

1 Corinthians Chapter Ten: Israel's Example Instructs the Church

Opening Question: What point was Paul expressing with the Old Testament illustrations he chose to instruct the Corinthians?

Key Takeaways:

1. Just as Israel followed Moses, but were led by Christ, so the Corinthians followed Paul or Apollos or Peter but were being led by Christ as members of one body.
2. Paul warned the Corinthians with the example of Israel, many of whom were "laid low" by the Lord in judgment for their disobedience.
3. Being "laid low" meant to be killed by God's judgment.
4. "To fall" means to be killed by God and to "stand" means to live. The point is to be careful how you stand/live so that you will not fall/be disciplined by the Lord with death.
5. The Corinthians were to recognize that the same temptations brought the same judgment by the same faithful God who administered judgment in the Old Testament.
6. Paul instructed the Corinthians not to seek their own good but the good of the other.
7. God will faithfully administer judgment to those tearing down the body.

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Paul's Old Testament examples of Israel's rebellion and God's discipline in Numbers 21:1-9; 25, and Exodus 32. Discuss how Israel's actions were to serve as an example for the believer.
2. In what way is it good to be reminded of Lord's judgment in disciplining those He loved? Has God changed? Is it correct to say that God is faithful to discipline those He loves? If so, how is this at odds with the idea that God wants you to be happy at all costs?
3. Connect Paul's command to flee immorality in 10:14 to the way of escape in 10:13.

Practical Application:

1. Think back through what you know about the Corinthian church from your understanding of 1 Corinthians thru chapter 10. Now read 1 Corinthians 11:1. In what way would imitating Paul as he imitated Christ solve the problems in the church at Corinth? How does Paul's sole focus on building up the body of Christ serve to motivate you?
2. Beginning in Genesis, the biblical story is replete with "stone/rock" imagery referenced by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10. Read Genesis 28:11,18, 22; 29:2, 3, 8, 10; 31:45-46; 49: 22-24; Exodus 17:12; Psalm 18;19; 27; 28; 78; 89; Isaiah 8:13-14; Matthew 7:24.
3. Read Deuteronomy 32 to continue to see the relevance of Paul's use of the rock imagery in 1 Corinthians 10. Who is the rock that Israel had been looking for from the beginning? In what ways does making these connections help you in understanding the story of the Bible?

Closing Prayer:

Father, Thank You that we will all stand again at the resurrection. May we stand now, living our lives in ways that glorify You in service to Your Son as we sacrificially serve His body the church. Amen.