

Message #35

I Corinthians 10:1-13

It is possible to win great rewards; it is also possible to lose them. In 9:19-27 Paul describes what it takes to finish a winner. In **10:1-13** Paul describes what it takes to finish a loser.

REGARDLESS OF WHAT A BELIEVER HAS SEEN GOD DO IN HIS LIFE, IF HE DOES NOT LIVE A LIFE THAT PLEASES GOD AND IF HE INVOLVES HIMSELF IN THINGS THAT ARE EVIL, HE WILL DIE AND LOSE ALL REWARDS.

The conjunction “for” of **verse 1** immediately connects us to the preceding context. This “for” indicates a further explanation of the previous text. Paul wanted the believers in the church of Corinth to realize that no matter what they had seen God do, if they did not get their lives in order and live a disciplined life for God, they would die and lose rewards at the judgment of God.

PART #1 – The illustration of Israel. **10:1-10**

The primary purpose of this illustration is to show God’s people that no matter what great things a person has seen God do, it is still possible, through disobedience, to die and lose all rewards.

Thought #1 - All Israel received benefits and blessings from God. **10:1-5**

Paul was always aware of the debt all of Christianity owed to Israel: through Israel came the Scriptures, the covenants, the Law, the promises, and, of course, the Son of God (Rom. 9:1-5).

(Benefit #1) - ALL were supernaturally guided and protected by the cloud. **10:1c**

God used the cloud to guide Israel (i.e. Ex. 13:21) and to protect Israel (Ex. 14:19-20).

(Benefit #2) - ALL were supernaturally delivered and protected through the sea. **10:1d**

Apparently some of the Corinthians were boasting about all the things they had seen God deliver them from.

(Benefit #3) - ALL were identified with a great spiritual leader. **10:2**

All of the Israelites had been under the miraculous ministry of Moses. He was an important and impacting man of God.

It is true that a minister will give an account of each sheep (Heb. 13:17). But it is also true that when a sheep stands before God, he will stand alone.

(Benefit #4) - ALL were supernaturally fed with food. **10:3**

God supplied manna from heaven to feed all of the Israelites (Ex. 16:4, 15).

(Benefit #5) - ALL were supernaturally refreshed with water. **10:4**

It was Jesus Christ who saved the Israelites from dying of thirst, not a rock.

However, as we come to **verse 5** we learn that even though ALL had experienced these wonderful blessings, NOT ALL were pleasing to God. In fact, a good number of them were executed by God in the wilderness.

There is a major difference between having been blessed by God and being pleasing to God.

Thought #2 - Some of Israel received judgment for rebellion against God. **10:6-10**

(Rebellious Act #1) - Some were given over to lusts. **10:6**

The word “crave” is a word that speaks of one who is given over to lustful passions and desires that are contrary to God’s Word and God’s will.

(Rebellious Act #2) - Some were given over to idolatry. **10:7**

Idolatry was a real threat in Corinth. The temple of Aphrodite featured idol worship and apparently some of the Corinthians were boasting of their relationship with God and were still attending and participating in some of the idolatrous services (i.e. 10:20).

The Apostle John warned N.T. believers to keep themselves from idols and idolatry (I John 5:21).

(Rebellious Act #3) - Some were given over to immorality. **10:8**

Many from the nation Israel got involved in sexual immorality with godless Moabite women who lured them into idolatrous worship (Num. 25:1-9).

Immorality is a dangerous threat to God’s people and is a different level of sin (I Cor. 6:18).

The point of this text is to get believers to stop a lifestyle that will cost them rewards and to start a lifestyle that will earn them rewards.

(Rebellious Act #4) - Some were given over to unbelief. **10:9**

Many from the nation Israel were destroyed by serpents because when Moses and Aaron told them what God’s Word said, they did not believe them nor do what they told them to do (Num. 21:5-9; Ps. 78:18-32).

(Rebellious Act #5) - Some were given over to grumbling. **10:10**

However, many people did not like Moses or Aaron. Behind the scenes they grumbled and complained about them and, as a result, God executed 14,700 of them (Num. 16:41-49).

Thousands of Israelites were executed as a judgment of God because of their rebellion and because they did not please God with their lives.

PART #2 – The application of Israel's illustration. **10:11-13**

Application #1 - These illustrations were written to instruct N.T. believers. **10:11**

The word “example” means that these illustrations are types of stories that should instruct us to the realization that lives that do not please God will be punished by God.

Application #2 - These illustrations were written to warn N.T. believers. **10:12**

On the day one faces God, one can and will lose all rewards.

Application #3 - These illustrations were written to deliver N.T. believers. **10:13**

Every unrewarded believer will be able to say, “We saw God do many wonderful things, but we didn't dedicate ourselves to pleasing God.”

If you are guilty of any of the sins Paul named, there is a way out. There is a way of escape. Choose to obey God right now. If you do, you will finish a rewarded winner. If you don't, you will finish a loser.