

Abusing Your Liberty

Steve Hereford 8/16/20 (c) 2020

1 Corinthians 10:1-6

INTRODUCTION

1. Please turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 10
2. This morning we are considering verses 1-6
3. Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-6
4. Paul continues his discussion about Christian liberty that he began in chapter 8
5. In chapter 8 he gave the principle that if we love as God calls us, will limit our liberty for the sake of weak believers
6. In chapter 9 he illustrates this limitation from his own life and ministry

7. And to keep them from thinking he was preaching for money, he refused to take any wages
8. He also modified and adapted his lifestyle so that he could win more to Jesus Christ
9. Now as we come to Chapter 10 he illustrates how our use of freedom affects our own lives
10. In verses 1–13 Paul shows how misuse of liberty can disqualify us from effective service to Christ
11. One of the surest ways to fall into temptation and sin is to become overconfident (MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary).
12. As he begins chapter 10, he uses the conjunction “for”, which is a “marker of cause or reason” (Louw-Nida) to what he said in chapter 9, verse 27
13. By stating his fear of disqualification, he uses the examples that follow
14. The first example is Israel

15. He didn't want them to be "unaware" (agnoeo) or to "not have information" (Louw-Nida) about historical events
16. He mentions the Exodus from which he instructs them
17. He short he says they must...

1

Learn from Israel (vv.1-4)

A. THEY WERE LIBERATED FROM EGYPT (V.1)

"For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ."

1. All of these events describe Israel during the exodus

2. Israel spent 400 years as slaves in Egypt

1. Genesis 15:13 (NASB) God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.

3. The Egyptians abused, maligned, and severely overworked them
 1. Exodus 1:11 says they had “taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor”
 2. God said to Moses in Exodus 3:7 (NASB) The Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.
 3. Exodus 3:9 (NASB) Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them.
4. After the 10 plagues that God sent against the Egyptians, God delivered them
 1. Exodus 3:8 (NASB) So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.
 2. Exodus 12:29-33 (NASB) Now it came about at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt,

from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle. 30 Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead. 31 Then he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, “Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship the Lord, as you have said. 32 Take both your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and go, and bless me also.” 33 The Egyptians urged the people, to send them out of the land in haste, for they said, “We will all be dead.”

5. After they left God led them by a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire

1. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:1, they were “all under the cloud”

1. Exodus 13:21-22 (NASB) The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. 22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

2. Psalms 105:39 (NASB) He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to illumine by night.
2. Paul continues by saying they “all passed through the sea”
 1. This is the red sea crossing that is recorded in Exodus 14
 2. God hardened Pharaoh’s heart to pursue the Israelities (v.4)
 3. God’s hardening is mentioned again in verse 5 rendered as “change of heart” referring to the Egyptians
 4. Verse 8 says “The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh”
 5. Verse 17 records God saying, “I will hardened the hearts of the Egyptians”
 6. God tells Moses in verse 21 to “stretch out his hand over the sea; and the Lord swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided” so that verse 22 says, “The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.”

6. Israel was now liberated from the Egyptians

7. With that liberty came the responsibility to serve and obey God

1. Exodus 12 was a test of their obedience as they were instructed to keep the passover or they would die

1. Exodus 12:23 (NASB) For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.

2. Exodus 12:42 (NASB) It is a night to be observed for the Lord for having brought them out from the land of Egypt; this night is for the Lord, to be observed by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations.

3. Exodus 12:50-51 (NASB) Then all the sons of Israel did so; they did just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron. 51 And on that same day the Lord brought the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.

