

I CORINTHIANS
Chapter 10:1-15

INTRODUCTION:

The connective, **"moreover"** (usually translated as "for"), shows Paul's fear of disapproval, **9:27**, with an illustration of failure from Israel's past. Paul constantly was on guard so as not to lose the rights and privileges of his apostleship. As an example Paul showed that Israel failed to discipline herself and shortly after deliverance from Egyptian's bondage her behavior and disobedience was such that it brought about God's disapproval. She did not lose her covenant relationship to God - **Romans 11:1-2; 28**, but she did surrender the joys and rights of her political freedom.

In this passage of scripture Paul tells us while making the journey from Egypt to the Promise Land, the children of Israel failed to realize their behavior was leaving an example to those who came after them. Note what Paul says in - **verse 6, "Now these things were our examples,"** Again in **verse 11** Paul makes his point - **"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."** The word **"examples"** in **verse 6** and the word **"ensamples"** in **verse 11** are the same word. We get our English word "type" from this word. Paul was saying that everything that happened to the children of Israel is a type and picture of the believer.

He tells us in **verse 11** that the record of their experiences is for our **"admonition,"** which means "to place in the mind." Simply put, as a child of God we are to learn from their example so as to not to make the same mistakes as we seek to serve the Lord.

As Paul takes us back to the experiences of the children of Israel in the desert, he does so as a warning. In **verses 7-10**, twice he says **"neither ye"** and twice says **"neither let us."** He is using the children of Israel as a warning so we don't do what they did or end up as they did.

There is a real danger that a child of God may be rejected, so far as his present service is concerned, and consequently lose his reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Therefore, self-discipline and faithfulness to the Lord must be maintained lest there be the loss of rewards. This chapter shows by the example of Israel, how we as Christians can fail in obeying the Lord and lose our rewards.

VERSE 1:

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant.

This seems to have been a favorite phrase that Paul used - **Romans 1:13, 11:25; I Corinthians 12:1; II Corinthians 1:8.**

In **chapter 10** Paul shows his balance in the ministry. In **chapter 9** he stated that he - **"made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some."** Here, as well as in the references given above, he shows just as great a concern that God's people should be well taught in God's Word. He not only desired they have knowledge of the Word of God, but that they put God's Word into practice.

The word **"ignorant"** speaks of lacking information or intelligence. He wanted the Corinthian believers to know what had happened to the children of Israel and why it happened. He didn't want the Corinthians (or us) to be ignorant to the ways of the Lord and how obedience brought blessing, and disobedience brought the chastening hand of the Lord. Paul's desire was for the Corinthians and each child of God to learn from Israel's journey and conduct so we would not make the same mistakes, but instead, walk in the ways of God.

Israel had the guarantee of God's presence, protection, and guidance in the visible cloud. Moses wrote, {21} **"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: {22} He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" - Exodus 13: 21-22; Numbers 14:14.** The "cloud" here spoken of is commonly referred to as the "Shechinah Glory." This term is not found in the Word of God. It is used to express the visible majesty of the Divine Presence.

With the water in front, mountains on both sides, and the pursuing Egyptians behind, the Israelites were in a precarious situation. They were unable to save themselves, but God sent a wind to separate the Red Sea when Moses stretched out his hand upon the waters. What followed was one of the most dramatic moments of history: **"And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" - Exodus 14:22.** After the Israelites had crossed on dry ground, the Egyptians drowned when the water was permitted to return to its natural state. This event marked the supernatural redemption of the Israelites.

VERSE 2:

Baptism signifies a believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection; and publicly manifests a death to the old life and desire to walk in the newness of life - **Romans 6:3-4.** In a sense, the Israelites experienced baptism. They were completely immersed - - the sea floor was under them, the sea walls on either side of them, and the cloud above them. They were constantly reminded that God was present by a - **"pillar of a cloud"** that hovered above them by day, and by a - **"pillar of fire"** that hovered over them by night.

The purpose of their baptism was to show their complete break from their old life of Egyptian bondage, and their anticipation of blessings as free men. They were committing themselves to follow Moses out of Egypt, and at the same time committed themselves to Moses' leadership and his teaching. Moses was the leader, Prophet, and Law-giver who God had appointed for them - **Exodus 3:10-14; Exodus 20** but note especially **verse 19.**

VERSE 3:

The account of the manna being given unto Israel by the power of God is found in **Exodus 16:1-36.** Of course, it is the manna that is call **"meat."** When used in this manner, **"meat"** - simply refers to food in general, not flesh. For forty years God fed them daily with manna to satisfy their hunger.

