

Written For Us

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

The Bible is the story of salvation unfolding throughout history. Ever since the fall in the garden of Eden God has been moving His mission forward to save the world through Jesus Christ. As in any story there are major themes, characters and events that shape the narrative. Paul doesn't want us to be ignorant, but to understand the Bible so we can overcome our temptations (vv1, 13).

Pride & Privilege

It's not just events like the exodus that happened 3500 years ago that Paul is concerned about, but what they mean. Like the Corinthians, modern Christians see irrelevant stories where Paul sees parallels to current circumstances. These are true cautionary tales God uses to sanctify you and the church just like He did the Corinthians in the first century. That church had a lot going for it, and it resulted in pride, just as it did in Israel. These are not ancient unrelated Jews, but "...all *our fathers* [who] were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses...all ate...all drank" (vv2-3). Meet your spiritual ancestors. Five times he says *all*. The cloud is the Shekinah glory cloud where God dwelt, leading and protecting Israel, eventually taking them through the Red Sea and into the wilderness (Ex. 14). Just as we are identified with Christ through baptism, the Jews were identified with Moses by (a dry!) baptism, the savior of Israel (v2). They ate spiritual food in the form of manna and drank spiritual drink from the rock that followed them, which was Christ (vv3-4; cf. Dt. 32:15). No one in Israel lacked these spiritual privileges that were of the same kind given to people of Jesus Christ in Corinth: "But with most of the God was not pleased..." (v5). Just because God gives you incredible blessings doesn't mean you don't have to trust and serve Him. The generation that perished in the wilderness is the strongest type of spiritual apostasy in Scripture. They had what we have, but rather than walk into the land by faith, they perished. We should know what we are given and be eager to receive it from the Lord with humility and gratitude.

Cautionary Types

Types are things or people or events that represent a theme or category. These types are given in high relief so that we would not lust the way they did (v6). You *do not* have to imitate the sins of your fathers, but in order to avoid them you have to recognize them and acknowledge yourself as a sinner in need of God's grace. History doesn't necessarily repeat, but the complacent and proud always do. Paul is talking about the sins of the Israelites as they were on the way to inherit the Promise Land. They didn't completely forsake the Lord, but they wanted to cling to their sins alongside of following Him. It didn't (and doesn't) work that way. Israel built the golden calf to worship the Lord the way they wanted, and Aaron went along with it: "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (v7; Ex. 32:6). Plague followed (Ex. 32:25). Israel fell into sexual immorality going after the women of Moab at Baal Peor, and twenty three thousand of them died (Num. 25:1-5). Israel tested

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Christ, doubting what He was doing: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread?” (Num. 21:5). You can ask the Lord to fulfill His promises and even complain to Him like the psalmist, but you can’t attackingly accuse Him—the judge of earth will do right. The accusers were destroyed by serpents, but those who looked to the bronze serpent as God commanded were healed (Num. 21:6; Jn. 3:14-15). Lastly, some of them complained and were destroyed either in the Exodus or in the wilderness (Ex. 16:2). Paul pointed out that Moses’ instruction about muzzling oxen was entirely for us, and so all of these examples are delivered to us at the end of the ages (v11). Rather than indicating the world is ending, the final age was just beginning as Jesus ascended into heaven to sit on the right of the Father until all of His enemies are made His footstool. Those enemies include the ignorance and pride of His people.

The Way of Escape

The one who assumes he’s good from here on out because he’s standing better be careful lest he fall (v12). The temptations are not exceptional, and God is faithful to provide a way out for every individual and every generation (v13). God’s grace and wisdom are here for your individual situation. There is nothing the world, the flesh, or the devil can throw at you that you can’t overcome. And the same is true for this generation of believers. The church in this country, in North America, in western Europe, any and everywhere has all that it needs—Word and sacrament—to overcome in faith. The question is whether we will.