

The NT church reflected on the OT wilderness stories of God judging his people Israel who tested Christ. As disciples let us beware similar temptations to sin, heed the warnings meant for us, and escape spiritual destruction by fleeing all idolatry and running to Christ who will provide us escape by way of endurance.

Introduction – How the OT should be interpreted and applied is highly relevant to discipleship.

Background – In this passage the apostle Paul sets before the church a series of warnings from Israel’s past. These warnings serve as “types” that use stories from the books of Moses as spiritual instruction (*torah*). All OT symbolic examples point forward to the thing symbolized: Jesus Christ and his gospel.

I. Disciples are Made in a Community of Learning

A. United with OT Israel by our shared spiritual experiences of being led by Christ (vv. 1-4)

As a Christian, do you know you have come under the Lord’s protection and guidance? Israel as our fathers in the faith were all under the Lord’s cloudy appearing of smoke and fire. Did you pass through Christ’s cross by faith as the Lord transferred you from bondage to sin through death to self and into life and freedom? Israel also passed through the sea in the exodus. Have you entered the covenant community through baptism into the name of your Deliverer, and find spiritual sustenance by partaking of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, eating and drinking the sacramental elements of Christ’s body and blood as you feed by faith on Jesus? So did Israel, having been “baptized” into Moses through the cloud and sea, and having shared in the same spiritual food and drink which the Scripture identifies as Christ present with them. Just as the LORD led Israel out of bondage in Egypt, to the holy mountain to meet him, to be organized and adopted as God’s people, and then taught his holy laws, so also this pattern is fulfilled in the Lord’s leading his Church. God’s design is to make disciples in a community of learning as we experience and follow Christ together.

B. United by the realization that the church is more like sinful Israel than we admit (vv. 5-6)

Perhaps the second most important thing any church member will ever learn (apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ who died for our forgiveness and eternal life), is this: *we are the new Israel*. We tend to read with a “them not us” framework. But Paul had just explained to us church members in verses 1-4 that “they *are* us.” If God was so displeased with Israel’s sin, then similarly God must not be pleased with the church’s sin either. All those spiritual experiences the church shares with Israel happened as examples for us so we might not desire evil as they did. Stories of Israel’s evil deeds, as recorded by Moses, under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, are meant to function as morality tales for us. As *torah*, it is spiritual instruction that points symbolically to Christ, our need of him, and how we must relate to him. The whole Bible is ours! So let’s reflect on how these things took place as Christian examples for us so we won’t desire evil and fall into the same wilderness traps.

II. Disciples are Made in a Wilderness of Testing

A. Temptations to indulge idolatries while presuming a right standing before God (vv. 7-10)

Paul mentions four incidents when Israel fell into temptation to indulge various kinds of idolatries. It is significant that all these examples are from Israel’s wilderness wandering years because in the Bible “wilderness” is the place of testing where God’s people prove the genuineness of their faith and loyalty. First, Paul quotes from the abominable golden calf episode. Israel’s sin was crass idolatry: bringing offerings, partaking of a ritual meal in the presence of an idol, then arising in pagan revelry to “play” (Ex 32:6). The second idolatrous incident was when Israel worshiped the Baal of Peor by offering sacrifices and fornicating with the Moabite women (Num 25:1-9). In the third account, some

Israelites put Christ's authority to the test, so God sent poisonous snakes but also provided a bronze serpent on a pole to heal anyone who looked at it with repentance and faith (Num 21:4-9). Paul alluded to a fourth wilderness story when Israel expressed ingratitude through grumbling. Since Israel preferred the unthankful, faithless option of returning to bondage in Egypt, God sent again the destroying angel to slowly kill them off in the wilderness over the next 40 years (Num 14:29-37). In response to all four of these terrible stories, Paul tells us, "Don't be like them!" Don't yield to such temptations because they lead to death. And don't presume the church is immune. Our right standing by grace alone before God in Christ can only be presumed if we give evidence of God's grace in our lives: of resisting temptation, trusting Christ, and walking in our wilderness by repentance and faith.

B. Testings to increase endurance without assuming an infallible standing before sin (v. 12)

Wilderness is designed to be a place of training and strengthening of our faith. Paul states the wilderness principle in verse 12: let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. In other words: know thyself, including your strengths, weaknesses, and temptations so you might gain victory in Christ. Consider the examples of the younger generation of Israelites who left Egypt as child slaves, and of David's wilderness years before he became king. No one really grows spiritually in their ability to resist temptation without testing through trial. That's why God ordains the wilderness experiences in your life—to strip you of any false assurance that you are strong enough to handle life without Jesus. Only then will the wilderness be for you a blessing not a curse.

III. Disciples are Made on the Brink of Eternity

A. Think like a Christian! Scripture is written to steer us from eternal destruction to life (v. 11)

Since Israel's wilderness symbolizes the realm of testing between deliverance from sin (bondage in Egypt) and heavenly rest (the inherited land of Canaan), these stories are written to guide us to eternal life that we might escape eternal destruction. Will you be carried away to hell by temptation to idolatries, even as we experience God's cloud of protection and guidance, share in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper—just like the Israelites in the wilderness? Or will you be led to heaven by Christ's testings and refinements of our faith, while we also share the spiritual experiences with Israel of deliverance and sacraments, but laying hold of Christ by faith to share not merely in the symbol but in the Lord and his gospel symbolized? 1 Corinthians 10 shows the stakes in the new covenant are raised to the eternal degree. Disciples are made on the brink of heaven and hell.

B. Act like a Christian! Flee from idolatry and follow Christ the spiritual Rock (vv. 4, 14-15)

Therefore you and I must act like Christians who truly have been saved by grace, delivered from sin, and created for faith and holiness and works of righteousness. Paul gives us a negative and positive assignment to grow as disciples together. Negatively, he urges you to flee from idolatry which involves repenting of, and avoiding from now on, the kinds of sins Paul noted in his list of select stories from Israel's wilderness years (1 Cor 6:18-20; cf. Gen 39:11-12; 2 Tim 2:22a). Flee idolatry by removing yourself from people and situations that may compromise your integrity. Positively, flee temptation by simultaneously fleeing to Jesus Christ. He is the same spiritual Rock that followed Israel in the wilderness. Put your faith in his saving work on the cross to die for your sins to forgive you, and in his rising from the dead to share his resurrection life with you. Pursue Christ the spiritual Rock with other disciples who are also calling on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Tim 2:22b).

Conclusion – Where are disciples made? At every place we find ourselves helping others take one more step toward Christ, but especially in the local assembly of worshipers. So maximize and prioritize your time on Sundays to gather with the local body of believers. By God's design you can take significant steps toward Christ while gathered with your church for teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer (Acts 2:42). All aided by the simple fact that we're gathered together on the Lord's Day in a community of learning, in the wilderness of testing, and on the brink of heaven and hell. Amen.

