

Exegetical Notes – 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

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Introduction: There was correspondence between Paul and the Corinthian Church about which we have no record. Apparently, in a letter which we do not have, the Corinthians had written to Paul asking him to address certain concerns. Beginning in Chapter 7 of 1 Corinthians, Paul begins to answer the questions the Corinthian Elders had addressed to him as an Apostle. Chapter 8 concerned the issue of eating food which was offered to idols. In Chapter 9, Paul gives an example from his personal life to illustrate the principle he has given in Chapter 8:13 related to eating meat offered to idols. That principle is, “if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.” In Chapter 9, Paul gives examples of how this principle, though related to food in Chapter 8, guides a follower of Christ in many other matters. In Chapter 10:1-13, Paul talks about how the Hebrews did not learn the lesson he was trying to teach to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Verses 1-5

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.² They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.³ They all ate the same spiritual food⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

- The Jews were God’s chosen people. This is proven by two specific events from their history: 1. They were “all under the cloud” (see Exodus 13:21, 40:36-37, Numbers 9:17, 21, 10: 11-12, 14:14, Nehemiah 9:12, 19, Psalm 78:14. 2). This symbolized God’s personal leadership of that community of people. He was “with them” in the cloud. 2. They all “passed through the sea” (see Exodus 14:1-15, Deuteronomy 11:4, Joshua 2:10, Nehemiah 9:9,

11, Psalm 66:6, 77:13,53). The passage through the sea was proof of God's deliverance of Israel from her enemies. These events for Hebrews are as baptism is for Christians.

- In addition, the Hebrews shared one common food, manna, and drank one common drink, the water which flowed from the rock (see Exodus 16:2-35, 17:1-7, Numbers 20:2-11, 21:16). These showed that God provided for Israel's physical needs. Christians also share one common food and one common drink at the Lord's Table. As the bread and the cup are reminders of Jesus, so the rock was a picture of Jesus.
- Though the Hebrews had these reminders and symbols, God was not happy with them and as a result of God's disapproval, the Hebrews died in the desert wanderings (see Numbers 14:22-24, 28-36, Joshua 1:1-2).
- Instead of being humbled by their special relationship to God, they became "puffed up" by it thinking that they were better than everyone else (see 1 Corinthians 8:1-2).

Verse 6

⁶Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

- Israel's behavior serves as an example to Christians. We should not become conceited by our relationship with Christ as did they. We should not be like them.

Verses 7-10

⁷Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." ⁸We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. ⁹We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

- Israel became a nation of idol worshippers when they made the golden calf and worshiped it as their god (see Exodus 32:1-6).
- Israel worshiped Baal of Peor which involved sexually immoral acts (see Numbers 25:1-9).
- When Israel was without water (Exodus 17:2) and at other times, they grumbled and complained about Moses' leadership. But as Moses was their appointed leader, their complaint against Moses was considered by God as

a complaint against Him. Their sinful complaining against Moses' leadership and God's appointment of Moses as leader, led to death.

Verses 11-13

¹¹ These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. ¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

- These things happened to the Hebrews, God's chosen ones, to teach Christians a lesson. We should not become "puffed up" or conceited by our relationship to God through Christ.
- When we are confident that we are "standing firm in Christ" we should be careful because it is then that we are most likely to fall into error.
- Temptation comes to all believers. But others have endured the temptations we face before us.
- If we are humble before God and remember that we are weak spiritually, we will not become "puffed up" with spiritual conceit. We will remember that the first among us is servant of all (see Matthew 20:26). And God will deliver us from temptation.

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