The manna is called a - **"spiritual food"** because of its heavenly origin and its spiritual significance. In **Exodus 16:4,** it is called **"angels food" - Psalms 78:25,** and it was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. - **John 6:31-35; 6:48-51**

VERSE 4:

The water they drank here is called - "**spiritual drink**" because it was miraculously produced and it was a figure or type of Christ. As they had all eaten of the same - "**spiritual meat**", so they all did drink of the same "**spiritual drink.**"

When the Israelites arrived at Rephidim, they complained because there was no water to drink - **Exodus 17:1**. God told Moses to smite the designated rock and water miraculously came out of it - **Exodus 17:5-6**. They all drank or shared in the supernatural provision to satisfy their thirst. It was spiritual drink in that it typified Jesus Christ, who was smitten on the cross to provide the waters of everlasting life - **John 4:14; 7:37-39**.

How did the rock follow them? An early Jewish legend claims the rock literally followed them. It may mean that the water followed them as it flowed down the dry river beds alongside where they walked - **Psalms 105:41**. It could also mean that the "**spiritual rock**", namely Christ, was with them at all times in their journey.

VERSE 5:

"But with many of them God was not well pleased:" - More literally "with most of them." Out of all the adults whom God delivered out of Egypt, only two of them, Joshua and Caleb, entered the land of Canaan. All the rest - "**from twenty years old and upward,**" **died in the wilderness** - **Numbers 14:21-29**.

The proof of his displeasure was that they were - "**overthrown in the wilderness**". The word "**overthrown**" is the word from which we get our English word "catastrophe." In spite of all the miracles and blessings they had experienced, a spiritual catastrophe took place in their life. Literally, they were strewn as corpses in the wilderness. Their path through the desert could be traced by the bones of those who perished through the judgments of God.

VERSE 6:

"These things were our examples," - means types or figures. "**These things**" refers back to and includes all that has been said thus far in this chapter. The Israelites and the facts of their history were for our examples. They show what will happen to us if we do as they did in following, or rather, not following God. An example may be an example of good which we need to follow, or as the case here, an example of bad or evil which we must shun. Human nature, and thus human failure, is the same in all ages.

The particular thing they were guilty of, which brought their downfall and serves as a warning to us, is lusting - "**after evil things**". "**Lust**" means to "desire with a strong desire." The simple interpretation would be, "now these things came to pass as examples for us, for the purpose of teaching us that we should not lust after evil things, as they lusted". According to - **Numbers 11:4**, the people lusted after the fleshpots of Egypt, and said - "**Who shall give us flesh to eat?**" God gave them their desire; but read - **Numbers 11:34; Psalms 78:27-31**. This was a constant warning against the indulgence of excessive desires for forbidden objects. It was especially appropriate as a warning to the Corinthians not to desire participation in the sacrificial feasts of the heathen in which they had been accustomed to indulge.

VERSE 7:

The reference is to the making of the golden calf which they set up in the wilderness - **Exodus 32:1-35**. Moses had gone up into the mount. Their leader who had brought them out of Egypt was no longer visible, just as our blessed Lord has gone to the Father's right hand in heaven and our eyes do not see Him. Therefore, the people turned to Aaron and said in **verse 1** - **"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.** In other words, they were saying, "We cannot see this man, he has disappeared from us; now make us gods that shall go before us, tangible gods that we can see and worship."

Aaron then told them to bring all the gold, all the earrings, and other ornaments, and he would make a god for them. They brought them and he melted them down, poured the metal into a mold, and made a calf of gold, and set it upon a pedestal, and even gave it Jehovah's name. He said in **Exodus 32:5** - **"And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD."** The people danced around it and sat down to eat a sacramental meal in the presence of the golden calf, because of which the judgment of God burned fiercely against them as Moses came down from the mount.

You remember the horrible results. Many of them died under the hand of God, those that were spared even had to drink the calf. Moses took the calf of gold that they had made, and ground it into dust and poured this into the water that they drank. That was the "gold cure" to show them the folly of worshipping any other than the one true and living God. The second warning for us is that we dare not put somebody or something else into the place that belongs to God alone. He is to have the first place in our thoughts, affections, and lives no matter how precious it may seem to be, the time will come when we will regret it.