1 Original Language, Personal Translation, and Textual Notes

Verse	Greek	Literal Translation
1 Cor 10:1	Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλην ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διήλθον	For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea,
	NET tn Grk "ignorant."	
1 Cor 10:2	καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ	and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,
	<p>NET tc † A number of witnesses, some of them important, have the passive ἐβαπτίσθησαν (<i>ebaptistheōsan</i>, "were baptized") instead of the middle ἐβαπτίσαντο (<i>ebaptisanto</i>, "baptized [themselves]") in v. 2 (so ℵ A C D F G Ψ 33 al latt). However, the middle is not without its representation (ⲣ^{46c} B 1739 1881 Ⲙ Or; the original hand of ⲣ⁴⁶ read the imperfect middle ἐβαπτίζοντο [<i>ebaptizonto</i>]). The passive looks like a motivated reading in that it is clearer and conforms to typical Pauline usage (his thirteen instances of the verb are all either active or passive). B. M. Metzger, in representing a minority opinion of the UBS Committee, suggests that the middle would have been appropriate for Jewish baptism in which the convert baptizes himself (<i>TCGNT</i> 493). But this assumes that the middle is a <i>direct</i> middle, a rare occurrence in the NT (and never elsewhere with this verb). Further, it is not really baptism that is in view in v. 2, but passing through the Red Sea (thus, a metaphorical use). Although the present editors agree with the minority's resultant reading, it is better to take the middle as causative/missive and the scribes as changing it to a passive for clarity's sake. Translational differences are minimal, though some exegetical implications are involved (see <i>ExSyn</i> 427).</p> <p>ἐβαπτίσθησαν {C} On the basis of what was taken to be superior evidence and Pauline usage, a majority of the Committee preferred the reading ἐβαπτίσθησαν. [It is more probable that copyists replaced the middle ἐβαπτίσαντο (which corresponds to Jewish practice, according to which the convert baptized himself) with the passive (which is the usual expression in the case of Christian baptism, e.g. 1.13, 15; 12.13; etc.), than vice versa. B.M.M. and A.W.]</p> <p>~ Metzger's Textual Commentary on the Greek NT</p>	
1 Cor 10:3	καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον	and all ate the same spiritual food,
1 Cor 10:4	καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα· ἔπινον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας, ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός.	and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.
1 Cor 10:5	Ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός, κατεστρώθησαν γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ.	Nevertheless, with many/most of them God was not pleased, for they were laid low [i.e., killed] in the wilderness.
1 Cor 10:6	Ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν, εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν, καθὼς κακέينوι ἐπεθύμησαν.	Now these things came to be as examples for us, so that we won't be the ones who desire evil as they desired that.
1 Cor 10:7	μηδὲ εἰδωλόατραι γίνεσθε καθὼς τινες	Do not be idolaters as some of them were;

Verse	Greek	Literal Translation
	αὐτῶν, ὡς περ γέγραπται· ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πίνειν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν.	just as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and to drink and arose up to amuse themselves [i.e., to play or indulge in pagan revelry]."
	NET tn The term "play" may refer to idolatrous, sexual play here, although that is determined by the context rather than the meaning of the word itself (cf. BDAG 750 s.v. παίζω).	
1 Cor 10:8	μηδὲ πορνεύωμεν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν καὶ ἔπεσαν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ ἑξήκοσι τρεῖς χιλιάδες.	We must not indulge in sexual immorality, as some of them engaged in illicit sex, and there fell in one day twenty-three thousand.
1 Cor 10:9	μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπείρασαν καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ὄφρων ἀπώλλυντο.	We must not put Christ to the test [i.e., to entrap him], as some of them tempted him and were destroyed by serpents,
	NET tc Χριστόν (<i>Christon</i> , "Christ") is attested in the majority of MSS, including many important witnesses of the Alexandrian (ⲫ ⁴⁶ 1739 1881) and Western (D F G) texttypes, and other MSS and versions (Ψ latt sy co). On the other hand, some of the important Alexandrian witnesses have κύριον (<i>kurion</i> , "Lord"; Ⲭ B C P 33 104 1175 <i>al</i>). A few MSS (A 81 <i>pc</i>) have θεόν (<i>theon</i> , "God"). The <i>nomina sacra</i> for these readings are quite similar (χΜν, κΜν, and θΜν respectively), so one might be able to account for the different readings by way of confusion. On closer examination, the variants appear to be intentional changes. Alexandrian scribes replaced the highly specific term "Christ" with the less specific terms "Lord" and "God" because in the context it seems to be anachronistic to speak of the exodus generation putting <i>Christ</i> to the test. If the original had been "Lord," it seems unlikely that a scribe would have willingly created a difficulty by substituting the more specific "Christ." Moreover, even if not motivated by a tendency to overcorrect, a scribe might be likely to assimilate the word "Christ" to "Lord" in conformity with Deut 6:16 or other passages. The evidence from the early church regarding the reading of this verse is rather compelling in favor of "Christ." Marcion, a second-century, anti-Jewish heretic, would naturally have opposed any reference to Christ in historical involvement with Israel, because he thought of the Creator God of the OT as inherently evil. In spite of this strong prejudice, though, {Marcion} read a text with "Christ." Other early church writers attest to the presence of the word "Christ," including {Clement of Alexandria} and Origen. What is more, the synod of Antioch in A.D. 268 used the reading "Christ" as evidence of the preexistence of Christ when it condemned Paul of Samosata. (See G. Zuntz, <i>The Text of the Epistles</i> , 126–27; TCGNT 494; C. D. Osburn, "The Text of 1 Corinthians 10:9 ," <i>New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis</i> , 201–11; <i>contra</i> A. Robertson and A. Plummer, <i>First Corinthians</i> [ICC], 205–6.) Since "Christ" is the more difficult reading on all accounts, it is almost certainly original. In addition, "Christ" is consistent with Paul's style in this passage (cf. 10:4 , a text in which {Marcion} also reads "Christ"). This text is also christologically significant, since the reading "Christ" makes an explicit claim to the preexistence of Christ. (The textual critic faces a similar dilemma in Jude 5 . In a similar exodus context, some of the more important Alexandrian MSS [A B 33 81 <i>pc</i>] and the Vulgate read "Jesus" in place of "Lord." Two of those MSS [A 81] are the same MSS that have "Christ" instead of "God" in 1 Cor 10:9 . See the tc notes on Jude 5 for more information.) In sum, "Christ" has all the earmarks of authenticity here and should be considered the original reading.	
1 Cor 10:10	μηδὲ γογγύζετε, καθάπερ τινες αὐτῶν ἐγόγγυσαν καὶ ἀπώλοντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ.	nor murmur/grumble, as some of them grumbled and were destroyed by the Destroyer.
	NET tn <i>Grk</i> "by the destroyer." BDAG 703 s.v. ὀλοθρευτῆς mentions the corresponding OT references and notes, "the one meant is the destroying angel as the one who carries out	

