

## LESSONS FROM THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES

**Intro:** This year many of us are reading the Bible through. The past couple of weeks some of us have been reading from the book of Exodus about God's deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage.

Good students of Scripture recognize that the experience of Israel could be seen as a type of our own salvation. In fact, Paul would use their experience to warn them of the dangers of idolatry.

Let's consider that text together: 1 Cor. 10:1-13. Read.

There are at least seven distinct lessons we can learn from Paul's exhortation. The first is an implicit one.

### GOD'S WORD IS ALWAYS RELEVANT.

It might have seemed strange at first to the Corinthians that Paul would use the example of the ancient Israelites to teach the "modern"

Corinthians. Note the differences:

The Israelites were nomads, recently released from slavery in Egypt, uneducated by the world's standards.

The Corinthians lived near a seaport, surrounded by luxury, and many were highly educated.

And yet, both groups had much in common. They both were subject to the same temptations of lust, idolatry, unfaithfulness, immorality. The message was relevant to the Corinthians. In fact Paul said:

*Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Cor. 10:11)*

Paul's message is likewise relevant to all Christians today. Though we may be a world apart in technology, we still also need the moral spiritual lessons of Scripture.

### OUR PAST SALVATION DOES NOT ASSURE OUR FUTURE FAITHFULNESS

Paul urges the Corinthians to see that the ancient Jews were very much like Christians in their experience.

They were "baptized into Moses" as they passed through the sea with clouds above and sea beside. Their faith joined them to the great prophet as their leader.

Moreover, they had the words of Christ for their food and drink. I.e. they were spiritually provided for as well as physically provided for by God. v. 3-4. cf. the giving of the Law and its righteous principles. Yet having these experiences with God did not assure their continued life with God. Most of them were laid low in the wilderness (v. 5)

**Paul offered this sobering truth to the Corinthians and we need to heed it as well. Being baptized is not the ultimate requirement to go to heaven. We must follow through with that which baptism declares about us. That we have been joined to Christ to follow His teaching and walk in "newness of life"! (Rom. 6:3)**

### **IT IS POSSIBLE TO EXPERIENCE OF THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGES AND STILL BE UNGODLY.**

**The Israelites as a people had witnessed some astounding miracles. (the cloud, the pillar of fire, the parting of the Sea, manna & quail from heaven, miraculous preservation on numerous occasions, signal demonstrations of God's presence, and sometimes wrath), Surely people subject to such great demonstrations would believe; and yet Israel disobeyed God! Though experiencing the most wonderful miracles, they still turned away from the Lord. Sometimes people say, "If only I could have seen the miracles of Christ, etc. I would believe". Are you sure?**

*Then He began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you." (Mt. 11:20-24)*

*But he said, 'No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'" (Luke 16:30-31)*

**God power to save is not merely in miracle, but in message. The wonder of a miracle will not cancel out the disposition to disbelieve the message. If we refuse to obey the gospel, no other power could make us do so (Rom. 1:16).**

### **WE SEE FOUR SINS THAT CAN TAKE US DOWN.**

**Take a look at the list of things that led Israel to its downfall:**

**Idolatry--worship of false deities, primarily carnal in thrust, cf. v. 7 The Israelites were not the last to do this in supposed worship of God!**

**Fornication--the worship of idols was often also attended by immorality, v. 8 Such was rampant in Corinth and is still rampant in this land. We need to beware!**

**Testing God--Even though they had seen numerous indications of God's love and power, the Israelites continued to test God. In the event which Paul here describes the Israelites became impatient; they complained of the blessings of God rather than be thankful for them.**

**Grumbling--God's people complained against Moses & Aaron the leaders of God people rather being grateful for their leadership  
We need to be careful that these sins do not characterize us!**

#### **WE NEED TO BEWARE OF OVER-CONFIDENCE.**

**It is over-confidence that causes us to underestimate our enemy and overestimate our strength.**

It is over-confident to dabble in the "gray" areas that obviously lead one to more serious sins.

Think of Peter's famous last words, "I will never forsake you!" (Mt. 26:33) Peter failed to make adequate preparations for the trials coming upon him.

**We do not know what we will do when severe trial comes; but this we do know. We need to prepare ourselves by watchful and prayerful spirit.**

#### **OUR TEMPTATIONS ARE NOT UNIQUE TO US.**

**Paul urges the Corinthians to see that all of us must encounter the same tempter and hence the same basic temptations. What the Israelites faced the Corinthians faced. What the Corinthians faced we face.**

**No one can say, "No one has gone through what I have" as a justification for one's sin. And there is also encouragement here as well as warning.**

#### **GOD MAKES A WAY OF ESCAPE.**

**Our temptations will never be beyond our ability to withstand. God will never put us helplessly into the hands of a being as powerful as Satan.**

**This is encouraging.**

**The word "escape" was used by ancient peoples to refer to a mountain pass. I.e. when an army would be surrounded by its enemy, one might see an escape route and be saved from destruction. God provides such for us. v. 10**

**Conclusion: Such are the lessons Paul gave to the Corinthians. They are still needed. Be warned, but also be encouraged. God is on our side. He has provided everything we need to live faithfully. Let us humbly depend on His help and guidance. If you are not a Christian you have no hope of heaven. Come and obey today.**