

“Examples for Our Instruction”  
(1 Corinthians 10:1-13)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Last Lord’s Day, we considered the very first Scripture that Christ – in His offices of both King and Prophet – gave His church: the Law.
  - a. The lifespan of mankind was growing shorter.
  - b. The number of God’s people were increasing.
  - c. The old method of oral transmission would no longer work as well.
  - d. And so the Lord began to commit His Word to writing, to a form that could be preserved and handed down throughout their generations to the end of the world.
  
2. And let’s not miss the point of what the Lord gave His church first: the Moral Law.
  - a. It appears that the first words the Lord spoke to man in the Garden of Eden was the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – which was really a summary of the Moral Law.
  - b. Now we see that the first Word He committed to writing was His Moral Law.
  - c. The point is: Law comes before grace.
    - (i) We must first see our need by looking at the standard before we will reach out for God’s grace in Christ.
    - (ii) When Adam broke that Law, the Gospel was revealed to him.
    - (iii) After the Moral Law was spoken at Sinai and written down on tablets of stone, then the Lord gave His Ceremonial Law which was the revelation of the person and work of Christ in the Gospel.

B. Preview.

1. This morning, we’re going to rise up above the trees and look at the forest to see another way the Lord revealed His Gospel to the Jews.
  - a. Paul writes in our text, “Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (v. 11).
    - (i) The word “example” here is the Greek word *tupikos* which means “typically”: these things happened as types or as examples for us.
    - (ii) The redemption of the people of God from Egypt to Canaan was all one grand picture of the redemption Jesus would later provide when He came into the world.
  
  - b. But it also shows us one other important thing – what we must avoid to make it to heaven:
    - (i) The Jews received many spiritual privileges when the Lord delivered them from Egypt.
    - (ii) In spite of this, many of them fell away and were destroyed.
    - (iii) This stands as a warning to us not to be tempted off the path of righteousness, but to remain steadfast, if we are to make it to heaven.

2. Let's look now at two things:
  - a. First, at a picture of the redemption Christ brought about for you in His deliverance of Israel from Egypt.
  - b. And second, at the dangers you must avoid as you travel towards heaven.

## II. Sermon.

- A. First, let's consider how the redemption of Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land is a picture of the work of Christ has done for you.
  1. The picture begins with the children of Israel in bondage to Egypt.
    - a. Egypt is a picture of the spiritual bondage you were in when you came into this world.
    - b. You were guilty in Adam, guilty because of your own sin, bound over to the kingdom of the enemy.
    - c. You were a slave to sin and couldn't resist it; and you were free with regard to righteousness – your heart was not bound to Christ.
    - d. This is true slavery – when you are a slave to what will ultimately destroy you.
  2. But they were set free following the offering of the Passover Lamb.
    - a. The Passover Lamb is a picture of the redeeming blood of Christ – just as the destroyer passed over those houses that had the blood of the Passover lamb on them, so also the Lord passes over you in judgment when He sees the blood of His Son applied to you.
    - b. When Christ died on the cross, He poured out His infinitely precious life for your freedom, if you are trusting in Him this morning.
  3. When they passed through the Red Sea, they were baptized into Moses – the mediator of the Old Covenant – in the sea and in the cloud.
    - a. We saw how this was accomplished before – the clouds were pouring down rain on that occasion (Ps. 77).
    - b. This baptism was a picture of what happens to you when the Lord, in His mercy, sends His Spirit to change your heart, when He grants you the gift of faith, when He applies the blood of Christ to cleanse your souls.
    - c. Water baptism is a symbol of the baptism of the Spirit that places you in Christ, that causes His life to flow through you, that frees you from the power of your sins.
  4. The Lord guided and sustained the Jews until they reached the Promised Land.
    - a. The Jews were led through the wilderness as pilgrims heading towards the land of Canaan.
      - (i) This is a picture of the pilgrim church in this world – in the world, but not a part of the world – on its way to heaven.
      - (ii) Don't forget your life here has an end – you are only strangers and aliens in this world; you have a better country, a heavenly one.
    - b. The Jews were led through the wilderness by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