Verse	Greek	Literal Translation
	the divine sentence of punishment, or perh. Satan."	
1 Cor 10:11	ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινε ἐκείνοις, ἐγγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντηκεν.	Now these things happened to those as a warning, but it was written down for our warning, on whom the end of the ages has come.
1 Cor 10:12	Ὡστε ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι βλεπέτω μὴ πέση.	Therefore let the one who thinks he is standing beware lest he fall.
1 Cor 10:13	πειρασμὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος· πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεός, ὃς οὐκ ἑάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε ἀλλὰ ποιήσει σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἔκβασιν τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν.	No temptation has overtaken you all that is not common to man. And God is faithful, who will not allow you all to be tempted beyond what you all are able, but with the temptation he will make a way out so that you all may be able to endure it.
	NET tn <i>Grk</i> "except a human one" or "except one common to humanity." tn <i>Grk</i> "God is faithful who." The relative pronoun was changed to a personal pronoun in the translation for clarity. tn The words "to bear" are not in the Greek text, but are implied. They have been supplied in the translation to clarify the meaning.	
1 Cor 10:14	Διόπερ, ἀγαπητοί μου, φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας.	Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.
1 Cor 10:15	ὡς φρονίμοις λέγω· κρίνατε ὑμεῖς ὃ φημι.	I speak as to the wise; judge for yourselves what I say.

2 Exegetical Outline (verse summary)

V1. The apostle Paul, addressing the Corinthian church, does not want his brothers to be unaware that their spiritual forefathers were in the exodus all under the cloud and passed through the sea.

V2. Also their spiritual forefathers were all baptized into Moses, the cloud, and the sea.

V3. Also their spiritual forefathers all ate the same spiritual food.

V4. Also their spiritual forefathers all drank the same spiritual drink when they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them (the Rock of Christ).

V5. Nevertheless, Paul reminds the Corinthians that God was not pleased with most of their spiritual forefathers, for they were killed by being laid low in the wilderness.

V6. Paul emphasized that all those things that happened to their spiritual forefathers were examples for him and the Corinthian church, so that they won't be the ones desiring evil as some of their fathers desired evil.

V7. Paul urges them to not be idolaters as some of their spiritual forefathers were; then he quoted the Scripture that says the people sat down to eat and drink but then arose to revel like pagans.

V8. Explaining that kind of revelry, Paul commanded that Christians must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of their forefathers did, so that twenty-three thousand fell in one day.

V9. Explaining that kind of testing God, Paul commanded that Christians must not put Christ to the test as some of their spiritual forefathers tempted him and were killed by serpents.

V10. Explaining that kind of murmuring to others against God, Paul commanded that Christians must not grumble as some of their spiritual forefathers did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.

V11. Paul explained all these things happened to the forefathers as their warning, but it was written as Scripture for a warning to Christians—those of whom the end of the ages has arrived.

V12. Paul concludes that the one who thinks he is standing firm beware lest he likewise fall away spiritually.

V13. Paul encourages them that no temptation has overtaken them that is not common to humanity, and that because God is faithful he will not allow them to be tempted beyond their ability to resist, for with every temptation that comes God will provide a way of escape so they will be able to endure the temptation.

V14. The conclusion of this lesson to Paul's beloved brothers regarding the idolatry of our spiritual forefathers is to flee from idolatry.

V15. Paul notes that he is speaking this way to address the wise, urging them to judge for themselves what he says about it all.

3 Exegetical Outline (full)

- I. Although Israel in her exodus and wilderness years shared in God's graces with Christ, God was not pleased with most of them and therefore killed them in the wilderness (vv. 1-5)
 - a. The common spiritual blessings Israelites received from God in the exodus were experiences of Christ present with them all along the way (vv. 1-4)
 - i. V1. The apostle Paul, addressing the Corinthian church, does not want his brothers to be unaware that their spiritual forefathers were in the exodus all under the cloud and passed through the sea.
 - ii. V2. Also their spiritual forefathers were all baptized into Moses, the cloud, and the sea.
 - iii. V3. Also their spiritual forefathers all ate the same spiritual food.
 - iv. V4. Also their spiritual forefathers all drank the same spiritual drink when they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them (the Rock of Christ).
 - b. Despite all those common spiritual blessings of Christ the Israelites shared, God was not pleased with most of them and therefore killed them in the wilderness (v. 5)
 - V5. Nevertheless, Paul reminds the Corinthians that God was not pleased with most of their spiritual forefathers, for they were killed by being laid low in the wilderness.
- II. The stories in Scripture of the Israelites being killed in the wilderness for their covenant unfaithfulness were various warnings for God's people to be faithful then and especially now as Christians in this last of the ages (vv. 6-11)
 - a. All the curses that killed the Israelites for their spurning God's graces are negative examples for Paul and the Corinthians to not desire the same evil things (v. 6)
 - V6. Paul emphasized that all those things that happened to their spiritual forefathers were examples for him and the Corinthian church, so that they won't be the ones desiring evil as some of their fathers desired evil.
 - b. Paul quotes and alludes to scriptural examples from Israel's wilderness years of the kinds of sins that led to their destruction by God's covenant judgment (vv. 7-10)
 - i. V7. Paul urges them to not be idolaters as some of their spiritual forefathers were; then he quoted the Scripture that says the people sat down to eat and drink but then arose to revel like pagans.

- ii. V8. Explaining that kind of revelry, Paul commanded that Christians must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of their forefathers did, so that twenty-three thousand fell in one day.
 - iii. V9. Explaining that kind of testing God, Paul commanded that Christians must not put Christ to the test as some of their spiritual forefathers tempted him and were killed by serpents.
 - iv. V10. Explaining that kind of murmuring to others against God, Paul commanded that Christians must not grumble as some of their spiritual forefathers did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.
- c. The death suffered by Israelites for their covenant disobedience was a warning to them, but their example in Scripture is a warning for Christians who are God's end-of-ages people (v. 11)
- V11. Paul explained all these things happened to the forefathers as their warning, but it was written as Scripture for a warning to Christians—those of whom the end of the ages has arrived.
- III. The way to heed the warning of Israel's unfaithfulness and destruction by God's ordination is to heed Paul's wise counsel: do not presume on God's grace, beware a similar fall for you, believe God to provide you escape, and then escape by fleeing idolatry (vv. 12-15)
- a. The way to heed Scripture's warning about Israel is to not presume upon God's grace now, but to beware a similar fall and to believe God who will always make a way to escape all such common human temptations through faithful endurance (vv. 12-13)
- i. V12. Paul concludes that the one who thinks he is standing firm beware lest he likewise fall away spiritually.
 - ii. V13. Paul encourages them that no temptation has overtaken them that is not common to humanity, and that because God is faithful he will not allow them to be tempted beyond their ability to resist, for with every temptation that comes God will provide a way of escape so they will be able to endure the temptation.
- b. The way of escape all such common human temptations is to heed Paul's warning from Scripture, wisely recognize temptations as idols, and flee from committing idolatry (vv. 14-15)
- i. V14. The conclusion of this lesson to Paul's beloved brothers regarding the idolatry of our spiritual forefathers is to flee from idolatry.
 - ii. V15. Paul notes that he is speaking this way to address the wise, urging them to judge for themselves what he says about it all.

