

1 Corinthians 10:1-12 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. ⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ⁷ And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." ⁸ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; ⁹ nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; ¹⁰ nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Christ is our Rock!

What is evil? That is a question that this text should make us all ask. What did the Children of Israel do that so displeased God that He killed them off in the desert. What is so evil that God would kill us, leaving our souls to hell and not enter the promised land that Christ won for us on the Cross?

Well let's look at the examples God provides us. What do they all have in common? In all of them, Israel forsook God. The first example in verse 7 comes from the incident with the golden calf. The people couldn't patiently wait for God to send Moses back down the mountain so they made a calf of gold and proclaimed "this is our god that brought us out of Egypt" and had a

drunken party. They forsook the only true God who had delivered them with many mighty miracles out of Egypt because they were kind of scared and impatient? That is evil!

The next example in verse 8 comes from the incident with the women of Moab. Remember several months ago we looked at Balak king of Moab hiring Balaam to curse Israel and advise him how to defeat them. Finally Balaam told Balak that he couldn't get God to abandon His people, Balak would have to get God's people to abandon God. So the women of Moab came sashaying out and invited the people of Israel to join them in the worship of a Canaanite fertility goddess. In their lust for some passing moments of pleasure, Israel forsook their God again. God would give them eternal peace and joy and they forsook that and Him for a few moments of sinful pleasure?! That is evil!

The next two examples in verses 9 and 10 are two of numerous times that the Israelites complained about the food or the water or Moses or the meat they had in Egypt. Do you realize how evil complaining is? Them complaining about God and Moses

wasn't like us being not satisfied with our government which messes up all the time and wastes money etc... Their complaining was sheer evil. It was unbelief and distrust of God almighty. What reason had God ever given them to doubt that He would provide for them? None! He had graciously and amazingly provided them good food and plenty of it and water enough for all of them, 4 million some in a desert where there were no farms, no supermarkets, and springs, were few and far between. There wasn't enough food and water in that desert to keep a company of 400 people alive together and yet God had provided them food and water every day, and caused their sandals and clothes to not wear out for over 40 years. Their complaining was blasphemy. It was evil so great I can't think of a word to describe it. It was forsaking their God.

What is evil? What is the conclusion God wants us to come to after studying this text? We should conclude to ourselves - "What is evil? "I am evil" . Yes, adultery is evil and drunken debauchery is evil, but it is men, it is us who take the wonderful

beautiful thing that is the attraction between men and women and twist and befoul it as **Hebrews 13:4** says "*Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*" It is men who take wine and beer, which are delicious and should be enjoyed and used with thanks to God, and uses them to excess so that people end up spending all their money, become homeless, participate in drunk bar fights where a father gets knifed and killed, or driving home impaired and running down a child in the street. Every day on average, 28 people die from drunk driving. It's not God who does that. It is man because we are evil and think somehow it is fun or funny to get hammered or because we can't face our problems or the knowledge of our evil so we look to the bottle to quiet that whispering voice.

What is evil? I am evil. At its heart, complaining and discontent with the things you have is unbelief and mistrust that God your heavenly father is doing what is right for you. Worrying is mistrust that God will provide all that you need for body and life. And yet how often do we worry and complain? God calls a

spade a spade and worry and complaining from God's children is evil.

What is evil? I am evil. We too have turned to idols of gold. The desire to feel secure and safe is natural and fine, but we evil people when we feel impatient or a little afraid or that God isn't doing things the way we would, just like the Children of Israel, turn from the Lord our God who delivered us from slavery to sin and Satan and turn to gold (money), or ourselves or other sinful people to feel safe and secure. Once again, what a slap to God's face! What evil we are!

Why is the Holy Spirit here so adamant in crushing us? He is systematically destroying your self-confidence because when it comes to spiritual things, self-confidence is a death trap. It will leave you dead in the desert. It will leave you out of heaven. He who thinks His stand beware lest you fall.

