

Learn or Repeat

1 Corinthians 10:11-12

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I. Historical Background & Context

a. Historical Background

- i. Corinth was a city that was re-founded and established by Julius Caesar around 46 B.C. It became a governmental seat for people such as Achaia and it became famous for the Isthmian games that was only second in popularity to the Olympian games which Paul would use as a kingdom illustration for the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:24-27). By the first century, Corinth had become the foremost commercial center in southern Greece, and it was known as a wealthy city due to its tariffs and commerce, and as a crossroads for the ideas and traffic of the world. Aside from its wealth, the ancient city was also known for its immorality. There was a temple of Aphrodite that was known to have over a thousand prostitutes. Also, due to the city's reputation, writers like Plato would use phrases such as "Corinthian girl" as an expression for a prostitute. This led to a proverb that was used as a warning, "Not every for every man is the voyage to Corinth." Thus, Corinth was a city in which the people were proud and self-centered due to their wealth and immorality.

b. Passage Context

- i. The church in Corinth was founded by the Apostle Paul during his second missionary journey recorded in the book of Acts (Acts 18:1-18). In his second letter to the church (we call first Corinthians), Paul responds to issues written by those who were likely members of the church who had informed Paul of issues the church was facing (1 Cor. 1:11) and issues that the church raised that Paul needed to help them solve (1 Cor. 7:1; 8:1; 11:17; 12:1)
- ii. In Chapter 7, Paul now switches his letter from addressing the things he heard about from Chloe's people (1:11 – more than likely a member of the local church) to now addressing what they wrote about. The first issue is marital relationships
- iii. In chapter 8 – he deals with liberty matters and uses food as an example. The people were being divided over non-essentials
- iv. In chapter 9 – Paul describes the liberty he has as an apostle but talks about how he uses those things for the sake of the gospel not himself
- v. In chapter 10 – Paul describes how Israel was provided for by God but still grumbled and complained and did not obey God as they should have and the consequences that followed their disobedience:
 1. Vs. 1-4 deals with the provisions God provided for them
 2. Vs. 5-10 dealt with their disobedience and what they did despite God's provisions
 3. Vs. 7-10 lays out specific sins they did against God that Paul warned the Church not to do

Outline

I. Look Back (vs. 11a)

- a. Now these things happened
 - i. **Happened** - to occur as event or process, happen, come about
 - ii. Paul is summarizing his point of God's dealing with Israel in the wilderness
 - 1. Vs. 1-4 deals with God's provisions for them
 - 2. Vs. 5-10 lays out their disobedience and the consequences for them
- b. Examples for us
 - i. God's dealings with Israel were more than a matter of historical curiosity for Paul. They were examples to/for the church
 - ii. **Example** - pertaining to serving as an example or model, as an example/ warning, in connection with the typological interpretation of Scripture
 - 1. This is the second time Paul uses the word example in this chapter to drive home the point he is making to the church in Corinth (vs. 6)
 - 2. Israel was a nation that God created from one man – Abraham - in order to carry out his kingdom agenda
 - 3. The church is a nation that God created from one man – Jesus Christ – in order to carry out his kingdom agenda
 - 4. The Israelites of old experienced redemption, baptism and God's continuing help. But they flirted with idolatry and nearly all of them perished in the wilderness.
 - 5. *The lives of the Nation of Israel was the connection to those who were in the Church – Paul was stating that their idolatry served as an example for the church not to follow*

II. Listen Up (vs. 11b)

- a. They were written for our Instruction
 - i. **Instruction** - counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct, admonition
 - 1. Of historical incidents used as an example or warning to discourage improper conduct
 - 2. The word Paul uses for instruction, or warning occurs only once in the LXX, in Wisdom 16:6, which, speaking of Numbers 11, says that “they were provoked as a warning for a short time.”
 - 3. Paul's point is that God recorded Israel's mistakes for the purpose of warning the church
 - a. It may be that some of the Corinthians felt that their baptism and their use of Holy Communion guaranteed their final salvation, no matter what they did. Paul warns them that this is not so. Idolatry brings ruin

- b. Upon whom the ends of the ages have Come
 - i. **Ends** - the last part of a process, close, conclusion, especially of the last things, the final act in the cosmic drama
 - ii. **Age** - a segment of time as a particular unit of history
 - 1. There are Old Testament texts that suggest that God's revelation was written with a future time (or the last days) in mind, such as Daniel 8:26; 9:24; 12:4, 9
 - 2. The coming of Christ has decisive significance. All previous ages come to their appointed end in him. Those ages are now completed and the lessons they teach are open to us. We should then reap the fruits of the experience of those age
 - 3. Since God has begun the process of wrapping up history, it is of utmost urgency to learn from Israel's example in order to assure that the devastating judgment that fell on the nation does not end up being repeated in our own experience
 - 4. **Commentary** - As Fee points out, here "one captures a sense of Paul's view that both the historical events and the inscripturated narrative are not simply history or isolated texts in Scripture; rather, behind all these things lies the eternal purposes of the living God, who knows the end from the beginning, and who therefore has himself woven the prefigurement into these earlier texts for the sake of his final eschatological people."

III. Take Heed (vs. 12)

- a. Therefore
 - i. In light of all that Paul has said and broken down, he now transitions to a warning for the church of Corinth
- b. Let him who thinks he stands
 - i. **Thinks** - to consider as probable, think, believe, suppose, consider
 - 1. to appear to one's understanding, seem, be recognized as
 - ii. **Stands** - to cause to be in a place or position, set, place, bring, allow to come
- c. Take Heed that he does not fall
 - i. **Take Heed** - be ready to learn about something that is needed or is hazardous, watch, look to, beware of
 - 1. This is an imperative, active, and present verb meaning that it is a command for everyone to do presently
 - ii. **Fall** - to experience loss of status or condition, be destroyed
 - 1. To fall in a transcendent or moral sense, be completely ruined
 - 2. Paul uses the same word, "fall," here to describe the danger of the one who thinks that they stand that he used in v. 8 to describe what happened to the Israelites who engaged in sexual immorality.
 - iii. Paul's warnings throughout this passage are intended to help them see that their behavior suggests that they are not nearly as secure as they

suppose and that reconsideration of their present attitudes and practices is a matter of great urgency.

IV. Conclusion

- a. God uses the Nation of Israel and all of their events as warning to the church in this present age. Since the Christ has come, the church is now in the latter days and await the return of Christ. The church must use example of those who failed in the pass as warning to themselves to not do the same things