4 Exegetical Outline (abbreviated)

Exegetical Proposition: Israel's shared experiences of God's graces through Christ in the exodus, which they spurned by their covenant unfaithfulness in the wilderness to their own destruction by God's ordination, are warnings for Christians (God's people upon whom the end of the ages has come) to not spiritually fall into the same kind of temptation but to wisely heed Paul's instruction by trusting God to provide a way of escape and then flee that way to be saved from idolatry.

- I. Although Israel in her exodus and wilderness years shared in God's graces with Christ, God was not pleased with most of them and therefore killed them in the wilderness (vv. 1-5)
 - a. The common spiritual blessings Israelites received from God in the exodus were experiences of Christ present with them all along the way (vv. 1-4)
 - b. Despite all those common spiritual blessings of Christ the Israelites shared, God was not pleased with most of them and therefore killed them in the wilderness (v. 5)
- II. The stories in Scripture of the Israelites being killed in the wilderness for their covenant unfaithfulness were various warnings for God's people to be faithful then and especially now as Christians in this last of the ages (vv. 6-11)
 - a. All the curses that killed the Israelites for their spurning God's graces are negative examples for Paul and the Corinthians to not desire the same evil things (v. 6)
 - b. Paul quotes and alludes to scriptural examples from Israel's wilderness years of the kinds of sins that led to their destruction by God's covenant judgment (vv. 7-10)
 - c. The death suffered by Israelites for their covenant disobedience was a warning to them, but their example in Scripture is a warning for Christian who are God's end-of-ages people (v. 11)
- III. The way to heed the warning of Israel's unfaithfulness and destruction by God's ordination is to heed Paul's wise counsel: do not presume on God's grace, beware a similar fall for you, believe God to provide you escape, and then escape by fleeing idolatry (vv. 12-15)
 - a. The way to heed Scripture's warning about Israel is to not presume upon God's grace now, but to beware a similar fall and to believe God who will always make a way to escape all such common human temptations through faithful endurance (vv. 12-13)
 - b. The way of escape all such common human temptations is to heed Paul's warning from Scripture, wisely recognize temptations as idols, and flee from committing idolatry (vv. 14-15)

5 Theological Outline

Theological Proposition: Christians must wisely reflect together on the OT stories of God judging his old covenant people Israel who spurned Christ and his graces, so we might beware our similar temptations to various kinds of idolatry, heed Israel's warnings as ours, and escape their destruction by fleeing idolatry as we keep trusting God to provide a way to be saved.

- I. God's covenant people who experience his shared graces with Christ must be warned by the example of most OT Israelites in the wilderness whom God killed for their unfaithfulness (vv. 1-5)
- II. Stories in the OT of God judging his covenant people, such as his destroying faithless Israelites in the wilderness, were written as warnings for all Christians to avoid the same kinds of idolatry lest they also perish at God's hand (vv. 6-11)
- III. To heed Scripture's warning regarding faithless Israel, Christians must wisely reflect together on OT examples regarding common human temptations, believe God will provide a way of escape, and then flee idolatry to be saved from destruction (vv. 12-15)

6 Notes & Commentary

1. Possible OT readings. Exodus 32:1-35; Numbers 16:1-50; 21:1-9; 25:1-18; Psalm 106; Heb 3:7-4:13
2. **Children's message.** Today I want to talk to you about something kids do all the time and are really good at. There is a verse in today's Bible lesson that says, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." Is that something kids do every day? When you have breakfast, lunch, or dinner, do you sit down to eat and drink? Yes. And when you're finished, do you like to get up and go play? Of course you do! That's what kids do—they play. You play sports, or tag, or make-believe, or with dolls or other toys. You play with your brother and sister and friends. Playing is great. But here's the strange thing about the Bible verse. God starts by saying don't be like them. So what's wrong with play? Well, you know that sometimes when you're playing you can be naughty. Right? That's when playing is not such a good thing. You might play in a mischievous way, or a mean way, or a selfish way, or in some other way that, if you were to get caught by your mom or dad, you'd be in trouble. When we play like that, we try to hide and sometimes we don't get caught. But no matter where you go or what you do when you play, you cannot hide from God. He always catches us when we don't play well. The Bible says in that same passage about the Israelites "playing" that God was not pleased with them. Which means that God is not pleased with us when we play in a naughty way. So that's a big problem for us. If God's not pleased with us we need help, we need to be saved from the punishment, we need to be saved from God and saved by God. And that is what's so wonderful about Jesus. When Jesus sat down to eat and drink, he gave his body and blood in the meal just as God told him to. And when Jesus rose up after he ate and drank with his friends, he "played" just as God his Father wanted him to. He died on the cross and rose from the dead to save us from being punished for our sins—for all the times we don't play well. So that when you believe and trust in Jesus, he delivered you so you can now play well. With your sins forgiven and now able to play with joy before him. We're about to excuse you to go to children's church during the sermon. Do you have fun where you're going? Yes, because learning and singing and craft and snack and games all about Jesus and the Bible are fun. We don't want you to think that coming to church boring and you can't play in God's house. The right kind of play that honors Jesus is the kind of play that God is pleased with. So go play well, loving God and others. Let's pray.
3. Sermon Theme. The NT church reflected on the OT wilderness stories of God judging his people Israel who tested Christ. As disciples let us beware similar temptations to sin, heed the warnings meant for us, and escape spiritual destruction by fleeing all idolatry and running to Christ who will provide us escape by way of endurance.
4. Vine Project sermon series. Where are disciples made? The short answer is: everywhere at any time. Wherever you find yourself (home, work, school, vacation, sporting events, meetings, etc.), make disciples there. God shows us in the book of Acts and the pattern revealed in the New Testament that the local assembly of believers is the most important place where disciples are consistently made.

