

RED OAK CHURCH OF CHRIST

# *THE GUIDELINE*

*Psalms 31:3*

## A HISTORY LESSON

1 Corinthians 10:1-12

“History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future.” (Robert Penn Warren) “The more you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future.” (Theodore Roosevelt) “To remain ignorant of history is to remain forever a child.” (Cicero) We can quickly see from these few pithy quotes how important history truly is. Through history, we can learn how past cultures, ideologies, governments and their systems function, how technologies were learned, how they operated, and how they have progressed. A study of world history certainly can help us paint a good picture of where we are today in society and where we are headed. One word of caution might be in order here, remember secular history is written by man, and men often times record things with tinted glasses!

While the study of secular history of various types is encouraged, this is not the purpose of the discussion at this time. Our goal, however, is to show how God often times used lessons of a historical nature to teach great biblical principles. The wonderful thing about studying God’s history lessons is the fact that you don’t have to wonder whether or not it is correct! (Cf 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21, Romans 15:4)

One such example is found in our text. In 1 Corinthians ten Paul is giving a history lesson to the brethren at Corinth. In order to get the full impact of this chapter, I suggest backing up to chapter eight. Chapter ten is actually a continuation of Paul’s teaching on idolatry. In chapter eight Paul speaks about meat offered to idols and a Christian’s liberty to partake of that meat in a meal, *“As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.”* (1 Corinthians 8:4) He also warns about the danger of abusing that liberty and causing a weak brother to stumble, showing that charity and concern for the weaker brother should always be at the forefront of their (and our) minds. (vs 9-13) In chapter nine Paul shows that sometimes a Christian must be gracious and waive their rights and freedoms in order to help others as well as themselves. *“But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.”* (1 Corinthians 9:15) If you want a great lesson in humility study chapters eight and nine! This brings us to chapter ten in which Paul uses Israel’s history to show an example of just how dangerous it is to participate in idolatry.

First, Paul warns against historical ignorance. As we have already mentioned it is of great importance to be knowledgeable of secular history, but here Paul is discussing Israel’s history. He will show in a few words how the history of Israel is full of illustrations of the pitfalls that accompany idolatry. This would be of particular importance to those who were perhaps thinking that they could somehow participate in idol worship and not be affected by it. Paul goes directly to the chosen of God and illustrates a very important concept. *“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 10:1–4) Notice in these first four verses the word “all” it is mentioned five times in order to show that just because one is privileged (chosen of God) does **not** seal or guarantee ones entrance into the final blessings of God. They were **all** there, they all enjoyed the marvelous blessings and privileges as God’s chosen, but not all made it to the promise land. In fact, out of some 603,550 footmen only two that came out of Egyptian bondage made to the final destination! What caused this terrible blight among God’s chosen nation? We will let Paul inform us, *“But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.”* (1 Corinthians 10:5–6) The word “example” is of interest here. It is translated from the Greek word τύποι (tupoi) which means, **1.** the mark of a stroke or blow; print: Jn. 20:25, **2.** a figure formed by a blow or impression; hence univ. (a.) figure, image: of the images of the gods, Acts 7:43 **3.** an

example; in the technical sense, viz. the pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made: Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5, (Thayer's). We often times refer to a type of Christ or type or pattern of the church which is of course a good use of the word, but here Paul uses it in a very dark and negative way. What was the one of the examples or figures they left for the world to see and follow? "...lust after evil things.." Had the Corinthians been influenced by this timeworn example of the Israelites? It would certainly seem to be the case for Paul says, "...as they **also** lusted." These brethren, as Paul infers, were craving to eat the meat offered to idols in a way which would lead them to sin and death. However distasteful this historical event may seem to be we should study it well lest we be like the brethren at Corinth and forget or "be ignorant" of its dire warning and start lusting after evil things.

Paul now reminds them about these evil things the Israelites were lusting after, "*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. 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. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.*"(1 Corinthians 10:7–10) I believe we can see a progressive pattern here in this text. Notice, **1.) They sat down to eat-** When one makes the conscious decision to sit at the devil's table it will not take long until he will be motivated to the next step, "The Israelites participated in a feast in honor of the idol, the golden calf. They ate the food on that occasion, which had been offered in sacrifice to the animal. This instance is particularly fitting to the apostles argument-- almost and exact parallel. The Corinthians were wanting to eat in the idol's temple."(Reese pg 337) **2.) They rose up to play-** The word "play" here is far from harmless. It means to laugh, mock(Genesis 21:9), sport (Genesis 26:8), jest, insult and involves engaging in wild naked dances that involved honoring the golden calf. **3.) They committed fornication-** This is what the frenzied idol worship lead to! It seems more often than not that idol worship is some how connected to sexual sins. **4.) They tempted the Lord-** When we become dissatisfied with the way God wants things, we tend to test or tempt God. The Israelites were no longer satisfied with the water and angel food the Lord was supplying, and they loathed it. Their test failed, by the way, for the record says that God sent fiery serpents, and many Israelites died as a result. It is interesting to notice that this occurred at the heels of a great battle being won due to God's blessings and answer to prayers (Numbers21). Here again, the Corinthians were not satisfied with what God provided, and they longed for pagan idol worship- especially the food incorporated with it. **5.) They murmured-** Murmuring seems to be a sin that continued to reoccur among the Israelite nation. They grumbled in their tents in the wilderness, at the Red Sea, against Moses and Aaron, about the water and food, etc al. What was the root cause of this griping and grumbling? It was discontent produced by idolatrous hearts. What was the result of this greivous griping? Thousands were swallowed up by the earth (Numbers 16)! Now Paul reminds them of an important lesson, *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* (1 Corinthians 10:12–13)

We must make every effort to flee all forms of idolatry if we want to go to heaven!†

James

#### CONTACT INFORMATION:

RED OAK CHURCH OF CHRIST

P.O. BOX 143

MANCHESTER, TN 37349

PHONE:

JAMES COSSEY: 931-247-0172

RED OAK CHURCH OF CHRIST: 931-247-0249

EMAIL: [redoakchurchofchristtn@gmail.com](mailto:redoakchurchofchristtn@gmail.com)

WEBSITE: [www.redoakcoc.org](http://www.redoakcoc.org)



**SEARCH FOR:**

**"Red Oak church of Christ"**



**SEARCH FOR:**

**"RAYMOND HAGOOD"**



**SEARCH FOR:**

**"JOHNNY ROBERTSON"**