominations of Israel as bloody
 - The Hebrew word is literal “blood” but the meaning is idiomatic
 - It doesn’t necessarily mean that a person was harmed in every case, though certainly at times that was the case
 - Child sacrifice was a part of their practices and they also shed the blood of prophets and others who tried to bring Israel back to the Lord
 - Nevertheless, the word blood in Hebrew can be used euphemistically to mean acting in a vile or violent way to oppress the truth and harm well-being
 - That was Israel’s pattern for centuries and it was true of this generation
 - The people shed blood in the midst of the Lord’s city and made idols in the city against their own interests, the Lord says in v.3
 - These acts brought the day of judgment nearer and brought judgment to Israel in their time, in their years
 - That’s a useful way to conceive of God’s judgment, and it also applies to His discipline for the believer
 - With each decision to sin, each step away from the Lord and His word, we are “pulling” His judgement closer
 - It’s as if it’s a train headed our way and it moves in concert with our decisions
 - As we choose to sin against the Lord, we accelerate that train of discipline toward us
 - But as we repent and move away from sin, the train stops and retreats
 - Israel kept pulling that train toward itself and so the time had come for Israel to get run over, so to speak
 - The Lord would make the city know of her abominations through this judgment
 - The blood they shed and the idols they built convicted them
 - We’re not talking about their fathers’ sins...this is about the sin of this very generation now
- They would become a mocking and reproach to neighbors, He says in v.4
 - That’s a significant statement, because Israel’s neighbors hated God’s people
 - They would love nothing more than to see Israel brought low

- But the Lord says Israel will become a reproach before her neighbors
 - They will look at Israel with contempt because of this outcome...almost as if they feel sympathy for God's people
 - That tells you how devastating the coming attack will be
- And the nations will mock Israel for its downfall
 - Their mocking will go this way...here's Israel, the nation that claims to be God's people and expected to always be protected by God
 - And yet look who's now been devastated by that very God
 - So they laugh at the Israel who thinks they were better than everyone else and yet now is worse
- That's also a reminder of what happens when we enter into a relationship with the living God
 - Our future hope is better than the world, because our relationship with God has rescued us from the world's future fate
 - But that same relationship also places significant expectations on us for obedience
 - And when we suffer the consequences of a lack of obedience, we risk becoming a laughing stock to the world
 - Our faith ensures we will be victorious in the end, but in the short term we may be exhibited as an example
- Then in v.6 the Lord turns to the leaders and recites an inventory of all that the current rulers of Israel have done to further Israel's fall
 - He says they each contributed to the bloodshed and violence according to his power
 - So individuals did evil in their own power
 - Judges and priests presided over evil in their jurisdictions
 - And kings spread evil throughout their kingdoms
 - In v.7 the Lord begins to list their specific offenses
 - He begins the list with disrespect for parents
 - The leaders treated the authority of parents lightly within Israel He says
 - Now with all that we've heard about going on in Israel in this book, this offense may seem out of place
 - It's not very serious compared to child sacrifice, yet it's the first one on God's list
 - But that's where it should be, because it's probably the root cause of much of Israel's ills
 - When children are brought up in families and in a culture where respect for parental authority is optional, it sows the seeds of greater problems
 - Those children eventually become adults who will not respect authority in general
 - And a lack of respect for authority takes the brakes off the depravity of the human

heart

- A child absent respect for parents experiences a way of life that teaches them that authority is a force to be fought and defeated
- Rather than appreciating authority as a God-appointed force to be respected for the sake of good
- These leaders didn't enforce the Law's requirements that disobedient children be disciplined
- So disobedience became the norm
- And as childhood rebellion became the norm, societal rebellion against Law and authority in general also became common
- And in a related trend, when a culture becomes engaged in fighting against the powers that be, it loses interest in the weak
 - So the fatherless, the widow and the like will be overlooked and abandoned and abused
 - The alien who has little or no right in the culture will be oppressed
 - When society only desires power and rebellion, it loses all respect for those who offer neither
- Third, the Lord says that Israel despised the holy things of God, including the Sabbath
 - This is the next step of progression for those who have learned to fight against authority
 - There is no authority greater than God, so for a heart determined to fight back against authority God makes the perfect target
 - Israel was a culture saturated with the symbols and rituals of God
 - And each week a day was set aside to cease in everything and remember God
 - So if you were a Jew with a heart set against obeying authority, then profaning the Lord's rituals and sabbath was an obvious choice
 - You had a daily opportunity to flex your muscles against the Lord
 - And once a heart gets a taste of rebellion, it's hard to cut it off
 - So disobedience to parents led to disobedience against Law and authority as an adult
 - And a rebellious and disobedient adult heart soon turned to rebelling against the ultimate authority in Israel, which was God Himself
 - And once the heart is freed from the constraints of law and God's authority, there is nothing to restrain its depravity
 - So the next offense in this chain in v.9 is slandering, murder, engaging in idol worship, which led to sexual depravity
 - This slippery slope follows Paul's wise words in Romans