5. In one way the passage is on the same theme of Hebrews 3:7-4:13 (esp. Heb 3:16-4:2) about striving to enter the eternal rest that was denied symbolically to faithless Israel in the wilderness. In another way Paul's argument in chapter 10 follows the sequence of Deuteronomy 32 (the Song of Moses) that chronicles Israel's wilderness 40-year journey. In still another way the passage illustrates Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 of the runner who disciplines (i.e., disciples) his body so as to win the race and not be disqualified. Whereas the Promised Land for them was physical and typological of heaven, so that their failure to enter it was symbolic (if not really) of their failure to enter heaven by faith, for new covenant believers, the promise of eternal rest is not symbolic or typological. Heaven is the thing signified, so it is true that Christians who live now when the end of the ages has come are really and truly (not symbolically or typologically) on the brink of heaven and hell. In the new covenant the stakes are higher, although the reality of heaven and hell was certainly present in the old covenant age. It's just that during the old covenant, and in this case, in the wilderness, there was a typological, symbolic layer added to their real-world experiences that teaches lesson explicitly designed for new covenant members.
6. **Quotation:** "In chapter 9 Paul used himself as an example of a mature Christian who disciplines himself to better serve God. IN chapter 10, he uses Israel as an example of spiritual immaturity, shown in their overconfidence and lack of self-discipline." ~ NKJV Life Application Bible, 2103
7. Vv1-5. Cf. WCF 7.5; 27.5; WLC 174, 175; HC 78. Not all who experience spiritual benefits finish well or finish by inheriting eternal life.
8. Vv1-2. Jews looked back to the exodus as their corporate redemption experience as a people. In the exodus Israel was saved, and future salvation was envisioned in the imagery of the first exodus (cf. Lk 9:31).
9. V1. Paul often uses the formula: "I don't want you, brothers, to be aware" to introduce a vital faith matter (Rom 11:25; 12:1; 2 Cor 18:8; Col 2:1; 1 Thess 4:13). Those delivered under the theophanic cloud (Ex 13:17-22; 40:34; Num 9:15-23; 14:14; Dt 1:33; Pss 78:13-14; 105:39; 106) and who passed through the sea (Ex 14:1-31) are the exodus generation of Israelite slaves who left Egypt following Moses through the wilderness (Ex 13:17-14:31).
10. V2. All the Israelites were "baptized" into Moses by their following him through the water ordeal and deliverance of the Red Sea exodus. By their identification with Moses the leader (Ex 14:31), Israel was "baptized" into Moses which was analogous and spiritually connected to baptism into Christ our leader as the Savior and Lord (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27). By extension Paul is emphasizing that just because all Israel was baptized does not mean God was pleased with all those who were baptized. Baptism doesn't save a person or make him pleasing to God. Faith and its fruit of obedience (covenant fidelity built on repentance and faith in Christ the Lord and Savior) please God. So the Corinthians, even though they are all united in baptism, cannot presume that God is therefore pleased with all of them without exception because of the example of Israel in the wilderness. Apart from saving faith, membership in the covenant community (either Israel or the new Israel) by baptism and subsequent activity in the body will accomplish nothing and ultimately keep a person from finishing the race and entering God's eternal rest in heaven.

11. Vv3-4. Building on verse 2, Paul warns the Corinthian believers not to find false comfort or assurance in partaking of the Lord's Supper (eating and drinking the same spiritual food and drink; cf. 1 Cor 10:14-22). Note the parallels and shared spiritual experiences of the Israelites and the Corinthian church. Israel also shared in divinely given food and drink—manna from heaven and the water from the rock (Ex 16:2-36; 17:1-7; Num 20:2-17; 21:16). "Spiritual" doesn't mean immaterial, but that the physical material was supernaturally provided by God's power (cf. 1 Cor 2:6, 14:3:1; 15:44-46). So if you take comfort in the fact that you participate in the Lord's Supper, then your comfort is misplaced. Take your comfort in the Lord's Supper first by looking to Christ the Comforter, and second from your real and genuine faith in Christ if it is producing the fruits of repentance, love, new obedience seen in good works done to the glory of God alone. Jesus is the bread and water of life (Jn 4:14; 6:30-35). The spiritual food and drink do not work *ex opere operato* (out of the doing, it is done). No one profits from the sacraments unless saving faith lays hold of the promises by clinging to Christ. In fact, without saving faith, participation in the sacraments bring spiritual curse not spiritual blessing (1 Cor 10:14-18; cf. Jn 7:37-39; Rev 22:17). Paul's warning stands. Rejoice with a faith that takes heed lest you fall; beware without a faith that keeps on sinning that grace may abound (Rom 6:1-4). Being baptized, confirmed, and taking the Lord's Supper does not guarantee eternal life with Christ. The test of eternal life is faith in Christ, not a faithlessness that test/tempts Christ.
12. Vv3-4. **Quotation:** "The manna on which they fed was a type of Christ crucified, the bread which came down from heaven, which whoso eateth shall live forever. Their drink was a stream fetched from a rock which followed them in all their journeyings in the wilderness; and this rock was Christ, that is, in type and figure. He is the rock on which the Christian church is built; and of the streams that issue from him do all believers drink, and are refreshed. Now all the Jews did eat of this meat, and drink of this rock, called here a spiritual rock, because it typified spiritual things. These were great privileges. One would think that this should have saved them; that all who ate of that spiritual meat, and drank of that spiritual drink, should have been holy and acceptable to God." ~ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*
13. V3. The spiritual food being the manna from heaven and the quail (Ex 16:1-16; Num 11:4-34).
14. V4. How was the rock the Israelites drank from actually the Rock who is Christ? In the OT God is often compared to a rock (Dt 32:4, 15, 18, 30-31) because he is Israel's king (Gen 49:24; Ps 95:1-3). Israel is sometimes called Jeshurun who forsakes God the rock of her salvation (Dt 32:13, 15). In the wilderness at Massah and Meribah, the LORD identified himself with the rock from which water flowed because the LORD stood before the rock as Moses struck it to produce flowing water (Ex 17:1-7, esp. v. 6). Later the "rock" in the wilderness that "followed them" (by rabbinic exegesis) shows up years later near the end of their sojourn (Num 20:2-13, esp. v. 8; cf. Pss 78:15-16; 105:41; 114:8). The physical, material rock didn't follow Israel in the wilderness, but Christ the Rock in his spiritual, immaterial presence followed Israel to accompany his people. Paul sees in that rock a type of Christ our Rock because the deliverer of Israel in the exodus and wilderness wandering years was none other than Christ who was crucified (the Rock stricken by God and men) and risen (the Rock of salvation from whom living waters spring for salvation; cf. Ezek 47:1-12).

