

O.T. Shadows of Judgment

(1 Corinthians 10:1-13)

INTRODUCTION:

1. O.T. shadows can be a tricky matter, often requiring some sort of N.T. confirmation to be assure of their validity.
 - A. I have heard that almost all the O.T. is a shadow of something in the N.T., which may be true.
 - B. But we must be sure seeing the shadow must present a proper pattern for its N.T. counterpart.
 - C. So, I have sought out N.T. references to shadows, or types in the O.T., that I might present them with confidence.
 - D. The shadows of *God's judgment* that I want to examine today are found in 1 Cor. 10:1-13.
2. Background: In 1 Corinthians 8-9 Paul has been addressing a problem concerning the Corinthians' desire to eat at the idol's feasts that were part of their past and their culture.
 - A. 8:1-13 – Paul acknowledges they are correct that idols are *nothing* and there is but one God. Yet, not every Christian has this knowledge and might eat meat offered to an idol *as worship* and perish. So, better not to eat meat than to sin by causing a brother to stumble!
 - B. 9:1-18 – Paul stressed the need for them to deny themselves this “liberty” by using himself as an example of *self-denial* in that although he had the right to demand support from them, he refused it (and got it from others) to avoid any problems his in preaching.
 - C. 9:19-27 – Paul impressed the need to consider the wellbeing of others by stating how he made himself a servant of all for their good, and controlling his body to assure that he, too, was saved.
 - D. The point: Because the Corinthians assumed they had proper knowledge and the right to do this thing, this didn't mean it was the best thing to do considering their brethren or their own souls!
3. 1 Corinthians 10 Paul changes his focus to the danger of God's judgement the Corinthians were flirting with in their desire to return to these idolatrous feasts.
 - A. He focuses on redeemed Israel, freed from bondage by the great power of God, but who became discontent and yearned for the ways of Egypt and sinned, bringing God's judgment upon them.
 - B. Paul says these events have a message for us (10:6 – “Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.”)
4. Today I want us to focus on the various O.T. examples of God's judgment listed here that we might avoid the mistakes Israel made in the wilderness which caused them to face God's judgment!

BODY:

I. Israel of old began in fellowship with God; but many lost His favor and died (10:1-5).

- A. There is an underlying sentiment at Corinth that as baptized believers and partakers of the Lord's supper they were **in Christ** and quite safe from any danger while eating meat at idols' temples!
- B. Paul illustrates the folly of this by listing the similarities of Israel's saved condition to that of the Corinthians, while also reminding them that Israel lost God's favor by such behavior (10:1-5).
 1. When all Israel was led by the cloud and passed through the sea, they were “baptized into Moses,” or joined to him as disciples, as baptism joins us to Christ (10:1-2).
 - a. Their baptism separated them from Egyptian bondage and brought them under Moses.
 - b. N.T. baptism separates us from sin's bondage and makes us disciples of Christ.
 2. They partook of the same spiritual/supernatural food (manna from God) and drink (water from rock), which was Christ, just as the Corinthians partook of the Lord's supper, the body and blood of Christ, who is for us the *bread* and *water* of life (10:3-4).
 3. Although all Israel received these blessings, with most of them God was displeased and they died, their bodies being scattered throughout the wilderness (10:5).
 - a. God's special blessings to the saved do not ensure salvation to the reckless/rebellious.
 - b. Believers can become unbelievers and the faithful become unfaithful resulting in displeasing God and facing His wrath!

II. These examples, types, or shadows, are for our learning (10:6-11).

- A. **1 Cor. 10:6** – “Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.”