Rom. 1:21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Rom. 1:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Rom. 1:23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Rom. 1:24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

- Turning from the true authority led to establishing authorities of their own making, which is merely license to do as they wish
- They saw themselves as wise and sophisticated, but in reality they were foolish
- And that so-called wisdom led them to worship the silliest of things, which then led to a profaning of their own bodies
- Ritual sex was the height of Canaanite worship practices, and naturally it was a great attraction to Israel
 - Surely the enemy anticipated that effect and so he used sex to entice the Israelites into pagan idolatry
 - Douglas Stuart said this about Canaanite worship practices:

Ritual sex was another great attraction of idolatry. Most of the ancient Near Easterners believed that all things that came into being were born into being. This was a major tenet of their belief system. They believed that not only animals were born, but also plants. What was born into being started, they believed, with sex on the part of the gods—specifically Baal and Asherah, the god and goddess of fertility according to the Canaanites. They also thought that if a person bringing an offering to Baal and/or Asherah would have ritual sex with a prostitute at the shrine as part of worship this would help stimulate the divine powers of nature to have sex, and thus more animals and crops would be born, and the agriculture would flourish. Outlandish as this sounds to us, it was the pinnacle of theology among the Canaanites—and was what the Israelites readily accepted at Baal-Peor.

- Naturally, as sexual practices degenerated within the culture, it became a free-for-all of sexual lust
 - They uncovered their father's nakedness, which indicates that fathers were engaged in ritual sexual activity side by side with their family members
 - Women were put in service to men even while in menstruation, which was against the law and considered abhorrent
 - Adultery and incest followed as well
- These practices weren't simply happening in dark corners of the culture
 - They had become common place and were accepted and even encouraged by Israel's leadership
 - Can you imagine such a place? We know our current culture is bad too, and in some ways, it's worse

- But generally, society frowns on such things at least for now
- But imagine a place where these behaviors were as common as kids's soccer games and walking your dog in the park
- And just as acceptable
- Finally, the culture saw men taking brides as a contract to put other men to death, according to v.12
 - The people are charging interest on debt, which was prohibited by the Law
 - And they willingly injure their neighbor for financial gain
 - In short, the people have forgotten their Lord
- Knowing how bad things had become in Israel, is it any surprise that they can't accept Ezekiel's warnings?
 - They could scarcely remember the God Who called them into being and set them in the land
 - It's been generations since the people have truly experienced His presence
 - And meanwhile as His glory resided in the temple, they were a short distance away engaging in ritual sex and idol sacrifice
 - It's a wonder that the Lord didn't strike the entire nation down long ago
 - So now as He speaks to them, the Lord's words hardly make a dent in their hard heads and harder hearts
 - But the grace of God is evident in the fact that He keeps trying
 - The Lord pursues His people despite their disinterest in Him
 - And getting their attention for His words begins with stripping them of the unholy gain of their depraved practices
 - And then it moves to applying such intense heat and pressure that their hard hearts melt and soften

Ezek. 22:13 “Behold, then, I smite My hand at your dishonest gain which you have acquired and at the bloodshed which is among you.

Ezek. 22:14 “Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong in the days that I will deal with you? I, the LORD, have spoken and will act.

Ezek. 22:15 “I will scatter you among the nations and I will disperse you through the lands, and I will consume your uncleanness from you.

Ezek. 22:16 “You will profane yourself in the sight of the nations, and you will know that I am the LORD.”””