15. V4. **Quotation**: “The reality of the things signified was exhibited in connection with the ancient sacraments. As, therefore, they were emblems of Christ, it follows, that Christ was connected with them, not locally, nor by a natural or substantial union, but sacramentally. On this principle the Apostle says, that the rock was Christ, for nothing is more common than metonymy in speaking of sacraments. The name of the thing, therefore, is transferred here to the sign—not as if it were strictly applicable, but figuratively... There remains another question. ‘Seeing that we now in the Supper eat the body of Christ, and drink his blood, how could the Jews be partakers of the same spiritual meat and drink, when there was as yet no flesh of Christ that they could eat?’ I answer, that though his flesh did not as yet exist, it was, nevertheless, food for them. Nor is this an empty or sophistical subtilty, for their salvation depended on the benefit of his death and resurrection. Hence, they required to receive the flesh and the blood of Christ, that they might participate in the benefit of redemption. This reception of it was the secret work of the Holy Spirit, who wrought in them in such a manner, that Christ’s flesh, though not yet created, was made efficacious in them. He means, however, that they ate in their own way, which was different from ours, and this is what I have previously stated, that Christ is now presented to us more fully, according to the measure of the revelation. For, in the present day, the eating is substantial, which it could not have been then—that is, Christ feeds us with his flesh, which has been sacrificed for us, and appointed as our food, and from this we derive life.” ~ John Calvin, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*
16. V4. **Quotation** “Paul identifies Christ as the rock in a figurative sense, based on his reading of the descriptions of the rock in Exod 17 and Num 21:16–20. Despite Christ’s accompaniment and provision of water in the desert, the people still complained about God’s provision and rebelled against His leadership. Paul urges the Corinthians not to follow the Israelites’ example of complaining about provisions given by the rock (Christ). Paul interprets Israel’s rejection of God in the wilderness as a prefiguring of their later rejection of Jesus as Messiah. The metaphor of Christ as rock also recalls the imagery of the Messiah as cornerstone (Isa 28:16; Psa 118:22) and Jesus as foundation for the Church (Eph 2:20).” ~ LEB Faithlife Study Bible
17. Vv5-14. Cf. WLC 148, 195; WSC 81; HC 94.
18. Vv5-10. Several allusions to Israel’s various episodes of committing idolatry in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt. Paul quotes the narrative of Israel’s pagan revelry associated with the golden calf incident at the foot of Mount Sinai (Ex 32:6). The two major sins Israel’s experiences, after being baptized and eating/drinking spiritual food/drink, that Christians ought to likewise beware are idolatry and sexual immorality. The four spiritual lessons Paul wants the Corinthians (and therefore all Christians) to learn: do not be idolaters (v. 7); do not be sexually immoral (v. 8); do not put Christ to the test (v. 9); do not complain (v. 10).
19. V5. God was not pleased with most of the Israelites, so he overthrew (Hb: laid low, killed) them in the wilderness. For what sin? In general, their idolatry. But that idolatry they expressed in several ways at various times, including in grumbling/murmuring against the LORD and his prophet Moses, in rebellion against the same for jealousy, in discontent with God’s provision of bread and water (cf. Num 14:22-23, 29, 37; 26:64-65; Ps 78:30-31; Heb 3:17; Jude 5). Israel in the wilderness had witnessed and benefited from many miracles, but

only a few had genuine faith in the LORD (Heb 3:16-19; 4:2). Joshua and Caleb were the only Israelites from that generation allowed to enter the Promised Land (Num 14:22-24, 27-38; 26:63-65; Jos 1:1-2).

20. V5. **Quotation**: “The Corinthians who worship the gods and fornicate may ‘think that they stand’ on account of the sacraments of the gospel, but the reality is they will fall, as the Israelites did. The covenants have different roles, the former prefiguring and the latter gloriously fulfilling. But the same God is the God of both and his moral character does not change. If we sin in the ways the Israelites did, then we in the churches will just as surely perish along the way. Paul is determined not to be disqualified and so submits to rigorous self-discipline (cf. 1 Cor 9:27). These verses encourage Christians to have the same determination for self-discipline and spiritual survival.” ~ Paul Barnett, *1 Corinthians*, 170-171
21. V6. BDAG. τύπος, ου, ὁ (Aeschyl., Hdt.+; ins in var. senses: New Docs 4, 41f; loanw. in rabb.). **6. an archetype serving as a model, type, pattern, model** (Pla., Rep. 379a περὶ θεολογίας) **c.** of the **types** given by God as an indication of the future, in the form of persons or things (cp. Philo, Op. M. 157; Iren. 1, 6, 4 [Harv. I 74, 3]); of Adam: τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος (Ἀδάμ) *a type of the Adam to come* (i.e. of Christ) **Ro 5:14**. Cp. **1 Cor 10:6, 11 v.l.**;
22. V6. The word translated as “examples” (ESV) is *typos* in Greek which indicates typological hermeneutics are at work in these OT stories as Paul is relating them to the Corinthian church. The wilderness events alluded to therefore have a divinely intended correspondence with the experiences of Christians in the church. Thus Israel is a type of the Church, and her pilgrimage through the wilderness to the Promised Land functions as an instructive example for the church’s pilgrimage to heaven (cf. 1 Cor 9:10; Rom 15:4). In the wilderness, Israel was not thankful or satisfied with spiritual food, but instead craved evil things (Num 11:4-6, 18, 20, 34; Ps 106:14-15) and died (Num 11:33).
23. V7. NET **sn** A quotation from [Exod 32:6](#).
24. V7. An allusion to the golden calf that Israel worshiped (Ex 32). Jews regarded that incident as their most embarrassing moment in national history when they ate a ritual meal sacrificed to an idol (Ex 32:6; cf. 1 Cor 8). Earlier Paul argued that eating food sacrificed to idols is not permissible. The act is actually, when eating in the temple of a pagan god (1 Cor 8:9-10), partaking of the table of demons which is idolatry (1 Cor 10:21). Here is the connection to the Israelites. For the church to eat such meals in temples is akin to following the example of the wicked idolatrous Israelites in the wilderness! How so? Israel benefited from God’s redemption but still fell when tempted to worship the local gods with their rising up to debauched “play” in pagan revelry that suggests wild partying with drinking and sex (Ex 32:1-6).
25. V8. NET **sn** This incident is recorded in [Num 25:1–9](#).
26. V8. An allusion to the Baal of Peor worship and sexual immorality with Moabite prostitute temple virgins who worship Baal (Num 25:1-9; 31:16). Paul alludes to the Israelites who committed sexual immorality in the wilderness because he had just discussed the same kind of sin in the Corinthian church (1 Cor 5:1-13; 6:12-20). If God punished sexually immoral

Israelites, why would he not judge the same in the church? God does take very seriously sexual immorality, for he laid low in death around 23,000 guilty Israelites (Num 25:1-9; cf. Ex 32:28, 35).

