

Examples

By Warren Zehrung – August 20, 2011

As we know brethren, the Bible is the Word of God. It is God's instruction manual, and His guidebook, on how we are to live our lives if we expect to be successful in this life, and go on to the next.

We communicate with God through prayer, and God communicates to us through His written word, the Bible, and it is His revelation to us.

Right now we are becoming children of God, in the Family of God, and that is not a natural process, at least not since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden.

Satan has corrupted the process, and we no longer know by our natural instincts how to please God.

So God in His grace has given us thousands of biblical examples of what works, and what does not work.

He gives us the Ten Commandments. They are spiritual, and they work for the good in every circumstance. They work for the good in our personal lives, in our families, in society, and even among nations.

And God has also given us statutes and judgments. But with all of that, we still lack Godly balance, and we are not mature or well-rounded Christians.

When we were first called by God, we began reading the Bible. Everything that we read did not make sense to us. There was a lot that we read, and then wondered what it was all about.

Here is one **example** that struck me as being the wrong way around.

Jesus gave this principle:

Matthew 13:12 For whosoever has much, to him it shall be given the more, and he shall have even more abundance: but whosoever has not much, from him shall be taken away even what he has.

That did not sound fair, or even just, to me. But Jesus said it, so it had to be fair and just! My mind had to begin to change. It sure does not sound like re-distributive wealth, does it?

But what Jesus was speaking about was the spiritual growth that comes with striving to live according to the rules of the Kingdom of God, while utilizing (in a very proactive way) the talents and opportunities that He has presented to us.

And as for "*it being taken away even what he has*" that refers to those who do not seek the Kingdom with all their mind and their heart, or that they lose whatever spiritual understanding they might have had.

And on top of that, Jesus was speaking in a parable for the precise purpose that the unconverted would not comprehend what He was teaching (Luke 8:10).

As we progress through all of the time that God has allotted for us to become like Him, and the more that we study, and we grow in grace and knowledge, the more everything in the Bible begins to make good sense to us. Now it is working in our mind, and we can see how the plan of God is being worked out.

We come to this section in I Corinthians 8, 9, and 10, and we try to follow Paul's thought process. Paul was a brilliant man, and sometimes it was hard to tell where he was going and what he was referring to. He thinks in ways that are hard for us to grasp, and his writings are like that also.

Paul has these big themes going throughout his writings, then he has sub-themes, then he has examples and explanations. He even likes to use a play-on-words to drive the messages home to us.

This is all for the express purpose of helping us to have the mind of Christ in everything. We want to see every situation as God sees it. We want to react to what is going on all around us the same way that God would react. And in doing so, we are fighting human nature, which does not naturally look to the ways of God. We have to put on the godly nature of God.

Paul has some very definite reasons for writing each letter. One of the big themes in this epistle, or letter, to the Corinthians has to do with division in church, and a lack of unity among the brethren.

We have seen that lack of unity mentioned a number of times so far, and we will see it mentioned again much more when we come to the middle of Chapter 10, and 11.

In I Corinthians 8, Paul is speaking of an issue that has come up, and it is one of Paul's sub-points. It is about whether or not pagan sacrifices can be eaten — and what to do if you are not sure if the meat has been offered to an idol or not. That was a big question for the Corinthians.

Paul cuts to the chase, and explains that the important spiritual understanding of the matter of pagan sacrifices is that you love your brother.

So the apostle Paul tells us to be **good examples** to weak brethren, and to new brethren, so that we do not cause them to be offended.

The common belief of the pagans at Corinth was that their idol deities, their false gods, had consecrated, blessed, and sanctified the sacrificial offerings presented to them.

Paul explained that meat offered to inanimate idols of stone, wood, or even a molten image, does not change the edibility of the meat, because there is only one God, and an idol is nothing. The meat did not change by being waved in front of a statue. But there is something much more important to be considered here, and that is what kind of **example** is being set for others?

Paul demonstrates Godly love by saying that he would not eat meat that had been offered to idols anyway, even though it has not been polluted. The reason that he would not eat it is for concern over offending the tender sensitivities of a weak brother who might suppose that Paul is partaking of a pagan sacrifice — and that would cause an offense. And as we read at the end of 1 Corinthians 8:12, causing that offense would be a sin against Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:13 "Wherefore, if meat makes my brother to offend, I will eat no [supposedly sacrilegious] flesh while the world stands, lest I make my brother to offend."

