



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERIES: FOLLOWING CHRIST THROUGH CHAOS | 7.17.22 |

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1 COR. 10:1-13 •

MAIN POINT

We must stand with God to withstand temptation.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Do you enjoy the study of history? Why or why not?

What is one historical mistake or problem you hope our country will not repeat?

What is one historical mistake or problem you hope our church will not repeat?

What is one familial mistake or problem you hope your children and grandchildren will not repeat?

George Santayana wrote, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” History can teach us where other people have made mistakes as they met the challenges of life. Paul believed the history of Israel had much to teach the church. In today’s study, we’ll see how the temptations of Israel’s past should help today’s believers stand with God and resist temptation.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-5.

What five common experiences does Paul note all of Israel shared?

In what way do these five experiences relate to New Testament believers and the church today?

From verse 5, what was Paul’s point?

All the Israelites were joined together in the shared common experiences of God’s grace, just as all the Corinthians were joined together in their experiences of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Despite the grace they experienced, God was not pleased with most of Israel, and they did not make it into the promised land. Paul wanted the Corinthian church, and today’s church, to recognize a similar possibility. To

seemingly begin a spiritual journey through participation in baptism and the Lord's Supper do not necessarily signify or guarantee saving faith.

How would you respond to a person who believes, "It doesn't matter how I live because Jesus has forgiven me"?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:6-12.

According to verse 6, what was one intended outcome of Israel's struggles with temptation?

How would Paul respond to a believer who says, "I have to learn things the hard way"?

What five negative examples of Christian behavior from Israel's past does Paul warn us against? Why?

By eating food sacrificed to idols in pagan temples (8:10), the Corinthians were playing with fire. Their desire for food could take priority in their hearts over their loyalty to God. They could misunderstand the serious nature of idolatry. Being in the pagan temple could lead them down the path of sexual immorality. They could become dissatisfied with what God had given them in Christ. They could become complaining and rebellious toward Paul's leadership. Each of these things had been demonstrated in Israel's history and were dangers for the Corinthians and every believer who is overly confident and careless about personal holiness.

From these five warnings, which stands out the most to you right now? Why?

How do you know if you're in danger of falling (v. 12)?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13.

What truths do you learn about temptation in this one verse?

How is this verse an encouragement to us when temptation comes?

What are some of the ways God gives us to get out of a situation where we could sin?

God doesn't just give us an example of bad choices and the encouragement to make wise choices; He gives us the ability to do so. If we are in Christ, we never have to give in to temptation. God is faithful and always gives us a way out of temptation that doesn't include sinning against Him. We need to recognize the seriousness of our choices and stand with God in order to withstand temptation.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Why is knowing the Word of God essential to overcoming temptation? What can you do this week to be better equipped for the temptation that will come?

Besides knowing God's Word, what are some other practical ways you can daily stand with God to withstand temptation?

How can this group help you stand with God and withstand temptation?

PRAYER

Thank God that He has not left you helpless, but offers a way to stand up under the weight of every temptation. Invite Him to show you areas where you've been playing with fire in regards to temptation, and ask Him to fill your group with His strength to turn away and walk more closely with Him.

COMMENTARY

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13

10:1-2. The believers in Corinth who ate meat offered to idols had a measure of knowledge, but Paul feared they were ignorant of the lessons of Old Testament history and the imminent dangers that idolatry posed. The apostle drew two comparisons between the Corinthian Christians' experiences and the wilderness wanderings of Israel. First, the Israelites were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea. All the Israelites, young and old, male and female, faithful and unregenerate, were baptized into Moses in this way. The use of the word baptized points to an implicit analogy. The Israelites had been baptized into Moses just as the Corinthians had been baptized into Christ. Paul pointed out this similarity in order to identify Israel with the Corinthians, and thereby to apply Israel's lessons to Corinth.

He strengthened this association by referring to the Israelites as our forefathers, even though the Corinthians were Gentiles. In Paul's mind, sufficient continuity existed between the covenant people of God in the Old Testament (Israel) and in the New Testament (the church) that the Old Testament Israelites were the spiritual forefathers of all New Testament believers.

10:3-4. Second, the Israelites ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink. This food and drink were not ordinary, but spiritual. Paul did not mean that these items were nonphysical but that they came from the Spirit and had spiritual

power for God's people. Specifically, Paul spoke of the manna that God provided to Israel for forty years (Exod. 16:12-35), and the water he provided them at least twice (Exod. 17:6; Num. 20:11). A spiritual rock, one miraculously provided by the Spirit and empowering the people, accompanied them in the sense that water-giving rocks appeared on at least these two occasions. John explained that the manna foreshadowed Christ (John 6:31-58). Here, Paul symbolically connected Christ and the water-giving rock. The rock was Christ.

Israel's spiritual food and drink were similar to the Corinthians' partaking of Christ's body and blood symbolized in the Lord's supper (10:14-22). The Israelites in the wilderness had lived through the Old Testament foreshadows of Christian baptism and the Lord's Supper. By describing these Old Testament events as "baptism" and "spiritual food and drink," Paul emphasized the similarity between the situation of the Corinthians and of the Israelites under Moses.