27. V8. **Quotation**: “Why does Paul mention fornication again, when he has said so much about it already? It is always Paul’s custom, when he admonishes people of many sins, to put them down in order before proceeding to deal with them individually, and then to refer to earlier topics as he goes down the list. God himself does this in the Old Testament when, in mentioning each particular transgression he keeps going back to the golden calf, reminding the Jews of that sin. Paul is doing this here, reminding them of the sin of fornication and pointed out that the cause of that evil was sloth and gluttony.” ~ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* 23.4, cited in CSB Ancient Faith Study Bible, 1425
28. V9. NET **sn** This incident is recorded in [Num 21:5–9](#).
29. V9. An allusion to Israel putting the LORD to the test (Ps 78:18; cf. Dt 6:16; Isa 7:12; Ps 106:14; Mt 4:7; Lk 4:12; Acts 15:10) by grumbling and complaining about their food, after which God sent fiery serpents (Num 21:5-6). Moses wrote to memorialize these incidents that occurred at Massah (testing, proof) and Meribah (quarreling, faultfinding; cf. Ex 17:7; Ps 95:8 where the LXX transliterates these two places as Testing and Rebellion). Psalm 106 is an especially poignant meditation on Israel’s sins in the wilderness. God in Christ was spiritually present with his people Israel during their wilderness pilgrimage (cf. Jude 5). That is how we can say Israel tested God in Christ (cf. Num 21:5) when they became impatient with the LORD’s provision of food and water (cf. Ex 17:2, 7; Dt 6:16; Ps 78:18). After many died by snake bites, God told Moses to fashion a bronze serpent, put it on a pole, and instruct the Israelites to look to the bronze serpent, which came to be a symbol for the Christ, to be saved by God (Num 21:8-9). God sent his Son to be curses on a tree so that whosoever believes in him might be saved (Jn 3:14-17).
30. V9. **Quotation**: “He warns us against tempting Christ (as some of them tempted, and were destroyed of serpents, v. 9), or provoking him to jealousy, v. 22. He was with the church in the wilderness; he was the angel of the covenant, who went before them. But he was greatly grieved and provoked by them in many ways: They spoke against him and Moses, Wherefore have you brought us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for which reason God sent fiery serpents among them (Num. 21:5, 6), by which many of them were stung mortally. And it is but just to fear that such as tempt Christ under the present dispensation will be left by him in the power of the old serpent.” ~ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*
31. V10. NET **sn** This incident is recorded in [Num 16:41–50](#).
32. V10. An allusion to when the Israelites repeated complained against the leadership of Moses and Aaron, and the resulting plague (Ex 16:2-3; 17:1-7; Num 11; 14:2, 36; 16:13-14, 41-50). The OT stories associate grumbling with the deserved judgment of God (Num 11:1; 14:1-38; 16:11-35). Paul reasons the judgment falls at the hand of God’s Destroyer who is not mentioned explicitly in Numbers (cf. Ex 12:23; 2 Sam 24:16; 1 Chr 21:15; 2 Chr 32:21; Acts 12:23; Heb 11:28).

33. V10. **Quotation & Illustration & Application**: “In contemporary terms, some congregations dislike and reject the pastor who, like Paul, faces the members with their sins and the spiritual dangers they are in because of those sins. The Corinthians did not like Paul, and many professed Christians today dislike him intensely for the stand he takes on theological and moral especially sexual issues. Yet he knew, as we should, that idolatry in all its forms, fornication, trying the patience of Christ and grumbling about apostolic teaching, are deadly sins. Such sins killed the Israelites physically before they reached the land of hope and they will ‘kill’ us spiritually unless we turn from them... The God of the Christians is the same God as the Lord of the Israelites. His acts of judgment then prefigure and confirm his displeasure now whenever his people sin in similar ways. God will always judge the worship of idols, fornication, testing Christ and grumbling against apostolic teaching. To be sure, that judgment may not be as physical and dramatic as that which fell upon the exodus pilgrims. Rather, it may take a spiritual form as people are quietly cut off spiritually from the source of their life in Christ. His judgment is that we will simply stop ‘knowing’ him. But it is a more severe judgment, because it is not merely the judgment of death, but an eternal judgment. Evidently, arrogance was major problem for the members of this church. Paul refers to this conceit metaphorically as being ‘puffed up’ (1 Cor 8:1). So ‘bloated’ and over-confident were they because of their supposed ‘knowledge’ and ‘wisdom’ (1 Cor 8:2-3), they believed they had outgrown their apostle (1 Cor 4:6, 18, 19). They were shamelessly proud of their lofty acceptance of gross sin in their midst (1 Cor 5:2) while being insensitively uncaring about the impact of their ‘liberated’ behavior on vulnerable fellow-believers (1 Cor 8:1; 13:4).” ~ Paul Barnett, *1 Corinthians*, 173-175
34. V10. **Quotation**: “He warns against murmuring: Neither murmur you as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer (v. 10), by a destroying angel, an executioner of divine vengeance. They quarreled with God, and murmured against Moses his minister, when any difficulties pressed them. When they met with discouragements in the way to Canaan, they were very apt to fly in the face of their leaders, were for displacing them, and going back to Egypt under the conduct of others of their own choosing. Something like this seems to have been the case of the Corinthians; they murmured against Paul, and in him against Christ, and seem to have set up other teachers, who would indulge and soothe them in their inclinations, and particularly in a revolt to idolatry. Rather let them feast on idol sacrifices than bear the reproach, or expose themselves to the ill-will, of heathen neighbors. Such conduct was very provoking to God, and was likely to bring upon them swift destruction, as it did on the Israelites, Num. xiv. 37. Note, Murmuring against divine disposals and commands is a sin that greatly provokes, especially when it grows to such a head as to issue in apostasy, and a revolt from him and his good ways.” ~ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*
35. V10. **Quotation**: “Those persons, it is true, murmured against Moses; but as they had no ground for insulting him, and had no occasion for being incensed against him, unless it was that he had faithfully discharged the duty which had been enjoined upon him by God, God himself was assailed by that murmuring. Let us, accordingly, bear in mind that we have to do with God, and not with men, if we rise up against the faithful ministers of God, and let us know that this audacity will not go unpunished.” ~ John Calvin, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*

