

1 Corinthians Chapter 10

We'll begin by saying that Ancient Israel's 40 year journey between Egypt and Canaan is a sobering illustration of the misuse of freedom and the dangers of overconfidence.

The Israelites misused their new found freedom, fell into idolatry, immorality and rebelliousness, disqualifying themselves from receiving the Lord's blessing.

1 Corinthians 10:1 "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;"

"Moreover ... ignorant":

This transition leads from the lack of self-discipline and subsequent disqualification spoken of in the preceding (chapter 9:27), to an illustration of it in ancient Israel.

"All our fathers":

Meaning Paul is referring to ancient Israel, of whom he was a descendant.

He asked his readers to remember what had happened to Israel in the wilderness, because of freedom without self-control.

"Under the cloud":

Guided by God's presence as a cloud by day and a column of fire at night (See Exodus 13:21).

"Through the sea":

Meaning the Red sea, which had opened for Israel to pass through and closed to drown the Egyptian army.

1 Corinthians 10:2 "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;"

Israel was immersed, not in the sea, but "unto Moses.":

Indicating their oneness or solidarity with him as their leader.

1 Corinthians 10:3-4 "And did all eat the same spiritual meat;" "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

Paul does not intend to imply that the manna was not literal food.

It was clearly designed for ordinary nourishment.

It was spiritual in the sense that it was supernaturally provided by the Spirit of God.

Likewise, the water that was received from the rock was real water.

It was spiritual in the sense that it was given through God's direct intervention.

"That Rock was Christ":

The Rock was not a theophany (a visible revelation of God).

Rather, it was a "type" of Christ.

It prefigured the provision that Christ would ultimately make for His people.

But also, it is intended to mean that the source of supply was Christ and not the rock.

This passage is an impressive affirmation of the preexistence of Jesus Christ.

The Jews had a legend that the actual rock Moses struck followed them throughout their wilderness wanderings, providing water for them.

Paul says they have a Rock providing all they need, but it is Christ.

Rock (Petra), refers to a massive cliff, not simply a large stone or boulder, signifying the pre-incarnate Messiah (Christ), who protected and sustained His people.

1 Corinthians 10:5 "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

This is an understatement.

Because of Israel's extreme disobedience, God allowed only two of the men over 19 who had originally left Egypt (Joshua and Caleb), to enter the Promised Land; all the others died in the wilderness including Moses and Aaron who were disqualified from entering the Land.

1 Corinthians 10:6 "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."

We can learn from their mistakes, if we will.

They murmured against God over and over.

It seemed they were never satisfied.

They died in the wilderness because of their failure of self-discipline and consequent indulgence of every desire.

Four major signs characterized them;

- (1) Idolatry (verse 7);
- (2) Sexual immorality (verse 8);
- (3) Testing God (verse 9); and
- (4) Complaining (verse 10).

1 Corinthians 10:7 "Neither be ye idolaters, as [were] some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."

The Israelites were barely out of Egypt when they fell into idol worship.

Exodus 32 records the story.

This is speaking of the time when Moses had gone to meet with God and get the tables of the Ten Commandments.

They had no excuse, because God had spoken to them from the mountain and given them orally the Ten Commandments, even before Moses went to get them on the tables of stone.

They believed something had happened to Moses, and they had Aaron to form them a golden calf to worship.

The problem with these people, and with those caught up in false worship today, is that they wanted a god they could see with their physical eyes to worship.

God is Spirit.

If you can see something with your physical eye, it is part of God's creation.

It is not God.

1 Corinthians 10:8 "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand."

(Exodus 32), records the story of some (3,000), who were executed by the Levites for instigating an immoral orgy at Sinai.

There was a plague the next day (in Exodus 32:35), and the additional (20,000), could have died in that plague.

I couldn't find an exact reference to the timing here so it could mean within a 24-hour period (one day), which could cover two days.

1 Corinthians 10:9 "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents."

We can read of this (in the 21st chapter of numbers), which records the story of the people questioning the goodness and plan of the One carrying them through the wilderness, the Protector and Provider, the spiritual Rock, Christ pre-incarnate.

I will give just one Scripture here that shows the LORD sent serpents when they spoke against God and Moses.

Numbers 21:6: "And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died."

"Tempt" (in verse 9), above means to test thoroughly.

They had questioned God over and over.

It is very dangerous to test God, as they found out.

1 Corinthians 10:10 "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer."

Murmuring was very displeasing to God.

Paul had said that he had learned to be content in whatever condition he was in now.

Possibly, this was added, because they had sent a letter speaking negative things about Paul.

You remember that this letter is in answer to problems they were complaining about.

“Destroyer”:

This incident is recorded (in Number 16:3-41), and has to do with the report of the spies.