- The Lord promises the leadership, which found ways to profit from Israel's lawlessness, will see their dishonest gain stripped away
 - Practically, we know that this stripping process came in a big, dramatic way
 - The entire city is wiped out
 - The people are either killed or hauled off into captivity with nothing
 - The land is left fallow for 70 years so that when they eventually return it's a

serious fixer-upper project

- So the glory of the nation is stripped away and the evil hearts of the people are humbled
 - Which leads the Lord to ask if they think their proud, hard hearts can endure what the Lord is bringing against them?
 - The answer is obvious, or should be obvious to everyone who entertains it
 - Can you withstand what the Lord is prepared to bring against you to get your attention?
 - To soften your disobedient heart and bring you into submission?
- It's worth remembering that should we entertain a season of disobedience in our lives, we can't beat the Lord
 - In His patience and long suffering nature, He may give us plenty of rope to hang ourselves, as He did Israel
 - But eventually, the Lord will bring us under the rod
 - And when that time comes, can your heart endure?
 - Do you think you will be strong in that day?
- The foolish think they either won't be held to account or can stand up to God
 - The same foolishness that caused them to rebel against God's authority in the first place also deceives them into thinking there will be no consequences
 - But when they inevitably do come, it's impossible to stand against God
- So the Lord, once again, promises to disperse the people out of their land so that He might consume their uncleanness
 - Consuming their uncleanness refers to the way the Lord used these events to eliminate idolatry in the nation
 - Yet in their desperate circumstances, Israel would profane themselves He says
 - In other words, as they turn back from idolatry while in captivity, they will be unable to abide by the ritual requirements of the law
 - Likely, the people ate pork and other unclean things at times
 - We see Daniel refusing to eat such things in captivity, though it's unlikely that all Jews were equally scrupulous
 - The people would be stripped of everything to the point all they had left was their identity in God
 - And in that way, they rediscovered a respect for His authority
 - This process of stripping away the sin and depravity and hard heartedness can be compared to the way metal is refined
 - And that's the process the Lord uses next to explain what was coming for His people

Ezek. 22:17 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

Ezek. 22:18 “Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; all of them are bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace; they are the dross of

silver.

Ezek. 22:19 “Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Because all of you have become dross, therefore, behold, I am going to gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.

Ezek. 22:20 ‘As they gather silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into the furnace to blow fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in My anger and in My wrath and I will lay you there and melt you.

Ezek. 22:21 ‘I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you will be melted in the midst of it.

Ezek. 22:22 ‘As silver is melted in the furnace, so you will be melted in the midst of it; and you will know that I, the LORD, have poured out My wrath on you.’”

- The Lord begins the analogy by referring to Israel’s sin as dross
 - Dross are the impurities in ore mined from the ground
 - The desired metals of silver, gold, lead and the like must be freed from other impurities like sulphur and the like
 - In the smelting process, the ore is heated to a temperature that melts all the metals in the soil
 - The desirable metals are heavier, so they sink in the hot vessel
 - Those parts of the ore that are not heavy, float to the surface
 - Then a blacksmith will take a tool to scrape the impurities off the surface of the molten metal
 - Those impurities are the dross
- So the removal of the impurities involves a two step process of heating and separation
 - Likewise, the stripping of Israel’s impurities involved both steps
 - First in v.19 the Lord says they will be put in the middle of the city of Jerusalem
 - He’s talking about Jerusalem like it’s a pot
 - Historically, the people were contained in the city like in a pot over fire, because the city was blockaded by the Babylonians
 - Secondly, the Lord has gathered the previous metals in the city, referring to the people themselves
 - Israel’s sins were numerous, but the people themselves were precious to the Lord
 - So the Lord needed a stripping process to remove the people from their sins so that the precious things of Israel could continue
 - So the people in the city are heated up like metal in a pot
 - The Lord will blow His wrath on them like a blacksmith blowing on a hot fire to increase the heat
 - The Lord will melt the people so to speak