10:5. Next, Paul addressed his chief concern. Five times in four verses (10:1-4) he mentioned that "all" of the Israelites shared these common experiences. All the Israelites were joined together in their experiences of God's grace, just as all the Corinthians were joined together in their experiences of Christian baptism and the Lord's supper. Despite the experience of grace enjoyed by all Israel, God was not pleased with most of them. As a result, most of them died in the desert and were not permitted to enter the Promised Land. Paul mentioned this to draw attention to a similar possibility within the Corinthian church. Everyone in the Corinthian church had begun a spiritual journey in Christ, and everyone had participated in baptism and the Lord's Supper—but these experiences did not guarantee that each of them would complete the journey and receive eternal life.

We must not think that Paul believed it was possible to lose salvation. Paul taught that those who have saving faith in Christ will never lose their salvation (Rom. 5:8-10; Eph. 1:5, 13-14). Yet, he also knew that not all people who profess faith in Christ and partake of baptism and the Lord's Supper have saving faith.

10:6. Five times Paul warned the Corinthians against acting as they did ("as some of them," 10:7; "as some of them did," 10:8-10). Five times he showed how Israel's experiences provided negative examples of Christian behavior. Each example drew attention to Paul's main concern in this passage: how to deal with meat offered to idols. First, the Corinthians were to avoid setting their hearts on evil things. This terminology occurs only twice in the Old Testament (Num. 11:34; Prov. 1:22), so Paul

may have been alluding to Numbers 11:4-6 where the Israelites valued Egypt's food above loyalty to God. Israel committed so many sins that all but two of the adults who originally left Egypt died in the wilderness (Num. 14:22-30; 32:11-13). Even Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land (Num. 20:12)..

10:7. Second, Paul warned believers not to be idolaters. Here he had in mind the specific event of Exodus 32:6, and he quoted it to illustrate his point. When Moses went to Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, Israel began to indulge in pagan revelry before the golden calf, which evidently included pagan cultic meals like those the Corinthians ate in pagan temples (8:10). Because of this idolatry God nearly destroyed the entire nation of Israel. As it was, he had three thousand men put to death (Exod. 32:28).

10:8. In the third example, Paul warned against sexual immorality, referring to the time when twenty-three thousand of them died after engaging in idolatry at Baal-Peor and involving themselves in fertility rituals (Num. 25:1-9; 31:16). Many died because of involvement in pagan fertility rites. Fertility religions believed that participating in religious prostitution and orgies brought health, fertility, and prosperity. The idolatry practiced in Corinth in Paul's day involved similar fertility practices. Paul's warning was plain: eating meat sacrificed to idols may lead to sexual immorality—to which some of the Corinthians were prone (1 Cor. 6:15-16)—and such immorality stirs the wrath of God.

10:9. Fourth, Paul warned the Corinthians not to test the Lord, and he mentioned snakes which killed many in Israel. This alludes to Numbers 21:4-9 where the people blasphemed God by rejecting his manna. Paul drew upon this parallel because some in Corinth were not satisfied with what God had given them in Christ. As the Israelites before them who desired food other than manna, the Corinthians desired meat so much that they disregarded all other considerations. God's retribution against the Israelites warned the Corinthians against these practices.

10:10. Complaining against God and his leaders took place many times in the wilderness (Exod. 15:24; Deut. 1:27). But Paul had in mind a time when the destroying angel killed those who grumbled. Although the Scriptures do not mention a particular time when such an angel appeared in the wilderness, similar concepts appear in many places in the Old Testament (Exod. 12:23; 1 Chr. 21:15). The rabbis of Paul's day taught that God had a particular angel who destroyed and killed. Apparently, Paul agreed with this teaching. Those who opposed Paul on the matter of

meat offered to idols risked committing against him the kind of rebellion against Moses which brought death to the Old Testament Israelites.

10:11. Paul again exhorted the Corinthians that the sins and judgments in the wilderness happened to them as examples and were written down in the Old Testament as warnings for Christian believers. This does not mean that the only reason the Israelites experienced these things was to provide an example for later Christians, but it does mean that in God's providence this was part of the reason. Similarly, these events were not recorded just for the sake of the New Testament church; the Old Testament covenant people of God also benefited from these lessons. Followers of Christ are always in danger of taking their Christian experiences of grace as a license for sin (cf. Rom. 6:1), but the Old Testament example prohibits such license.

10:12. Followers of Christ who are overly confident and think they are standing firm should be careful not to fall as the Israelites did in the desert. Again, Paul did not mean that one's salvation can be lost. Rather, he meant that some who wrongly think they are saved might prove themselves not to be (see Heb. 3:12-13).

10:13. The warning to be careful not to fall raised another issue that Paul addressed. What if Christians are so tempted that they cannot resist turning from Christ? Perhaps he had in mind the attraction some Corinthians had toward the idolatrous fertility rituals practiced in Corinth. What if they were not able to resist? First, all temptations that Christians experience, including that of idolatry, are common to man. Others had resisted the temptation toward idolatry, and the Corinthians could do so as well.

Second, God is faithful, and he will not desert his people (see Deut. 7:9; 1 Thess. 5:24; Heb. 10:23; Rev. 1:5). God can be trusted not to allow temptations beyond what Christians can bear. God will always provide a way out of temptation so believers can stand up and not fall into apostasy. He himself tempts no one (Jas. 1:13), but he is in control of Satan, who tempts believers to sin (Matt. 4:1; 6:13). Because of his great love for his children, God does not allow temptations to be so great that they overcome us. Instead, Christians sin because they do not search for a way out.