The same angel had slain the firstborn of the Egyptians (Exodus 12:23), and the (70,000 men), because of David’s census (2 Sam. 24:15-16), and again to the entire Assyrian army that was besieging Jerusalem (2 Chron. 32:21).

1 Corinthians 10:11 "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Paul is telling them to study the Word of God and learn from the mistakes of others.

Do not be so stiff-necked, that they had to learn the hard way.

The end of the world is a statement that means the end of the ages or the last days of redemptive history before the messianic kingdom.

Paul felt that the return of the Lord was near.

1 Corinthians 10:12 "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

This is just saying; don't be so proud that you cannot learn.

Learn from others mistakes, so you will not make the same mistake yourself.

Paul is saying, be ever conscious of yourself.

Examine your own self, so the Lord will not have to.

Remember that prides goes before the fall!

1 Corinthians 10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]."

To try and explain this scripture, I'm going to start by quoting (James 1:13-15), then explain those scriptures in detail.

Verse 13: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:"

The same Greek word that is translated "trials" is also translated "temptation" here.

James' point is that every difficult circumstance that enters a believer's life can either strengthen him if he obeys God and remains confident in His care, or become a solicitation to evil if the believer chooses instead to doubt God and disobey His Word.

God cannot be tempted.

God by His holy nature has no capacity for evil, or vulnerability to it.

Nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

God purposes trials to occur and in them He allows temptation to happen, but He has promised not to allow more than believers can endure and never without a way to escape.

They must choose whether to take the escape God provides or to give in.

Verse 14: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

"Drawn away":

This Greek word was used to describe wild game being lured into traps.

Just as animals can be drawn to their deaths by attractive baits, temptation promises people something good, which is harmful.

“His own lust”:

Refers to the strong desire of the human soul to enjoy or acquire something to fulfill the flesh.

Man’s fallen nature has the propensity to strongly desire whatever sin will satisfy it.

“His own” desires the individual nature of lust, it is different for each person as a result of inherited tendencies, environment, upbringing and personal choices.

The Greek grammar also indicates that these “desires” are the direct agent or the cause of one’s own sinning.

“Enticed”:

This is a fishing term that means “to capture” or “to catch with bait”.

It is a parallel to “drawn away.”

Verse 15: "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Sin is not merely a spontaneous act, but the result of a process.

The Greek words for “has conceived” and “brings forth” liken the process to physical conception and birth.

Thus, James personifies temptation and shows that it can follow a similar sequence and produce sin with all its deadly results.

While sin does not result in spiritual death for the believer, it can lead to physical death.

Those who turn to the Holy Spirit when going through various temptations, will be given the power to resist Satan’s deceit.

But, there can be no doubt as to following the Holy Spirit’s guidance.

Believers must learn to trust God’s leading in all things without fear or doubt so that our faith is then strengthened.

That’s the reason God allows us to go through various trials and tribulations.

Another excellent scripture for those suffering from an unexpected loss and begins to question God as to why appears in (2 Cor. 1).

2 Cor. 1:3-4: "Blessed [be] God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;" "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

In other words, when someone is going through such heartbreaking trials such as the loss of a loved one, those who have been through those same trails may be used of God to bring comfort to those who are suffering.

And I might add, that we won't always understand why some things happen, but we should never doubt that God is with us and is mourning with us as we go through those times.

1 Corinthians 10:14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."

"Wherefore":

In Greek means dioper or a strengthened form of dio.

Literally means "for this very reason.

This is probably some of the best advice Paul could give in this city where idolatry was everywhere.

Paul says, run the other way from idolatry.

This is very good advice for us today, as well.

1 Corinthians 10:15 "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

Paul reminds them here, that they were wise enough to line up with those who know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

He expresses strongly that they must take heed to his teachings, if they are to remain in good standing with the Lord.

Think this out carefully, before you do any of these worldly things.

1 Corinthians 10 Questions

1. Who is Paul speaking of in verse 1 when he says, all?
2. What two things had they all done?
3. What did the wandering in the wilderness for the forty years form?

4. What was the spiritual meat?
5. The water from the Rock and the Manna symbolized whom?
6. Who was the Bread?
7. Now these things were our _____.
8. What particular time in the wanderings of the Israelites, was verse 7 speaking of?
9. Where was Moses when this happened?
10. Why must we not worship things we can see with our physical eye?
11. Verse 8 says God killed how many in one day for committing fornication?
12. Some were destroyed of _____, when they tempted God.
13. Why did these things happen to them?
14. What was meant by "the end of the world"?
15. What lesson can we learn from verse 12?
16. When we are tempted, what will God do for us?
17. Who was Paul speaking to in verse 14?
18. What did Paul call them in verse 15?