36. V11. Cf. WLC 155, 174. “The end of the ages has come” indicates the new covenant Church is living in the last days (Num 24:14; Dt 4:30; 31:29; Jer 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Ezek 38:16; Dan 2:28; 10:14; 12:13; Hos 3:5; 1 Cor 1:7-8, 20; 2:7; 7:26, 29-31; 2 Cor 5:1-5; 1 Thess 5:4-8; Heb 1:2; 9:26; 11:39-40; 1 Pet 1:10-12, 20). In the OT, the last days was the era when the great promises of redemption and salvation would be fulfilled. Since this is the case, coupled with Paul’s typological argument, Christians can, should, and must read about the OT events as they narrate Israel’s history as Scripture that by design looks forward in the future to applied to us. So to read the OT examples carefully as episodes about Israel’s idolatry, they serve as present-day warnings for what will happen to Christians who commit idolatry (cf. 1 Cor 10:14, 20-22) just as Israel did. Again, in the new covenant, the grace and privileges are greater therefore the stakes are higher. Christians in the new covenant have increased responsibility as those one whom the end of the ages has come (Lk 12:48; Heb 11:39-40).
37. V11. **Quotation**: “All these things happened to the Israelites, that they might be types to us—that is, examples, in which God places his judgments before our eyes. I am well aware, that others philosophize on these words with great refinement, but I think that I have fully expressed the Apostle’s meaning, when I say, that by these examples, like so many pictures, we are instructed what judgments of God are impending over idolaters, fornicators, and other contemners of God. For they are lively pictures, representing God as angry on account of such sins... For it was of no importance to the Israelites, but to us exclusively, that these things should be committed to record. It does not, however, follow from this, that these inflictions were not true chastisements from God, suited for their correction at that time, but as God then inflicted his judgments, so he designed that they should be kept everlastingly in remembrance for our instruction. For of what advantage were the history of them to the dead; and as to the living, how would it be of advantage to them, unless they repented, admonished by the examples of others? Now he takes for granted the principle, as to which all pious persons ought to be agreed—that there is nothing revealed in the Scriptures, that is not profitable to be known.” ~ John Calvin, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*
38. V12. Cf. WLC 175. Take heed lest you fall echoes Paul’s earlier exhortation (1 Cor 9:27; cf. Rom 11:20-22). To receive the benefits of the covenant (1 Cor 10:1-4) did not excuse Israel from God’s judgment if they committed idolatry (1 Cor 10:5-11). Paul argues by way of OT typology that points to and fulfilled in the NT church that the same principle applies (even more so!) to the church today. Perhaps the Corinthians thought they possessed higher knowledge about their freedom in Christ to have permission to eat in a temple devoted to idols (1 Cor 8:9-10).
39. V12. **Quotation**: “The harms sustained by others should be cautious to us. He that thinks he stands should not be confident and secure, but upon his guard. Others have fallen, and so may we. And then we are most likely to fall when we are most confident of our own strength, and thereupon most apt to be secure, and off our guard. Distrust of himself, putting him at once upon vigilance and dependence on God, is the Christian’s best security against all sin. Note, He who thinks he stands is not likely to keep his footing, if he fears no fall, nor guards against it. God has not promised to keep us from falling, if we do not look to ourselves: his protection supposes our own care and caution.” ~ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*

40. V13. Cf. 127. Both a promise and a rebuke. God graciously provides a way of escape to resist temptation to sin, in this case idolatry. We can count on God being faithful to give us that way which is to flee the temptation to idolatry (1 Cor 1:9; cf. Dt 7:9; Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 4:19). If you look, wait, and pray to know that way of escape, God promises there will always be an available (but maybe not easy) morally righteous solution that does not require the lesser of two evils. God will never ordain your circumstances to require disobedience to his moral laws. A study of biblical ethics helps think through the kinds of apparent dilemmas that can present themselves to Christians. Sometimes “fleeing” temptation cannot be a change of scenery or circumstances, but is the Holy Spirit’s power to stand firm and endure temptation. But the promise of deliverance is also a rebuke to lax covenant members, because since God is faithful we cannot plead that temptations are a legitimate excuse for our sin. Sin is never ever a necessity to any believer even though no believer can entirely resist sin (1 Kgs 8:46; 1 Jn 1:8-10). To plead, “the devil made me do it!” is to commit the same blame-shifting sin of Adam and Eve in the garden.
41. V13. **Quotation**: “He will make a way to escape, either the trial itself, or at least the mischief of it. There is no valley so dark but he can find a way through it, no affliction so grievous but he can prevent, or remove, or enable us to support it, and in the end overrule it to our advantage.” ~ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*
42. V13. **Quotation**: “The Lord is the sure guardian of his people, under whose protection you are safe, for he never leaves his people destitute. Accordingly, when he has received you under his protection, you have no cause to fear, provided you depend entirely upon him.” ~ John Calvin, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*
43. V14. Cf. WLC 174. Note the Corinthians lived in and had been saved from a background in paganism and idolatry. Temple in their city were devoted to the false gods and goddesses Apollo, Asclepius, Demeter, Aphrodite, and others. The Christians were exposed to the pagan temples every day in their life in the city. Temptation to indulge the cult of Aphrodite, with its many temple prostitutes, was particularly strong (1 Cor 6:18). “Therefore” links Paul’s injunction to flee idolatry with the previous context (1 Cor 8-10). Tracing his lengthy argument against idolatry in the Corinthian church goes back to the remarks about eating food sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 8:1; cf. 1 Jn 5:21; Rev 2:14, 20). Christians cannot think they can participate in idolatry in any of its many manifestations (see Israel in the wilderness) and think they will enter eternal life on the last day (1 Cor 6:16-18; 10:7; 10:8). Christians must avoid idolatry at all costs!
44. V14. **Quotation** & **Illustration** & **Application**: “Idolatry is still a serious problem today, but it takes a different form. We don’t put our trust in statues of wood and stone, but in paper money and plastic cards. Trusting anything for what God alone provides is idolatry. Our modern idols are those symbols of power, pleasure, or prestige that we so highly regard. When we understand contemporary parallels to idolatry, Paul’s words to ‘flee from idolatry’ become much more meaningful.” ~ NKJV Life Application Bible, 2104
45. V14. **Quotation**: “Seeing you have such encouragement to trust God, and to be faithful, do you approve yourselves men, be not shaken by any discouragements your heathen enemies may lay before you. God will succor and assist, help you in your trials, and help you out of

them; and therefore be not guilty of any idolatrous compliances." Note, We have all the encouragement in the world to flee sin and prove faithful to God. We cannot fall by a temptation if we cleave fast to him." ~ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*

46. V15. Paul invites Christians to judge for themselves whether what he is teaching is biblical and reasonable (cf. 1 Cor 11:13).
47. **Quotation & Application:** "Paul applies the Old Testament history to our lives to show the importance of persevering in the faith. It is not enough to experience the external benefits of the visible church. There must be the experiential application of God's grace in the soul. Reflect on how a spiritual privilege is not the same as a spiritual possession." ~ KJV Reformation Heritage Study Bible, 1659
48. **Quotation & Application:** "What is a contemporary parallel of the way these examples and warnings apply to you? What temptations do you most consistently have to face? Hence, does verse 13 encourage or frustrate you? How so?" ~ NIV Serendipity Bible for Groups, 1498

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