

*“An ungodly man diggeth up evil; and in his lips is a burning fire”*

We all sin and come short of the glory of God, only Jesus had no sins to confess and no transgressions from which to repent. As we cannot remove the stain in our past ourselves which follows from such mistakes, we often seek to hide them and to bury them deeply out of sight. We do not want anyone else to discover these. Sins that are down before all and are more widely known are different, those cannot be hid but instead are uncomfortable baggage which embarrasses us and spoils how people regard us. There is nothing wrong in being ashamed of our sins, we should be, and it is not for others to know of our secret sins, if we struggle against them on our own, they should only be known by God.

To know to do good and to do it not, is sin. James 4v17

Sin is the transgression of the law. 1 John 3v4

What soever is not of faith is sin. Romans 14v23

The Hebrew word translated dig is “Karah” which can also mean “make” or “prepare”. So, there is a sense in which the verse can be understood as those who establish evil who prepare its foundations, and make it come to pass. Otherwise, there is the idea of exposing evil which has been hidden away. To dig it up, to reveal it to the wider world.

The term “an ungodly man” is “a man of Belial” as the margin has it. Those given over unto Belial are those who are engrained in the way of error, they serve sin and have no real regard for the things of grace and the way of the spirit. They are intrinsically selfish and gain power over others by shaming them and putting them down especially before others. They seek to control those they regard as lesser than themselves by any mean they can and often hide their own limitations and refuse to talk about them. They delight in scandals and gossip and anything which excuses the old man in themselves but highlights the failures of others. They actively spend time looking for problems and difficulties preferring to pull down rather than build up.

His tongue speaks too quickly and there is always a justification for their actions and a condemnation of the actions of others, They love to set a room on fire by their words, but sadly have no control over the damage they do, no the carnage that is reaped from their words, sometimes carefully chosen to inflict harm and discomfort, and sometimes just blurted out with no thought towards the consequences.

The opposite of this concept is that “*love covereth a multitude*”, 1 Peter 4v8. Also, another Proverb echoes these thoughts 10v12 “*Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all sins*”. Does this mean that we ignore sin and do not expose a sinner when he transgresses? God covers sin and His Son Jesus has died for sinners, but we cannot cover our own sins let alone the sins of others. Only the love of God can truly cover any sins. Atonement means covering and digging up is the opposite of that. Whilst we should not seek to cover sins from sight we should protect the repentant sinner. Confession is to God, if we confess to another, we give them power over us, in this way it is necessary to be cautious in such matters. As all have sinned and it is better to exchange experiences rather have a one-sided revelation of any weakness.

There are always plenty of men of Belial around, sometimes when we least expect it. They do not wear a badge or a label, but it is their behaviour which reveals them for what they are.

The verse says “evil” rather than sin. Anything with negative or unpleasant consequences is evil. God knows evil, it is a necessary corollary of good. Evil is also best avoided, as the Lord’s prayer says – deliver us from evil. Evil is the consequence of sin. Death is evil but is necessary because God has to punish sin and cannot let a sinner live for ever. He needs to stop being a sinner and that is by choice and not a reprogramming of our natures.

The effect of evil is similar here. The digging up of evil is also to be avoided. The evil which follows us about is not good to dwell upon. We should leave it behind us and focus upon something more profitable than the negativities of life. Yes, we can learn lessons for the evil which afflicts us all, but should we spend time going around digging it up? No, we should not!

A Voice for the Altar

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