

Parson to Person

1 Corinthians 10 – Part 3

“The Rock”

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:1–13).

Obedience, Disobedience, and Consequence

Within this text Paul used several examples of Israel's willful disobedience to challenge the Corinthians regarding obedience and consequence. When Israel chose to be disobedient and unfaithful, they suffered greatly. When choosing to obey the Lord and trust in Him, they were greatly blessed.

We know that many in Old Testament Israel were faithful—and were therefore applauded. Even still, among the best, all men and women had and have shortcomings—but for this there were rare instances of chastisement. However, rebellion, open disobedience, and intentional ungratefulness were most often met by disciplinary intervention.

The faithful were not exempt from trials, temptation, persecution, etc., but the disobedient brought many of their trials (and judgments) upon themselves. This is the point of Paul's lesson! Obey!

Israel, The Chosen of God

The Children of Israel are the chosen of God (Isaiah 41:8–10) and remain such to this day—even though some may otherwise suggest. The present (blinded) condition of Israel does not and has not suggested they are anything less than the “apple of His eye” (Deuteronomy 32:10, Zechariah 2:8–13). God uniquely called them, has provided for them, made promises to them, and will bring about His great glory through them—when He brings to fruition all He has promised (Ezekiel 20:1–44, Romans 11).

Delivered from Egypt

Paul began setting up his illustrative work by referencing the miraculous deliverance God provided Israel when He called them out of Egypt—by His mighty hand (Deuteronomy 26:8). The nation began with the unique calling of Abraham—and what we know as “The Abrahamic Covenant” (Genesis 12:1–3, 15:1–21, 17:1–14). That Covenant was ratified and revisited to and through his sons Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 26:2–5, Genesis 35:9–15). Jacob’s sons then became the heads of the tribes of Israel: The Children of Israel (Genesis 29:31–30:24, 35:16–26).

In brief, one of Jacob’s sons was sold into Egypt by his brothers and then used by the Lord to migrate all the then living family to Egypt—where they would be inhabitants of the land of Goshen (Genesis 37:1–36, Genesis 39–46). In time their “residency” in Egypt became problematic, and therefore God, by His mighty power and work through Moses, delivered the Children of Israel out of Egypt in order to give them the “Promised Land” associated with the “Abrahamic Covenant” (Genesis 47–Exodus 15:21).

Herein we have the backstory (in brief—as mentioned) for the first verses of this chapter.

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

“Typos” – “Types”

The baptism mentioned is identification with Moses—and (by proxy) the God of Moses. “*The cloud*” (and unmentioned pillar of fire) led the Children of Israel on their journey (Exodus 13:21–22). “*The sea*” is the Red Sea that opened in order to let the Children of Israel pass through on dry ground—only to close up on the Egyptian army (Exodus 14:1–15:21). The “*spiritual food*” and “*drink*” were both the manna (Exodus 16) and water (Exodus 17, Numbers 20:1–13) provided by the Lord—but also the life-giving spiritual nutrition/sustenance God provided His people as they journeyed toward The Promised Land. The “*Rock*” was a literal earthen rock from which water flowed, but also, as here identified, was a type of Christ—their Messiah. He was with them all the way from Egypt to Canaan. He is still with them today. He is “*Immanuel*” (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23).

Privilege and Loss

This introduction was Paul’s way of saying that Israel was called, chosen, privileged, blessed, provided for, etc., but nevertheless rebelliously turned against the Lord, against Moses, and, as a result were rightly disciplined.

The lessons Paul gave were illustrative to the Corinthians (and all of us)! As we look it over, may the Lord challenge us to learn from these experiences and save ourselves from the disciplines we could suffer—if failing to heed the call.

The illustrations Paul used were:

- 1) Don’t have fellowship with idols or participate in idolatry (vs. 7).

- 2) Don't engage in sexual immorality (vs. 8).
- 3) Don't make false and selfishly motivated accusations against the Lord (vs. 9).
- 4) Don't falsely accuse appointed leadership (vs. 10).

Paul said that these illustrations were intended as examples set forth so *“that we should not lust after evil things”* (vs. 6), and concluded with the fact that we may be tempted to sin—but that God has enabled every believer to endure temptation and overcome by His gracious power.

But Aren't We Eternally Secure?

It is of note that Church Age believers have been provided eternal security in the Lord—by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, as described in the Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone (Ephesians 2:8–9, John 10:28). Therefore, any disciplines a believer might experience cannot be related to eternal damnation but rather to temporal loss and pain. Remember that the Lord disciplines those He loves and that as believers we are non-exempt from the sowing and therefore reaping we may suffer if we sow to the flesh (Hebrews 12:5–11, Galatians 6:7–8).

I love you all,
Pastor Paul