There is as much, if not more, idolatry among professing Christians today as there was among the Israelites. Take note of how many times the Holy Spirit caused Paul to speak of this subject in **I Corinthians** alone: **5:11; 6:9; 8:1, 4, 7, 10; 10:7, 14, 19, 28; 12:1**.

Yes, the golden calf is still worshiped. Many worship money, wealth, and pleasure; yet they claim to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ - **Philippians 2:6-8**. How can I be consistent in my following of Him if I put myself, or anything that this depraved heart of mine can put in the place of the true and living God? **"Little children,"** says John - **"keep yourself from idols,"** - **I John 5:21**.

VERSE 8:

The third is a solemn warning and is against the sin of - **"fornication"**. Paul refers back to - **Numbers 24-25**, and the story of how in one day 23,000 of the children of Israel were slain because of their whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

"Fornication" - was a sin commonly committed by the people of the city of Corinth in their worship of Aphrodite. This sin was also in the church at Corinth as we have seen in **chapter 5:1**, and was once again referred to - **II Corinthians 12:21**.

It is this verse that unbelievers and modernist like to point to as evidence that the Bible cannot be fully inspired. We read that because of this sin there - **"fell in one day three and**

twenty thousand." If you turn back to **Numbers 25:5-9**, you will find that twenty-four thousand were destroyed because of the sin of fornication. Therefore, these objectors say, "There is a contradiction in your Bible; in one place it says twenty-four thousand were destroyed and in another twenty-three thousand."

It is not difficult to harmonize the two accounts. In **Numbers** the complete account is given, there were twenty-four thousand destroyed during that period in which God was dealing with His people, but in **I Corinthians** the apostle is stressing the fact that the very first day that the judgment began, twenty-three thousand died. The other thousand, of course, died after that. He is emphasizing the fact that God was so angry with His people when they fell into sin of uncleanness that in one day He destroyed twenty-three thousand.

VERSE 9:

Notice the fourth warning - Note **V: 9**. The Greek word translated "**tempt**" in the first part of this verse according to Greek scholars is very intensive. It means to try or challenge God; to provoke Him beyond the point of patience which He is willing to go. No man can cause God to do anything He is not pleased to do; but God Himself limits His own patience and longsuffering according to His own will. They tempted Him beyond the limits that according to His own will He had set.

The idea of their tempting Christ is that they tested God, trying his patience. How did they - "**tempt**" Him? Read **Numbers 21: 5-6**. Notice **Psalms 78: 19** - "**Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?**" They limited the Holy One of Israel, and questioned the goodness of God and tried His patience. The result was that God sent fiery serpents among the people.

If I find myself in a very difficult circumstance, and question God's ability to see me through, then to ask such a question is to limit the God who gave His Son to die on the cross for our sins. "**He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**" - **Romans 8:32**. Faith believes God and never tempts Him, but goes forward in obedience to His Word. They found fault with God's provisions

VERSE 10:

Take note of the fifth warning which is murmuring. The reference here is to the destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in the wilderness. They murmured against God and Moses, the servant of the Lord, and Aaron, the high priest of Jehovah. They were accusing them of taking too much authority or too much on themselves for so long that it was time for them to go. - **Number 16:1-50**. We read in **Numbers 16:41** - "**But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord.**" They practically said, "We do not need a mediator, we do not need a high priest, we are good enough for God as we are." They found fault with God's provisions for them and destruction was the result.

The word Paul used to describe their grumbling - "**murmur**" is very interesting. It is a word that means to mutter something that is demeaning but which is barely able to be heard. To murmur is to complain in a rebellious spirit. They were walking around talking under their breath complaining about things. This conduct was a serious act on their part for it ended up with the majority of the people falling in the wilderness, the destroyer being God Himself.

VERSE 11:

The sense is not that these things took place solely to be examples or admonitions (def: warning to correct some fault), but their occurrence illustrated great principles of human nature. It showed the weakness of men, their danger of falling into sin, and their need of the divine protection.

"They are written for our admonition." They are recorded in the writing of Moses in order that we might be cautious not to trust in our own strength. The admonition did not relate just to the Corinthians, but just as applicable to Christians of all ages of the world. As we saw in **verse 1** the lessons Paul wanted the Corinthians and us to learn from their example is the same could happen to us. A person can be in a good church, hear God's Word week after week, and see God's presence and power at work, but still drift from God. If we are not careful even in a good church, we can get cold and indifferent, and find ourselves away from God.

