

## **I CORINTHIANS: HANDLING BELIEVERS' PRACTICAL PROBLEMS**

### **XII. Israel's Bad Example Of Reckless Unrestraint**

**(1 Corinthians 10:1-13)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. The people Paul disciplined in Corinth lived in a city that was known for its immorality, alcoholism and worldly pursuits (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians: The City of Corinth," p. 1619), so the formidable influence of the city's culture on the Corinthian believers left Paul addressing "(a)berrant beliefs and practices of an astonishing variety" in his letters to them, *Ibid.*
- B. However, in a vision Paul received from God as he ministered at Corinth in Acts 18:10b NIV, God told him, "I have many people in this city," so Paul was to keep on ministering regardless of the trials he faced there.
- C. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Paul gave a bad example in Israel's reckless unrestraint in the Exodus that led to God's severe discipline as a warning for his readers not to self-indulge in their liberties in Christ to the spiritual harm of other weaker believers. We study this passage for our insight, application and edification:

#### **II. Israel's Bad Example Of Reckless Unrestraint, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13.**

- A. After warning his readers in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 not to self-indulge in their liberties in the Lord to the wounding of the consciences of weaker believers, Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:1-10 gave the bad example of Israel in the wilderness who self-indulged in reckless unrestraint, what was met with severe divine discipline:
  - 1. When Israel had been freed from Egypt in the Exodus, she enjoyed five advantages, 1 Corinthians 10:1-4:
    - a. Israel had God's supernatural guidance and protection in the pillar of cloud, v. 1a; B. K. C., N. T., p. 525.
    - b. She experienced God's supernatural deliverance at the crossing of the Red Sea, v 1b; *Ibid.*
    - c. Israel was "baptized into Moses," meaning they were united with their spiritual leader Moses, God's servant, in their experiences with the pillar of cloud and the Red Sea crossing, 1 Cor. 10:2; *Ibid.*, p. 526.
    - d. Israel enjoyed spiritual food, the supernatural bread of manna from heaven, 1 Corinthians 10:3; *Ibid.*
    - e. Israel enjoyed spiritual drink (Exodus 17:6) though Christ was their actual Provider, 1 Cor. 10:4; *Ibid.*
  - 2. Similarly, Paul's Christian readers had experienced God's guidance and protection (Luke 1:79; 1 Peter 1:5), His miraculous salvation (Heb. 2:14-15), baptism into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) where He was its Head (Eph. 1:22), they had partaken of the spiritual Bread from heaven in Christ (John 6:31-34), and Christ was "the source of supernatural water for Corinthians (cf. John 4:10-14)," *Ibid.*, p. 525-526.
  - 3. However, though Israel enjoyed of all these advantages, all but Joshua and Caleb also experienced God's discipline, were disqualified, and died in the wilderness (Numbers 14:29), 1 Cor. 10:5; *Ibid.*, p. 526.
  - 4. To explain, "(p)aralleling the fivefold blessings enjoyed by Israel in their newfound freedom from Egypt, Paul" named "a fivefold failure experienced by Israel" in the wilderness, *Ibid.*, 1 Corinthians 10:6-10:
    - a. Israel lusted after meat, so God gave it to them and struck them down, Num. 11:34; 1 Cor. 10:6; *Ibid.*
    - b. Israel turned toward idolatry, paying for it with their lives, 1 Cor. 10:7 with Ex. 32:1-6, 28; *Ibid.*
    - c. Israel practiced sexual immorality in idolatry, so many of them died (Numbers 25:1-9), 1 Cor. 10:8; *Ibid.*
    - d. Israel doubted God's plan and purpose, so many died by snakes, Num. 21:4-6; 1 Cor. 10:9; *Ibid.*, p. 527.
    - e. Israel rebelled against God's leaders Moses and Aaron, so many died, Num. 21:4-6; 1 Cor. 10:10; *Ibid.*
- B. All of these events in Israel's wilderness journey occurred as an example for us **not** recklessly to self-indulge with the liberties that God gives us, 1 Corinthians 10:11. Instead, we must watch that we not become arrogant with our liberties in Christ so as recklessly to practice self-indulgence at the price of harming the consciences of weaker believers, 1 Corinthians 10:12.
- C. In 1 Corinthians 10:13, Paul encouraged his readers to overcome the temptation for self-indulgence in reckless unrestraint, noting God's provisions toward gaining such spiritual victory (as follows):
  - 1. Any temptation we believers face today is common to human beings in general, 1 Corinthians 10:13a.
  - 2. However, God faithfully does not allow us to be tempted above what we are equipped to overcome, v. 13b.
  - 3. In addition, in the temptation we face, He provides a way of escape as we depend on the Lord that we might overcome the temptation without committing acts of sin, 1 Corinthians 10:13c,d.

***Lesson:*** *As God severely punished Israel in the Exodus for recklessly self-indulging in sin, He will severely punish us believers today for recklessly self-indulging in our liberties in Christ to the harm of weaker believers. However, God faithfully provides the capacity for us to handle all temptations we face that we might overcome them.*

***Application:*** *May we avoid recklessly indulging in our liberties in Christ to the harm of other weaker believers.*