It is showing Godly love in not offending others. Paul could have taken that steak in the other room and eaten the whole thing. But he said that he was not going to do it, and he was going to bend over backwards, and go without eating meat for the rest of his life if it is suspected of having been offered to pagan idols. Godly love dictates that you do not offend others. That is what is important. Paul has more to say on this subject in Chapter 10. He explains how the idols are nothing, but the pagans intended for it to be offered to these demon-gods. The subject is an important one — 'you do not go there.' You leave those things alone is what Paul is saying. Paul is going to work in some more examples for us.

We might conclude that this example of sacrificed meats has very little relevance to Christians today. We should however, gather that we are to be careful not to offend others. Do not cause offense is what we should get out of this. The not causing offense is more important than whether or not the meat has actually been brought before a statue or an idol. That is the way that we need to look at it. We have to have the balance here. It is important to be careful not to offend others. How often do we hurt others without intending to do so? Sometimes we hurt them to their

knowledge, sometimes we hurt them and they do not realize it. We may be just giving a **bad example** and they may say, 'Well if he can do it, I can do it.' Or, 'If he or she has been in the church a long time and they are doing it, it must be okay to do'. We can offend others without them even knowing it, without even intending to do so. We need to be in tune to the feelings and sensitivities of others.

Let me give you a home-made example that will bring this principle a little more up to date. When a Catholic priest says mass he consecrates a wafer of bread, and in his mind he is consecrating it as the body of Christ. But you know what? That does not make it so. The Catholic priest says in Latin, "Hoc est Corpus Meum" – "This is My Body." The priest has been taught that he is in "alter dei," and that means that he is *another* god.* So the priest is saying "I", thinking that he is in the place of God. He thinks that the bread becomes the body of Christ, the literal fleshly body of Christ. Brethren, when the priest utters those words, the bread does not become the body of Christ, it is still simply a piece of bread, except in the eyes of a Catholic, and perhaps a weaker brother. Therefore, we would never partake of their holy communion because for sure we would be causing offense to others.

* "The [Catholic] Church Fathers strongly affirmed the faith of the Church in the efficacy of the Word of Christ and of the action of the Holy Spirit to bring about this conversion. Thus St. John Chrysostom declares: It is not man that causes the things offered to become the Body and Blood of Christ, but he who was crucified for us, Christ himself. The priest, in the role of Christ, pronounces these words, but their power and grace are God's. This is my body, he says. This word transforms the things offered."
CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

* "What is the priest? A man who holds the place of God, a man clothed with all the power of God... At consecration the priest does not say, 'This the Body of our Lord.' He says, 'This is my Body.' " Atlantic Marian Gathering 2011

We cannot justify our actions by saying that a weak brother should know better, and that piece of meat, or that piece of bread is nothing.

With regard to any offense, we must be careful not to conclude that we are at liberty to act in a way that might cause offense to others.

God uses **examples** in the Bible to teach us how to be like Him, and Jesus Christ.

From these examples we learn to think as God thinks, we learn to place the right value on each and every situation. We learn to have the love of God, and to become like Jesus Christ.

After all, Jesus' life is the perfect example of how we are to live our lives. We can see how His life's example touched all those who He came into contact with. We can endeavor to emulate His life, and be that example to others with whom we come into contact.

Here is an instance of where Paul uses an example to convey a deeper concept.

I Corinthians 9:9 "It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?"

In other words, did God write this for the oxen's sake? This example teaches us that those men who sow *spiritually* are permitted to reap physically.

1 Corinthians 9:11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

He is talking about carnal and physical things. This is where Paul uses an example from the Old Testament to bring it forward into a deeper spiritual understanding for the brethren. You and I need to do so all of the time. If we would learn from the examples of others, we would be way ahead of the game. We can gain both ways, with the good examples and the bad examples.

I would like to go all of the way back to the birth of Moses, because Paul is going to refer back to a number of these things that took place. He says that all of the things that took place in the Old Testament are **examples** to us. He even goes so far as to call them admonitions or warnings to us.

Exodus 2:1-2 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son [Moses]: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.

'Moses' means to 'draw out,' because as we will see in a moment, he is drawn out of the Nile.