VERSE 12:

"Wherefore" – as the result of all these warnings. Let this be the result of all that we learn from the unhappy self-confidence of the Jews, to challenge us not to put dependence on our own strength.

If there was a danger that concerned Paul the most, it was that even after he had preached to others, he himself might become – **"a castaway"**. How great is that danger for us? Those who thought they were so strong – **8:9-13**, were the most likely to fall into sin. Self-satisfaction with what you are in the sight of God and with what you are living and doing for Him, always produces carelessness which in turn, leads to a falling into sin – **Proverbs 16:18; Psalms 30:6; Romans 11:20-21.**

"That thinketh he standeth" - Those who feel comfortable in their position with God and their service to Him will be more likely to trust in their own strength rather than the strength of God. For those who think such a thing as what happened to the children of Israel could never happen to them need to listen closely to what Paul said.

"Take heed lest he fall" - fall into sin, idolatry, or any other form of sin. We learn here that confidence in our own strength is not evidence that we are safe. Such a confidence may be one of the strongest proofs that we are in danger. Those who are the safest are those who feel that they are weak and feeble, and who feel their need of divine aid and strength. They will then rely on the true source of strength and will be secure. At times we think that we are "spiritual" and when we hear about the failures of others, we think to ourselves such a thing could never happen to us. Paul's warning is very clear. He tells us when we feel that we will not or could not fail we are susceptible for a fall. He says, "Watch out, **"take heed, lest you fall."** We often say when we hear of someone falling, "I never would have thought he/she would do such a thing." In most cases, those who fall are those who felt they would never do such a thing.

Galatians 6:1 - **"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."** A person with a humble spirit considers himself as Paul said. He knows he has within his flesh all that is needed to become a failure or and realizes if he is not careful he will do the same as others or even worse.

All of the children of God are in danger of falling into sin, and of dishonoring their Lord; and the exhortation cannot be too often or urgently emphasized that they should take heed lest they fall into sin. How true it is that when a Christian in a moment of real revival, or a time of real closeness to the Lord finds that is the time they need to be most careful. For it is at that time they will be less likely on guard, and more likely to feel themselves strong with no need to be cautious. Note the example of Jesus when He was tempted of Satan. He was severely tempted, but without sin.

VERSE 13:

"There hath no temptation taken you." This is truly an great encouragement and assurance to us as children of God. No one will be tempted above the limit a loving God sets. Note **II Corinthians 12:7-10**. Whatever temptation one shall encounter will be – **"such as is common to man"**.

The words - **"taken you"** would indicate that some within the Corinthian church had yielded to temptation. He makes it clear the reason they yielded was because of disobedience in their heart. They had refused to take God's way of escape.

"...but such as is common" - Paul is saying temptation is common to man. The word **"common"** means, "that which is human, belonging to mankind." In other words temptation is a part of life. Temptation is not a unique experience to us, but is normal and common in our lives and no one is protected from temptation.

Remember in the Garden of Gethsemane we were warned. **"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."** Peter did not have to curse and swear and deny the Saviour. If he had prayed as he should have he could have had deliverance. So may you. Look at Peter - **Luke 22:39-46, 54-62**.

Notice this faithful phrase: **"but God is faithful"** - we are able to see that He did this for Israel of old. As we read the story of His dealings with them, we have many examples of His amazing intervention when they were at the end of their rope. The God who sustained His people in the wilderness, fed them on manna from heaven, gave them water from the smitten rock, and drove out their enemies from the land of Canaan is still alive. To the extent in which we learn to depend on the Lord, we shall find deliverance in the hour of difficulty and trial.

Now it will help us to realize that temptation is not a sin. It is a sin when you yield to the temptation. Because of our depraved nature we will be tempted, but because of our spiritual makeup we can overcome temptation. Paul tells us that God will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able to stand without providing a way of escape. That way of escape is found in the words - **"God is faithful."** God's own faithfulness is our help when tempted. The phrase - **"a way"** speaks of one way, only one way. Jesus expressed the same ideal in - **Matthew 6:13** when He taught us to pray - **"Lead us not in temptation but deliver us from evil."** The way of escape is by crying out to the Lord for strength, and trusting Him for deliverance and strength, and receiving from Him the strength needed to bear it.