- The heat refers to the difficulties of the coming siege and destruction of the city followed by their years of trial in captivity
 - This trial was severe indeed, but it caused the people to soften their hearts
- After the softening, the Lord scraped these desires away
 - First, He moved them away from the people's sight by removing them from the land
 - Then He removed the evil leaders who were encouraging the people to do the wrong thing
 - And finally, he stripped the people from the ability to do what they desired by limiting them in captivity
 - As desperation takes hold, the people naturally seek for relief and turn to God again in repentance
 - And what was left was something pure, something holy and obedient to God
- That's what the Bible means when it says the kindness of God leads a person to repentance
 - It means that as the Lord allows us to experience the desperation created by our rebellion, it produces a desire for relief from the effects of sin
 - And in that process, our heart will come to see obedience to God as the better path
 - Where before God's holiness and law seems like something to fight, we now see it as blessing
 - But getting to that point requires heat and separation
 - Like the Prodigal Son in Luke 15, the son's trial in the pigs' mud led him to see the father's kindness

Luke 15:17 “But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!

Luke 15:18 ‘I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight;

Luke 15:19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.””

- His poverty and loneliness was his heat
- And his desperate circumstances stripped him of his pride and arrogance and defiance
- And at that point, the son was ready to return a new man, precious and pure again
 - Where before the father's authority and provision was something to be resisted and rejected
 - Now the son, who was desperate in his situation, came to appreciate the father's authority as a comfort to be respected
 - That's how the Lord brings a heart into repentance
- So now to end this chapter, the Lord directs the blame squarely at the leaders, who

have made it possible for the people to stray so far

Ezek. 22:23 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

Ezek. 22:24 “Son of man, say to her, ‘You are a land that is not cleansed or rained on in the day of indignation.’

Ezek. 22:25 “There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her.

Ezek. 22:26 “Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

Ezek. 22:27 “Her princes within her are like wolves tearing the prey, by shedding blood and destroying lives in order to get dishonest gain.

Ezek. 22:28 “Her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,’ when the LORD has not spoken.

Ezek. 22:29 “The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery, and they have wronged the poor and needy and have oppressed the sojourner without justice.

Ezek. 22:30 “I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.

Ezek. 22:31 “Thus I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; their way I have brought upon their heads,” declares the Lord GOD.

- First, to Israel the prophet says they are a land that is not cleansed or rained upon
 - The punishment for their sins began long before they went into captivity
 - It started as a drought that lasted for many years
 - The people were seeing the land drying up around them as a foreshadowing of the dry period of captivity that was coming
 - But in the Bible rain is also a picture of blessing from God, so the imagery was clear...the days of blessing from the Lord were over
 - The nation was about to experience a spiritual dryness
 - And that dryness was the result of corrupt leaders
 - And the Lord then lists four groups of leaders and presents how each played a part in Israel’s downfall
 - Prophets, priests, kings and finally the people themselves
 - Interestingly, prophets get mentioned first and last in this list, which reflects the unique importance of those who claim to speak for God
 - Israel’s problems all began and ended with God’s word, or the lack thereof

- In the case of these prophets, they are not true prophets, of course
 - Ezekiel's speaking of false prophets and these prophets form a conspiracy
 - The false teaching of one prophet would be "confirmed" by another
 - And in that way, the people could be convinced that the false prophets were speaking for God
 - It's like the old saying that just because two people repeat the same rumor, that doesn't prove it's true
 - This is a typical tactic of false teachers generally
 - They tend to feed off one another
 - Today, you can see prosperity heretics, false healers and the like sharing each other's tricks and false interpretations
 - If one discovers something that works (i.e., raises money), the others soon copy it
 - And in that way, the false teaching seems to be confirmed
 - But the results are always the same
 - In v.25 we're told they devour lives, take treasure and make widows in their midst
 - The effects of false teaching is always to kill, steal and destroy because it's a tactic of the enemy
 - The testimony of these false prophets produced devastating results
 - Many in Israel were robbed of their money, and many saw families and relationships broken
 - Israel was unraveling from the lawlessness in families and in society in general
 - Many even lost their lives
 - The prophets were telling Israel in Ezekiel's day that God said to fight the Babylonians when they returned and they would win
 - This was the opposite of what the Lord actually said through Jeremiah and Ezekiel
 - Their lies created many widows in Israel
 - And false teaching is having a similar effect on the church today
 - Obviously, false teachers are constantly trying to fleece the flock of our money
 - And unfortunately, greedy Christians are willing to believe their lies in the hopes of riches from God
 - But false teaching also breaks relationships, causes suspicions, and destroy testimonies
- Moving to priests, the ones called to intercede for Israel with the Lord, we're told in v.26 they did violence to the Law and profaned holy things
 - The Lord had given Israel a Law and system of worship carefully designed to reveal Him to His people
 - And the priesthood was commissioned to guard these things for the people