The Bible is being very brief here, and it is speculation on my part, but I believe that there is something left out of the scriptures here. Being a Levite, I believe that Moses' father circumcised Moses on the eighth day. I am not real familiar with exactly what point the Israelites discontinued the practice of circumcision. We will see in a moment that the ritual of circumcision was given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But we will also see that it went undone when the children of Israel were just about to cross under Joshua's guidance into the Promised Land, after forty years in the wilderness. But, I believe that Moses was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth.

Exodus 2:3 And when she [Moses' mother] could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

Quite often rivers are shallow for a good ways out, and it is a place for all kinds of aquatic plants to grow in a few inches of water. So he was not put in the current where he was going to be swept away, but it was floating in the water as though it had drifted up by the river's bank.

Now we will jump ahead to where Moses is a grown man, and he takes a wife of the Midianites.

Exodus 2:21-22 And Moses was content to dwell with the man [Reuel]: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

So what had happened is that Moses had grown up and he had killed an Egyptian, and he fled the country. He went to Midian, a good distance from Egypt. It was the same direction that he would later go when he is leading the children of Israel out of Egypt. Moses had actually been in that land across from the Red Sea before he led the Israelites there. And the father of Zipporah gives her to Moses to be his wife. But he calls them strangers, as their ways of doing things were not the same as the Israelites who had been separated from the Midianites for at least 400 years. There is a great rift between these people. Apparently, they could speak the same language and so forth.

Exodus 2:23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

It is almost like we see in the world today, economic times were getting harder; and in addition to that, they were under bondage and slavery, and they were beaten. Their children were taken from them, and all these terrible things were happening to the Israelites.

Exodus 2:24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

Keep your marker here, but I want to turn forward to Genesis 17, and we will come back to this set of scriptures in a moment.

Here in Genesis 17, we find a part of that covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as mentioned in Exodus 2:24.

Genesis 17:9-10 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

Not just Abraham, but Isaac, Jacob, and all the way down to Moses' father.

Genesis 17:11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

So it is a token of the covenant.

Genesis 17:12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.

From this we see when circumcision is supposed to take place. Everybody living among the Israelites was to be circumcised, and you could say that he came from the country next door so he does not have to be circumcised. But God makes it real clear, even if they are strangers they are to be circumcised.

Genesis 17:13-14 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must need be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

God is real serious about each and every one of them being circumcised.

In Exodus, Moses encounters Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament, in the burning bush. Christ, the God of the Old Testament, tells Moses what He is doing:

Exodus 3:8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey;

Jesus Christ was talking about the Promised Land. And so, Jesus sends Moses off to deal with Pharaoh.

But there was a technicality that had not been taken care of. Moses had not circumcised Gershom, his firstborn son, on the eighth day according to the law. Why had Moses not circumcised his son, Gershom? The Bible does not say, but I will speculate here. I think it went something like this: Moses got ready to circumcise Gershom on the eighth day, according to the scriptures that we just saw in Genesis 17,

but I think what happened is that Zipporah, his wife, protested intensely and vehemently saying, 'You are not going to mutilate my son, Gershom'. And there was a standoff between the culture of Zipporah (the stranger) and Moses. Zipporah was a Midianite, and they did not practice circumcision.

However, God was not going to allow Moses lead the children of Israel out of bondage until Moses' own house was in order, and so Gershom had to be circumcised. We are talking about **examples**. Brethren, our house has to be in order. We cannot say that we do 99% of what God wants, and so God will overlook the 1% that we do not get around to.

Zipporah might have told Moses that Gershom was not even one of his people. But God had covered that very clearly, and the scriptures are not to be broken. Sometimes it is uncanny what is included in the scriptures. I would have thought that in Genesis 17 it would have been enough if God had said, 'Circumcise all of your children'. But God goes further than that, and He says, even if you bought them, even if they come from a strange land, you circumcise them.

It is time for Moses to go and talk to Pharaoh. God has a very specific date for when the children of Israel are going to leave Egypt. It was the exact day all the way back from the time of the Covenant with Abraham until they go into the Promised Land in Joshua's day (Exodus 15:13, 17:10). God had a time schedule, but Moses might not have known precisely what it was.

