

Delivered to the Torturers?

By Bill Fiess

Matthew 18:34 states: “And his master was angry, and delivered [*paredōken* from *paradidōmi*] him to the torturers [*basanistais*] until he should pay all that was due to him.” I wondered who *the torturers* represented. And what was the purpose of delivering this servant over to them?

Then I noticed that a similar phrase, *being delivered to Satan*, was used twice by Paul, each time using *paradidōmi*:

...When you are gathered together...*deliver such a one to Satan* for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 5:5).

...having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom *I delivered to Satan* that they may learn not to blaspheme. (1 Tim 1:19-20).

I take both of these texts from Paul to refer to divine discipline for the purpose of restoring believers who have fallen back to fellowship with the Lord. If so, that puts Jesus' saying in a different light.

The Lord was saying that the unforgiving servant would be delivered to the torturers (i.e. *to Satan and his minions*) for the purpose of *discipline* so that he might hopefully return to fellowship with the Lord.

And what's more, Paul's use of the same idea suggests that he received his teaching about temporal deliverance to Satan from the Lord.

Bill Fiess is a mathematics professor and ardent Logos user.