- (i) We saw before that this pillar was a visible representation of the Angel of the Lord, who was Christ Himself in His preincarnate state.
  - (ii) Christ was leading them to the Promised Land, even as He leads you today by His Word – to give light to show you the path of safety – and by His Spirit – to put fire in your hearts to follow.
- c. The Lord fed the Jews with manna – with the bread of heaven – and He gave them water to drink from the rock.
- (i) Both of these show you that Christ is your source of spiritual nourishment.
  - (ii) He told the Jews that He was the true bread that comes down from heaven. If anyone eats Him – or trusts in Him – he will have eternal life (John 6:32-35).
  - (iii) Paul reminds us in our passage that the rock that followed them in the wilderness, that gave them water, was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). Jesus says that if you believe in Him, rivers of living water will flow from your innermost being – He will give you His Spirit (John 7:38-39).
  - (iv) Christ is the One who provides you with spiritual meat and drink to sustain you through this spiritually barren world as you head towards glory.
- d. Finally, the Lord gave the Jews victory over their enemies.
- (i) You know that the Christian life is one of warfare – it’s not an easy road.
  - (ii) But as the Lord stood with His people and gave them victory over their enemies when they were faithful to His commandments, so the Lord will stand with you and give you victory, if you will only walk with Him in holiness.
- B. This brings us to the second point, the failure of so many of the Israelites to enter into Canaan stands as a warning of the pitfalls you must avoid on this journey.
1. The Jews became impatient when Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days.
    - a. They made a golden calf and began to worship it as the Lord who brought them out of Egypt.
      - (i) They weren’t content with God’s time table or His way of doing things.
      - (ii) They rejected His Law and began to plot to go back to Egypt.
    - b. The result was that the Levites killed three thousand men with the sword.
      - (i) You must not reject God’s plan, His Law, His time table, and in your hearts rationalize your sins and turn back to the world if you are to make it to heaven.
      - (ii) You must wait on the Lord and trust in Him.
  2. They rebelled against the Lord at the border of the Promised Land.
    - a. When they reached the edge of that land, they sent twelve spies to search it out.
    - b. Because the Jews received the report of the unbelieving ten spies, the Lord sentenced the men of war to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until that whole generation died off.
    - c. This stands as a warning to you not to allow yourself to doubt God’s Word and fall into unbelief, to believe God is unfaithful or that His Word isn’t true.
    - d. If you trust Him and persevere to the end you will be saved; but if you turn away from Him, you will be destroyed.

3. When the Jews complained and began to loath the provision the Lord made of the manna and again desired the delicacies of Egypt, He sent fiery serpents among them and many of them died (1 Cor. 10:9; Num. 21).
  - a. When they cried out to the Lord, He had Moses raise up the bronze serpent and gave the promise that if anyone bitten looked to the serpent, he would be saved.
  - b. This is to remind you that if you ever reach the point that you loath Christ or the provision He has made for your salvation and turn away from Him, you too may be destroyed.
  - c. But if you repent and look to Christ, you will be healed.
  
4. One final warning comes from when Balak, the king of Moab, hired Balaam, the seer, to curse God's people.
  - a. When Balaam failed to curse the Jews, since God had blessed them, he gave Balak the key to destroy them: immorality (Num. 25:1-9; Rev. 2:14).
  - b. Balak sent some harlots from both his people and the Midianites, to tempt the Jews, with the result that many fell into immorality and idolatry.
  - c. On that day 24,000 were killed, 1,000 of the leaders of Israel who were involved and 23,000 men of Israel (1 Cor. 10:8).
  - d. If you turn away from the path of righteousness, you will perish.
  
5. This brings us back to the point Paul is making in our text: even though the Jews had spiritual privileges – though they were baptized into Moses in the cloud and Sea, though they all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink – many of them still perished: “Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness” (v. 5).
  - a. Spiritual privileges aren't enough, as the whole history of Israel reminds us.
    - (i) You can make profession of faith, be baptized, participate in the Lord's Supper, and yet actually be lost in the end if you don't possess the reality.
    - (ii) All of your blessings can actually work against you, if you don't trust in Jesus and persevere in holiness.
    - (iii) You must be on the alert and never think that you're above falling: Paul writes, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall” (v. 12).
  - b. But you must also remember that the Lord will faithfully allow you the means to escape with each temptation: “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it” (v. 13).
    - (i) You must remember to look for that escape and take it when you see it.
    - (ii) One of these means is the Lord's Supper: it is His provision for your spiritual nourishment and strength.
    - (iii) If you're truly weary of your sin and are trying to overcome it, He promises to give you help here – strength to persevere.
    - (iv) Let's spend a few moments in prayer and ask the Lord to show us whether we're fighting our sins and whether we do have the right to come to the Table.