God chastened Moses, and He begins to turn up the heat on him because he had not circumcised Gershom. Moses would go to sleep at night thinking that he had to circumcise his son, but he could not stand up to Zipporah. She might have become violent, or run off with Gershom had he tired. But Moses knew why God was chastening him, and it was because he had not circumcised his son. So God scourged Moses to within an inch of his life, and Moses was about to die.

Finally, it came to the point that God would let Moses die and find a replacement to lead the children of Israel. If Moses would not do circumcise Gershom, the children of Israel were still going to be delivered.

Moses' life was being drained out of him...

Exodus 4:24 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him [Moses], and sought to kill him.

Moses was so weak, that he could not walk, and he was so sick, that he could not eat. So Moses was there on his deathbed, and it was very obvious. Whatever he had, it was clear that he was not going to survive the ordeal — and it was becoming clear to

Zipporah. Whatever it was that Moses had, it had come to a crisis point, and he was dying.

Moses told Zipporah, 'We either circumcise Gershom, or God will take my life and you will become a widow woman'.

Exodus 4:25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son [Gershom], and cast it at his [Moses'] feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.

She was extremely angry, and she was distraught, but the circumcision took place. There is a lesson here. God was using Moses for the great purpose of bringing the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, but there was this one little detail, this one little technicality, that had not been taken care of. This is the lesson that we should learn from this **example**. We cannot take care of the big things while letting the little things go. All of the Word of God is important.

Moses did what God told him to do through thick and thin — through all of the plagues of Egypt, through the opening of the Red Sea, and through all of the problems. Moses was leading the children of Israel, at Jesus Christ's direction in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

Exodus 17:1 And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink.

God knew that there was no water for the people to drink. He knew what was happening, and this was something that God had set up for the purpose of trying, testing, proving, and showing His Will.

Exodus 17:2 Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?

They complained and they got in Moses' face, and maybe they even rioted. I want you to key in on this: "*wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?*" He told them that they were going to try God's patience here. Moses was wise enough to know this as he was a converted man, and he was being led by God's Holy Spirit. He had faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ had brought them out of Egypt and He would bring them into the Promised Land. Moses did not just believe it, but he knew it from the bottom of his heart. Moses had faith in God.

Exodus 17:3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

There was terrible complaining and fault-finding, and they were blaming Moses, and this troubled him.

Exodus 17:4 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me.

It was really getting bad, and things were getting out of hand. God was not pleased with the situation, and that was not what the Israelites should have done. They should have fasted and prayed, and acknowledged that God knew everything, that He knew that they needed water. But they did not do it right. It happened for a purpose, and we will see why things happened the way that they did.

Exodus 17:5 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smote the river, take in thine hand, and go.

That rod had already turned into a snake and helped Moses come to the conclusion that God was working with him. Even in the hands of Aaron, miracles were worked with this rod. The Red Sea had parted with this rod.

Exodus 17:6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt **smite** the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

God Himself was standing on the rock. The Israelites could not see Jesus standing there upon the rock, but He was. He was to whack the rock with the stick. I picture the stick being a very hard wood. It would have had to be a lot of water for three million people and all of the animals.

Exodus 17:7 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

They were unbelievers. They said, 'We do not believe it any more, God is not with us. We will take matters into our own hands' — and that is how they tempted God.

I want to touch briefly on the incident of the idolatrous golden calf:

Exodus 32:5 And when Aaron saw [the golden calf], he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.

It had become an idol, a false god, and it had become a deity to them, and they were worshipping that golden calf.

When Aaron said that it was a feast to the LORD, it was not. You cannot just institute a new feast to the LORD. This was a pagan festival, like the ones that we find people celebrating all year round — like Christmas or Easter.

Exodus 32:6 And they [Israel] rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings [that is meat offered to idols], and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

This word 'play' is really toned down by the King James translators. That 'play' was a lewd sex orgy, and immoral and licentious idol worship. It was a terrible horrendous immoral wild party of dance. I do not know if there was drinking or what, but there was nudity and wildness that was going on. Where was Moses? He was up on Mount Sinai.

Exodus 32:7 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down [from Mt. Sinai]; for thy people, which thou brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:

We are following some of the things that Moses went through with the children of Israel. Moses had his weaknesses, and the children of Israel had their faults as well.

Numbers 20:7 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying...

