

1 Cor 10:12 TAKE HEED, LEST YOU FALL

PRELIMS. Having read Selwyn Hughes these last few days, and having just returned from a Xn **Conference** and considering they have all dealt with the subject of ‘watchfulness’ as Xns, I too feel that God maybe ‘speaking to us’ regarding our standing in Christ. We heard a very solemn warning on Wed night at the Conference regarding **apostasy** – in **only** happens among those who profess! There is **no** apostasy in the **world** who do not claim to be Christ’s! There is only apostasy where there has been **claims** of faithfulness!

The BACKGROUND to this VERSE

Paul is actually speaking about Xn **liberty!** In Chap 9 he tells us about the **correct** use of Xn liberty – eg he could have taken wages for his work of preaching the gospel, but he didn’t. He was ‘free’ and at liberty, not to take any. In chap 10, Paul is talking about the **abuse** of Xn liberty! It is the **easiest** in the world to abuse the liberty with which X makes His people free! “*You have been called to freedom, brothers... Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh” (to sin) [Gal 5:13]. But sadly, that is what exactly happens. Xns, all over the world, just live as they please, **despising** the very words and warnings of our Lord!*

It is as if Jesus never said “*by their fruits you shall know them*” (ie, know true Xns). The one distinguishing mark of God’s people is their **lifestyle** – it is the **only criteria** by which we are to make a judgment! That is why Paul had to say to the Gals “*I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain” [Gal 4:11]. Some Xns live as if the Bible never taught that “*No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God*” [1J3:9] “*We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning*” [1J5:18] It is as if Jesus never said to His disciples “*Except you repent you shall all likewise perish*” [L13:3] Despite the clear command from God that Xns must live a new life, many Xns just **do** what **they** want – they do what the rest of their mates do. And they **take comfort** from the fact that many other Xns are doing*

exactly the same as they are doing! Sadly, some Xns simply **reject** what Peter said was God's command "*Be holy for I am holy*"[1P1]

A WARNING from HISTORY

So Paul is **warning** them by an **example** for them! It is an amazing example, when you consider that Paul is writing here to **Greeks!** It is amazing because he is using a **Jewish example!** Surely Paul could have found an example from Greek mythology or history? But it was far more important than that – Paul wanted an example that included the **spiritual dynamic** more clearly. And of course there **is** a real spiritual **dynamic** in his example!

Their **spiritual fathers** –the Israelites. The very fact that Paul called the Israelites "*our fathers*" shows the **unity** between the OT and the NT! There is one spiritual covenant and privilege running through both testaments. No dichotomy between them. The one covenant of grace – **by faith** – and by **grace** in both testaments.

Notice: "*all were baptised*", "*all ate the same spiritual food*", "*all the same spiritual drink*"[3,4]; Jesus said "*if you believed Moses you would believe Me*"[John 5:46]; Writer to Hebrews "*the gospel was preached to us as well as to them*"[Heb 4:2]; Peter said that the OT prophets had "*the spirit of Christ in them*" when they talked about "*this salvation*" [1Pet 1:10,11]; **Moses** "*considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt*" [Heb 11:26]; Paul said "*if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise*"[Gal 3:29].

Paul wants his readers to realise that their spiritual forefathers, had the very same privileges as they had. They **rejoiced in salvation** by **grace** through **faith** just as they did! They "*drank from the spiritual Rock...and the Rock was Christ*"[4] **And yet**..... There is a "*Nevertheless...*" - he has to give this very serious warning

"...with **most of them** God was **not well pleased**"[5]! Not with some of them but with **most** of them! What do **you** think was the **consequence** of that displeasure? Verse [9 and 10] uses the same word – they were "**destroyed**", by God! Paul is being very serious

here, for those who profess faith but live **contradictory** or even **ambiguous** lives must take warning! God destroyed these people whom He at one time greatly blessed!

And notice the **sins** they committed, “*sexual immorality*”! The Xn Mags this month feature the high number of professing Xns sleeping around in the UK. Sexual immorality is even **taught** in our schools - how to commit it **without** catching a **disease!** Right? God punished the Israelites severely for it - 23,000 “*fell in a single day*”[8] *And guess what? God **would** have **forgiven** them 100% **if** they had **confessed** to Him and tried to **repair** any damage done!

The problem today is **not** simply the **sin**, but the idea that there’s **no** need to **repent!** I say again – the great difference between a true Xn and a professing Xn, is how they **respond** to **their own sin!** Do they **repent** of private sins as well as public ones! “*unless you*” (My disciples) *repent, you shall all perish*”[L13:3]

Why don’t Xns who have sinned, come in private to the Church (elders/ministers), and **ask** for **prayer and** for help to sort out any consequences or problems their sin has resulted in? The reason is probably this:

The UNDERLYING SIN CONDEMNED in this PASSAGE

There is one sin here which is **behind** all the sins of the Israelites. It is a sin we hear very little about – but it is a real danger in the Xn community! It is a very **subtle** sin. It is the sin of **presumption!** Taking God’s **grace for granted!** And this is it’s theology.....

It is thinking/believing and saying (in our **hearts** – **never, audibly**) ‘**I have** repented at my conversion, I don’t need to repent **anymore!** I am saved already, I don’t need to do a single thing! I don’t **really** need to repent because my salvation is in Christ and once I have committed myself to Him, I am saved for ever and ever, no matter what I do!’ **Friend, you must understand this: your conversion is the **beginning** of your **life of repentance!**

Paul wrote “*To the Church of God...with all the saints...I fear that*

when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have **not repented** of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have **practiced**”[2Cor12:21] Jesus said to the “Church that is in Thyatira...I gave her time to **repent**, but she **refuses to repent** of her sexual immorality”[Rev 2:21]! God’s people need to **repent** each day – because they sin each day! Repentance is **not** a ‘one-off’ experience – it’s **continual**. (**Not** grovelling but turning from!)

You know, God’s people are the **only** ones who **can** truly repent because repentance **needs faith** – if it is to be real! It is only **when** you have faith that you **can** repent! And the **proof** that your conversion was real is that your **repentance** was **genuine**! And the proof that your repentance is genuine is that it is **constant** and **perpetual** – ie, it never leaves you! You ‘**feel**’ the **evil** of sin every time you sin - and you **want** to confess it and to forsake it.

The sin of presumption is a **careless, leisurely attitude** towards your own sin. These **Israelites** reasoned like this: We are the chosen people. God will not cast **us** off! The **Corinthians** reasoned ‘We have been baptised, we have been blessed by God, **Paul confirmed** we are “*washed... sanctified...justified in the name of the Lord Jesus*”[6:11], we **cannot** be lost’!

But Paul know the **lifestyle** of some of these Cors - so he had to tell them what happened to their spiritual fathers “*I want you to know brothers that our fathers....Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall*”! Paul was not simply wanting to ‘shake them up’ when he said it, he was **deadly serious**!

Having a **pastor’s** heart, Paul reminds them of the **glorious promise** that “*God is faithful...he will also provide a way of escape*”[13] Ie, **not** escape from the temptation, but escape from **crumbling** under the temptation, escape from falling. You **will** be “*able to endure it*” [13c] And the ‘escape route’ is “*resist the devil and he will flee from you*”! Turn away from it! God promises that those who **obey** Him and resist the devil, **will be helped**. He is **faithful** to His own promises.