- They would guard the name and character and word of God so He could be clearly understood and appreciated in Israel
- But instead, the priests became representatives of pagan gods and led the people away from the true God
 - They presided over profane practices in the temple
 - They set up idols and invited prostitutes to serve inside
- So if the people managed to avoid the misleading testimony of false prophets, they would be sidetracked by a corrupt priesthood
 - They came looking for the true God, but the priests sent them in a different direction
 - That too was part of the conspiracy
- We don't have priests today, as no man or woman intercedes to God on our behalf
 - We are all part of the priesthood of God, since we all have direct access to the Father through our High Priest
 - Nevertheless, we can still act in a similar way to mislead people when we mix the holy and the profane
 - We can't mix what Scripture calls us to do and say and believe with worldly notions
 - People come to a church presumably looking for the truth about God, and any that would steer them away from God in that moment will be held accountable
- Thirdly, in v.27 the Lord says Israel's princes (kings) were like wolves tearing at a prey because they encouraged bloodshed and destroyed lives to gain riches
 - Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely
 - Israel's kings were men who should have put the needs of the people and the nation above their own needs
 - That's God's expectation for any person who has authority to lead over His people
 - But when someone holds power, they will always face temptation to use that power to their own advantage
 - In Israel, the corrupt kings were willing to condone or engage in murder to become richer
 - And then in v.28 we hear that those false prophets were lying in support of the king to share in their favor
 - Again, it all began and ended with false words from lying prophets
 - The enemy used these men to corrupt God's people
 - And as he did, Satan assumed he was working a plan to destroy God's Messiah even before He could come
 - For if Israel was absorbed in idol worship, then the Messiah would have no one to receive Him or even look for Him
 - But the Lord used Satan to work his own demise

- Satan directed the hearts of Babylon to attack God's people
- And in that attack, the Lord brought a refining process that ultimately led Israel away from idolatry
- Much the same way as Satan's desire to kill Christ was used by God to accomplish the atonement
- Finally, the fourth group are the people themselves, and the Lord says in vs.29-30 that the fruit of these corrupt leaders is a people without mercy or love
 - They rob, oppress, and have no compassion on the needy or stranger
 - These are the traits common in any group of people who have taken their eye off the Lord
 - When we are not walking with the Lord, we will become untrustworthy, unloving, unkind people too
 - Our hearts will rebel in full force against God unless and until He brings us back by His kindness
 - In Ezekiel's day, the Lord says He looked for one person to take the place of these bad leaders, a man who could lead His people back to Him
 - And despite His search, He found none
 - That statement is hyperbole and it's spoken for effect
 - Obviously, the Lord need not search for anyone, since He Himself knows all hearts
 - Furthermore, He has raised up Daniel and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and certainly these men could stand in the gap
 - The Lord's point is that the nation had strayed so far by this point that no man would have been able to tame the people's rebellious hearts
 - Simply put, this problem was too big to solve with a man
 - It required a God-sized solution
 - First, that refers to the Lord's solution of conquest and exile
 - That was literally the only way to solve this problem and no "good" king could come to power and solve this situation
 - Notice, in v.31 the Lord promises to pour out His indignation and consume them, because there simply was no other solution
 - The people wouldn't have listened to David or Solomon
 - They wouldn't have repented even if Moses preached to them
 - The problem was too big, the evil was too entrenched and the rebellion too far gone
 - So destruction was all that was left
 - There is a point when rebellion must be met with severe consequences
 - As Paul says about a particularly rebellious sinner in Corinth

1Cor. 5:3 For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present.

1Cor. 5:4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,

1Cor. 5:5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

- This believer was to be handed over to the enemy to put an end to his life through some difficult series of circumstances
- And as hard as that judgment sounds, Paul reminds us that it was necessary to save the man's soul
- That's a reference to saving his testimony, saving his standing with the Lord, not allowing him to do any more damage to his reward
- But the real solution for rebellious hearts is found in another God-solution: Christ