The Israelites should have grown in some grace and knowledge. Look at how many times God had spared them. He had spared them from the plagues in Egypt; He had opened up the Red Sea for them to go through; He had given them the water when Moses struck the rock in front of all of the elders. God was working with them. You would think that the Israelites and Moses, would have gotten the idea that they must look to God and rely on Him. They knew that God had brought them all this way for all the many years, so God would take care of them. But they needed water:

Numbers 20:8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and **speak** ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

God did not want Moses to whack the rock and beat on it with a stick this time. He wanted him to just go up there and hold the rod in his hand, and only **speak** to the rock. God told Moses that he did not need to use any force. God was showing them some higher spiritual lessons here.

Numbers 20:9-10 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

God did not tell Moses to castigate them, or read them the riot act? No. Moses might have deferred to God a little more, and he could have said, 'We are here for God to give you water again'. Let us not tempt God.

Numbers 20:11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he **smote** the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

Notice God is involved in this. I wish that we could see the look on God's face at this time. The water came out abundantly. Everybody was sitting around with a belly full of cool water and thinking everything is really cool. But it was not good. Why? Moses had not followed the technicalities. He had not done what Jesus Christ had said for him to do. Look at how God looked at it, and we are to look at the situation like Christ did. These **examples** are given to us so that we can see how Moses did not follow what God said. There are times when we do not understand, and God might wink at some of that, but when we know that God said do it His way, and we do it our way we are in big trouble.

Numbers 20:12 And the LORD spoke unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye **believed me not**, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

We are talking about a serious matter when you start talking about faith in God [believed me not]. It was not a matter of whether you just talked to it or whacked it with a stick. God counts it as unbelief. If Moses had spoken to the rock, and Jesus Christ was that rock, then it would have been Christ who gave them the water. But Moses stole the thunder from Christ. If he had just said, "Rock, bring forth water," then Jesus says that He would have been sanctified in the eyes of the children of Israel. They would have known that Moses had not even touched the rock and that God had given the water. God would have been set apart in their eyes. But Moses took all of the glory to himself. Christ said that was *unbelief*. All of these years, and all of this work in the wilderness, and all of the going before Pharaoh and everything, and Moses has just disqualified himself from going in to the Promised Land. It must have been a terrible blow, but God knows the heart and He knew that Moses needed to learn this lesson.

Numbers 20:13 This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

Christ gave them that river of living water. Moses did not go into the Promised Land because of unbelief. He was so close that he could look across the top of the mountain and see it over there. But Moses will still be in the first resurrection, and he learned his lesson. It must have been so humbling in the sight of Aaron and the children of Israel.

There is an example for us — that it is possible to miss out on God's promises, even after long, faithful duty and service to the Lord.

Experience is a good teacher. Even other people's experience can be a good example to teach us.

Paul speaks of our being good examples to others, and not following the appalling example of the Israelites in the wilderness. Paul is going to use a lot of these things that we have just seen that have taken place, and he is going to say, 'Those were bad examples, do not do as they did'.

We need to ask ourselves the question, "Is God pleased with me?" I think all too often we answer that question all too quickly. 'Yes, God is pleased with the 98% of what I am doing and some day I will get around to the rest of it'. Just be careful!

I Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, [guarded and protected by the cloud] and all passed through the sea;

Paul is telling us that he wants us to have all of the facts. They were protected by Jesus Christ. We know that those Israelites that came out of Egypt went through the tests that God put them through, but most of them that started out did not finish in the Promised Land. I will mention that as we go along, but just keep that in mind.

I Corinthians 10:2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

Paul is drawing the analogy of saying that they were baptized as they went under the Red Sea. He is saying that God is working with them in this special way.

I Corinthians 10:3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

Paul is saying that the ancient Israelites were a lot like us; we have all been baptized under the water, and we have all eaten of the spiritual meat. We have had hands laid on us. We have kept the Passover, and had our sins covered. We all have this in common with them, except to a much greater degree, because we have received God's Holy Spirit. The ancient Israelites did not receive God's Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the God of the Old Testament, but the world does not understand that. The Protestants get as far away from that truth as they possibly can.

I Corinthians 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Jesus Christ was the one who stood on the rock (Exodus 17:6). Jesus Christ was the rock from whom the water flowed. We are to look at the **scriptural examples** as analogies to show us what God is doing and how He is giving us the deeper understanding and meanings.

When Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments up on Mount Sinai, the Israelites, down below, were throwing a wild party like the heathens would do. God was not pleased with those Israelites who were involved in lewd sex orgies, and immoral and licentious idol worship. God was not pleased with those who tempted Christ with their complaining and not trusting in His benevolence and compassion. God would not have let the Israelites die in the wilderness guiltless.

I Corinthians 10:5 But with many of [*the Israelites*] God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown [*their dead bodies were strewn*] in the wilderness.

Notice in verse 6, and this is very important for us to understand. We will say that meat offered to idols does not apply to us today. What does the Israelites dying in the wilderness have to do with us? What does Paul say?

I Corinthians 10:6 Now these things were our **examples** [*tupos*], to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

This word 'examples' is the Greek word "*tupos*." This is where we get our word 'type'. When you make a mold of something, it is the pattern, the sample, the resemblance, or the model. So they were our examples to the intent that we should not make the same mistakes that they made.

I Corinthians 10:7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

Perhaps in Corinth there was more of an opportunity to commit idolatry, but most people think that they do not have to worry about idolatry. Yes we do, brethren, it is not just in the Catholic Church, it's not just in the Christmas lights, it is in everything that is not Godly. There is plenty of idolatry to go around. It is all around us, we rub shoulders with it every day. That 'play' was not innocent behavior; they were not playing football, baseball or cricket. The Corinthians were very familiar with immoral sex orgies being a part of licentious idol worship. This 'play' was wild, lewd and cavorting before their idols. We could see an example of that in something like Mardi Gras down at New Orleans, Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro.

I Corinthians 10:8-9 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

What does it mean to tempt Christ? You cannot tempt Christ with a ten dollar bill to do something that He should not do. It is not that kind of tempting. It means that they tried the patience of Christ, and they tried the longsuffering of Christ, by their complaining and not trusting in His benevolence, kindness, compassion, and generosity. They tempted Christ to put up with their outright rebellion. They tempted Christ by not believing in Him, and even Moses was included in that one. They tempted Christ by not being obedient to Him. They tempted Christ by complaining about the way that He was doing things, because it was not going the way they wanted it to go. Tempting Christ means putting Him to a test. We tempt Him today, whenever we ask, "Just how merciful will God be to me if I continue in sin?" That is wrong thinking.

I Corinthians 10:10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

That means that they complained, protested, and criticized Moses and God. Notice, brethren, that the following verse gives us the answer:

I Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for **examples**: and they are written for our admonition [warning], upon whom the ends of the world are come.

It happened to them more than three thousand years ago. God, through His wisdom, preserved the scriptures for us. Paul said that this was not in vain, it was written down so that we would apply it to ourselves. Do not say, 'I am not going to build a golden calf'. Brethren, we need to find out where the idolatry is and we have to find out where all of these violations are today.

I have a red flag by this next verse.

I Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

It is really easy to say that it does not apply to us. We have to learn to judge ourselves by every word of God.

God is serious! All of the adult Israelites, who left Egypt, did not go into the Promised Land because of unbelief, except for Joshua and Caleb.

I Corinthians 10:14 "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."

For us brethren, that is anything at all that is opposing to God, and His perfect way.

All of this happened because of the sins of the Israelites. Their dead bodies were strewn all over the wilderness, and twenty-three thousand died. They were destroyed by serpents, and they were destroyed by the destroyer.

Paul's examples are warnings for those of us who are converted. We have been given so much more. Let me clearly spell it out, and brethren, this is chilling!

In the same way that those Israelites, intending to go to the Promised Land, fell short and fell dead in the wilderness because of their sins, we Christians — intending to go into the Kingdom of God are being held to a much higher standard of Godly conduct. How much more accountable are we than the unconverted Israelites? Yes, it happened to the Israelites as examples and it is written and recorded for us to heed their example. It is a sad thing that we think that much of I Corinthians 8, 9 and 10 really does not apply to us today. But these examples teach us what we need to learn according to the Holy Scriptures.

Brethren, we have been given everything. We have been given the examples, the doctrine, and we have been given the Holy Spirit of God.

Hebrews 10:29 "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

WZ/pp/sl