2. This was to be observed forever (Ex.12:42)

8. Liberty always comes at a price
9. The same is true for the church
10. The price for liberty for the church was the death of Jesus
11. As Paul has been saying since chapter 8, the responsibility of our liberty is the conscience of our weaker brother and sister (see verses 32-33)

B. THEY WERE BAPTIZED INTO MOSES (V.2)

“And all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”

1. Ordinarily baptism refers to the ceremony in which water is used to symbolize cleansing from sin. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)
2. But here it is referring to identification, solidarity, oneness with Moses as their leader
3. So Israel was immersed then, not in the sea, but “into Moses”

C. THEY ATE THE SAME SPIRITUAL FOOD (V.3)

“And all ate the same spiritual food”

1. This refers to the manna which was miraculously provided for the people of Israel as they journeyed through the wilderness. (MacDonald, William. *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.)
2. Exodus 16:14-15 (NASB) When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground. 15 When the sons of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.
3. "Spiritual" doesn't mean the manna wasn't material
4. "Spiritual" means it was a type or a picture of spiritual nourishment

D. THEY DRANK THE SAME SPIRITUAL DRINK (V.4)

"And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ."

1. "Spiritual drink" is a reference to the water mentioned in Exodus 17:6

1. Exodus 17:6 (NASB) Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

2. The “spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ” means He was the One who provided it and the One it represents, providing living water to His people.
(MacDonald, William. Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments. Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.)

1. Exodus 14:19 (NASB) The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.

2. If you compare the phrase “the angel of God” with “the angel of the LORD” in Judges 6:20-21 you will see it is referring to the same person

3. This is a preincarnate appearance of Christ

1. In Genesis 16:10 He appears to Hagar and says to her, “I will multiply your descendants exceedingly”

2. In verse 13 she calls Him God
3. In Genesis 3:4 when Moses sees the burning bush, it says the angel of the Lord spoke to him
4. In verse 6 it says God spoke to him
5. Jesus is the only member of the Godhead that took on any form or manifestation
6. After Jesus appears in the NT you do not hear anymore about the angel of the Lord

2

God was Not Pleased with Israel (v.5)

A. HE WAS ONLY PLEASED WITH TWO (V.5A)

“Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.”

1. “Most of them” refers to all but two, Joshua and Caleb
2. They were the only two who were allowed to enter the promised land

3. Moses and Aaron wasn't allowed but they disobeyed God
 1. He struck the rock instead of speaking to it like God said
 2. Numbers 20:7-12 (NASB) and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, The Water of Meribah. 8 "Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water. You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beasts drink." 9 So Moses took the rod from before the Lord, just as He had commanded him; 10 and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?" 11 Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank. 12 But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."
 3. Numbers 20:23-24 (NASB) 23 Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying, 24 "Aaron will be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the sons of Israel, because you rebelled against My command at the

waters of Meribah.

4. “Laid low in the wilderness” refers to dying in the wilders

B. THE REST WERE KILLED (V.5B)

"For the rest were laid low in the wilderness.

Laid low (katastrōnnumi) means literally “to strew or spread over.”

1. The corpses of those with whom God was not pleased were strewn all over the wilderness
2. All Israel had been graciously blessed, liberated, baptized, and sustained by the Lord in the wilderness, but in that “race,” that test of obedience and service, most of them were “disqualified” (cf. 9:24, 27)
3. They misused and abused their freedom and their blessings. In self-centeredness and self-will they tried to live on the edge of their liberty, and they fell into temptation and then into sin.
4. Overconfidence was their undoing. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

3

Do Not Crave Evil Things as Israel Did (v.6)

APPLICATION

1. Those who “were laid low in the wilderness” had not brought their bodies under control as Paul had done with his (9:27) but had indulged their every desire, lust, and craving.
(MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)
2. We have an example given to us to not abuse our liberty
3. We can be liberated from sin but sin engaged in comes with a price
4. The ultimate price is death
5. This is exactly what happened to the Corinthians in chapter 11 at the Lord's Supper
6. They did not examine themselves and took of the bread and cup in an unworthy manner
7. 1 Corinthians 11:30 says, "For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep."

8. If you abuse your liberty, this can happen to you
9. This is God's chastening
10. Proverbs 3:11-12 (NASB) My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord or loathe His reproof 12 For whom the Lord loves He reproveth, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.
11. If you're here today without Jesus, you don't have to fear God's chastening, you have to fear His judgment
12. Repent and receive Him right now as we pray
13. Let's pray