We should never say to ourselves "I have been baptized I don't need to go to church". "I don't need to have personal devotions at home". "I don't need other Christians correcting me or

telling me what to do". That is exactly what Israel thought and did. The Holy Spirit points out here that crossing through the Red Sea was their equivalent of baptism. They rightly looked upon it as proof of their salvation and that God would save them from all adversaries till He got them to the promised land. What did Israel do with that knowledge? In their great evil they used that as an excuse to forsake the Lord. "God delivered us from Egypt. He is going to stick with us even if we do nothing but complain and rebel against him." God showed them and us that is not true.

We should never say to ourselves "I go to church once a week, I will be fine." "my marriage is just fine I don't need counseling from God's Word". "I don't need direction from God's Word to raise my children." "I have forgiveness in Christ I am going to go live in sin for awhile because I want to, forgiveness in Christ will still be there. I will go to the Lord's Supper and it will all be good." That is pretty much exactly what Israel, who died in the desert, thought. The Holy Spirit makes the comparison here between the Lord's Supper and the cloud that went before them at

day to shield them from the burning sun. Israel took God's Presence in that cloud for granted and thought "yeah I am going to go join myself to these Moab harlots and worship a nonexistent Canaanite fertility goddess because it sounds fun and God will still be there to shield me from the harsh sun when I get back". They kept forsaking God, neglecting God, and testing His grace and eventually God forsook them. Can you think of anything more evil than testing the patient mercy and love of God? That is like a son who knows his parents love him, killing his brother to see if they still love him after killing his brother. Then seeing they do so killing another brother to see if we can get away with that too. That is what we are doing when we knowingly do what is wrong. That kind of evil dwells in our hearts. Have no confidence in yourself to become a believer or to stay a believer.

Perhaps you are good with music or math? Good, have self confidence in your ability to sing or do equations. Do not have self-confidence in your mind, your heart, your hands when it comes to morality, to spiritual things, to salvation. That is what

God is telling us today, because He loves you and does not want you dead in the desert outside the promised land.

If we can't rely on ourselves or things of this world for salvation, what can you stand on? You can stand on Christ! There is only one solid ground. That solid rock is Christ. God wants us to know this too.

The Jews had this legend that the first rock that Moses struck and from which water poured for Israel to drink, rolled around behind Israel providing them water the whole way through the desert. You read through the Exodus account and you see that wasn't the case. But Paul uses that legend to let them know that while a physical rock did not follow them the whole way, a spiritual one did. A Rock was always there for them to stand on and protect them from the burning sun. A Rock was always there to provide them with water to drink from day after day and that rock was Christ.

It is not sin that condemns us to hell. No, scripture assures us it is not. Since Christ died for my sin, for all sin, it is not sin that

condemns us to hell. It is unbelief that condemns a person to hell because unbelief rejects the forgiveness of sins and salvation Christ earned on the cross. So do we go sin freely since our sin is forgiven? Can we be negligent with our God given faith? That is exactly what the Holy Spirit is warning against here. That is what the Israelites, that died in the desert, did in the evilness of their hearts and had forsaken God and were forsaken by Him.

We have that same evil heart in our flesh. We should have no confidence in ourselves to come to faith or stay in the faith! So what should we have confidence in? In Christ, He follows us, always, continually. His death on the cross continually shades us from the harsh condemnation of the law. His blood shed on the altar of eternal justice washes away our sin the minute it is committed. It is forgiven, not it will be forgiven, or well it may be forgiven. It *is* forgiven. His Gospel keeps us under the Rock and the Cloud where we do not die but live. His Gospel prevents our evil heart from leading us astray. What joy this knowledge brings us. What peace and safety we possess when we dwell in the

shadow of the cross under the flowing spring of the Rock of Christ. Have absolute confidence in Him to get you through the desert to the promised land. **Philippians 1:6** *“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;”*

You have a rock upon which to stand. By it, by Him, our sin is continually forgiven. By Him, our faith is sustained. By Him, our evil hearts our continually conquered so that we aren't led astray. By Him, you will come into the promised land! Amen

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