Why do we yield to temptation and fall? It is because we do not take this escape route. We know it is available, but the bottom line is we do not take it. Often times we do not want to take the provided way of escape, but instead, we willingly yield to the temptation. Paul warns us against spiritual disobedience and refusing to take what God has provided to keep from failure.

VERSE 14:

The – **"Wherefore"**, looks back to what the Holy Spirit, through Paul, had previously stated from **chapter 8** through **10:14**. He had warned the Corinthians in **chapter 8** against partaking of the meat that had been offered to idols, not because it was wrong in itself, for an **"idol is nothing in the world"** - **8:4**, but because of "weaker brethren" who believed in the reality of the heathen idols.

This brought him to the facts presented in **chapter 9** when Paul refers to his own example of self-denial. In **chapter 10** the chain of thought continues. In this chapter, he justifies his previous solemn warnings and exhortations by citing the sad, even horrifying, example of the Israelites. They were placed in circumstances that were spiritually similar to those of the members of the Corinthian church and to all other members of New Testament churches as **verse 11** shows. In the temptations and sins of the Israelites, all members of New Testament churches can clearly see the dangers that threaten them; unless, of course, they close their hearts and minds to these examples of warning as so many seem to do in our day.

In the book of **II Corinthians**, Paul called for absolute separation from any involvement in pagan idolatry, **II Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1**. His commands were pointed: **"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ... come out from among them ... be ye separate ... and touch not the unclean."** Five reasons were given in the form of symbolic questions: **"... for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" - II Corinthians 6:14-15.**

This passage closes with the solemn warning - **"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."** These are serious warnings. Let us take them to our hearts, remembering that it is one thing to have made a profession, but it is another thing to have that profession backed up by a godly life that proves the profession to be real.

VERSE 15:

There is no scorn or sarcasm here as there was in chapter 4:10. Paul really means that the members of the church at Corinth had the spiritual intelligence to understand the meaning.

As it is throughout the New Testament, the responsibility to read, study and spiritually evaluate what is written in the Word of God is placed upon each member of the Corinthian church as well as upon all born again children of God.

I CORINTHIANS 10:1-15
Study Guide

1. What did the children of Israel fail to realize? How does that apply to our lives?
2. What does the word "**admonition**" mean?
3. Why did Paul record the journey of the children of Israel?
4. What was the warning that Paul gave to us when he wrote of this journey?
5. _____ - _____ and _____ to the Lord must be maintained lest there be a loss of _____?
6. What was it that Paul did not want the Corinthians "**ignorant**" of?
7. What was it that Paul wanted the Corinthians and each child of God to learn from this example?
8. What was the guarantee Israel had?
9. The "**cloud**" spoken of is commonly referred to as the "_____?"
10. In **verse 2** what was the meaning of the phrase - "**baptized unto Moses**"?
11. The purpose of their baptism was to show their complete break from their ____.
12. In **verse 3** what is "**manna**" called? _____
13. Manna is also called _____, _____ and is a type of the _____.
14. In **verse 4** why is the water called "**spiritual drink**"?
15. What does the phrase - "**Rock that followed them**" mean?
16. In **verse 6**, what lesson is Paul teaching the Corinthians and applies to the children of God in 2008 as well?
17. What event is Paul referring to in **verse 7**?
18. What does idolatry mean and how is it committed today?
19. What does "**fornication**" mean?
20. In **verse 9**, the word "**tempt**" means what? How can this sin be committed today?
21. In **verse 10**, what is the fifth warning?
22. What does "**murmur**" mean?
23. In **verse 11**, what does the example of Israelites teach us?

24. In **verse 12**, what did Paul mean when he used the word - "**castaway**"?
25. When is a child of God most likely to fall to the wayside?
26. What does the phrase - "**take heed lest he fall**" mean? Is Paul dealing with someone losing their salvation? Give Bible verses to prove your answer.
27. When is a child of God most likely to backslide or get out of the will of God?
28. What does "**...but such as is common**" mean?
29. How is the phrase "**but God is faithful**" relate to us and how did it apply to the children of Israel?
30. Is temptation sin? When does it become sin?
31. **Chapter 10** was inspired of God and written by Paul to teach what to the children of God?
32. In **verse 14**, serious warnings are given to help us remember what?
33. Based on these 15 verses what is the responsibility of God's children?