1. These *examples* (Grk. *tupos*, or *types*) show and warn us of certain spiritual realities in the church! In other words, what happened then can happen now.
 2. The first type/shadow teaches us not to *lust after evil things* as did Israel when they refused God's manna while desiring the food of Egypt (Num. 11:4-5).
 - a. What Israel desired was not inherently evil but was desired over what God supplied!
 - i. God's manna was wholesome and nourishing, cost them no money or care, and little labor in gathering it, being exempt from the curse of toil and sweat of Gen. 3.
 - ii. Yet they yearned for Egypt's fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic, as though it cost them nothing, as though it was not the food of slavery!
 - b. How sad it is when the seeds of discontent grow causing God's people to find *fault* with the *faultless* and to seek out the ways of *slavery* while living in *freedom*.
 3. Though God *mercifully* provided Israel with quail in abundance, His wrathful judgment came upon them and people died (Num. 11:31-34).
 - a. Why, because they were so controlled by their cravings that they gathered all day, night, and the next day, hording it up in distrust of God's continual care!
 - b. Note the finality of God's judgment—death—providing no means of repentance and reminding us that unchecked evil desires will bring God's judgment (1 Jn. 2:15-16 – “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.”).
 - c. We need to be alarmed when we feel those seeds of discontent with God's blessings and worldly envy come upon us, seeing for these the judgement of God is sure.
- B. **1 Cor. 10:7** – “And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”
1. This shadow is alluded to because the Corinthians had returned to participating in the idol feasts, likely because this brought acceptance from family, friends, and society.
 2. To address this, Paul reminds them of Israel's idolatrous feasting before the golden calf (Ex. 32:1-6).
 - a. Israel, like the Corinthians, didn't intend to be idolatrous, seeing they associated the calf with *Jehovah* and this feast with the LORD, or Jehovah (Ex. 32:4-5). Yet, they were!
 - b. The lesson: Israel's idolatry brought God's *judgment* upon them and 3000 souls died in one day (i.e., finality!). And, the same could happen to the Christians at Corinth!
 3. It takes thought and dedication for us to avoid being guilty of idolatry.
 - a. Lusting for what we had in sin, what the world has in sin, and the desire to fit in with the world can easily become idols, that if bowed to, will cause us to lose God's favor.
 - b. We must work to avoid growing weary of our separation and the stand we must take.
 - i. We must conform to God's will, not the world (Rom. 12:1-2 – “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² **And do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”).
 - ii. We must affect the world, and not allow the world to affect us (Matt. 5:13 – “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”).
 - iii. God rejects those who seek to live like the world and be accepted by it!
- C. **1 Cor. 10:8** – “Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell”
1. Sexual immorality is generally connected to idolatry and is a constant threat to the spiritual health of God's people.
 2. This shadow reminds us that sexual immorality, which they committed with Moabite women, and idolatry go hand in hand (Num. 25:1-4, 9).

- a. Israel had God's law, the 10 Commandments, and had seen His power; but in this *one* incident they broke the command not to have other God's before Him, now to bow down to other gods, and not to commit adultery (cite Ex. 20:1-5, 14).
 - b. As a result of their sexual immorality, God's judgement was swift and final!
 - i. The leaders who allowed this evil were hung (25:4).
 - ii. And, God sent a plague that killed between 23,000 and 24,000 people (25:9)!
3. Sexual immorality, an accepted pastime of our society, and the focus of so much of our entertainment, will bring God's wrathful judgment upon all who fall victim to it!
 - a. Heb. 13:4 – "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."
 - b. Rev. 21:8 – "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, **sexually immoral**, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."
 - c. Folks, I cannot tell you how often I have witnessed those who followed their idols in leaving the Lord to be soon bound up in sexual immorality and vice versa!
 - d. Therefore, we must listen to God's exhortation and command (1 Cor. 6:18 – "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.").
- D. **1 Cor. 10:9** – "nor let us tempt Christ [the Lord], as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents"
 1. To tempt or test the Lord is to take Him to the limit to see if He will show Himself to be God.
 - a. This shadow refers to when Israel tested God by becoming discontent and complaining about God's provisions (Num. 21:5-6 – "And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." ⁶ So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.").
 - i. Though they ate the same spiritual food, the manna of God, they complained of no food and their loathing "this worthless bread"; and though they drank of that Rock which was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4), they complained of no water.
 - ii. No wonder God's judgement was swift and final in sending serpents upon these ungrateful people, bringing great suffering and *death*.
 - b. I am amazed people can read this and yet I still hear about God's grace as if it were a salve to be indiscriminately applied to heal all sorts of continual rebellion, while hearing little or nothing of God's judgement upon the unrepentant!
 - c. Point: If the Corinthians complained at God restricting them from intermingling with the pagans in their cultic festivals, they too would *put God to the test!*
 2. We can test God by...
 - a. By demanding He show His love in rescuing us from temptation to which we have rashly exposed ourselves (Rom. 13:14 – "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.").
 - b. By pushing our liberties to the verge of sin, while believing God will ignore it! (1 Cor. 8:10-12 – "For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? ¹¹ And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? ¹² But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.").
 - c. By expecting/demanding pardon for sin knowingly committed in complete disregard for God's grace (Heb. 10:29 – "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?").
 - d. In all such cases we seek to make God move at our pleasure, testing His grace!

- e. Brethren, the N.T. is not devoid of God's swift justice against those who try His grace (cite Ananias and Sapphira – Acts 5:1-10).
- E. **1 Cor. 10:10** – “nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.”
 - 1. People complain, or murmur, when they believe that justice has not been given them or that they have been deprived of their legitimate rights.
 - a. Israel complained against God at the report of the spies, causing all who were 20 years and older, except Joshua and Caleb, to die in the desert (cite Num. 14:1-4ff.).
 - b. Yet, this likely refers to the rebellion of Korah where he and 250 men of renown died, and then a plague broke out and killed 14,700 more Israelites who complained about God's judgment in the deaths of these men (Num. 16:1-3, 31-33, 41, 47-49).
 - i. Last month we emphasized the mercy of God found in that in all these occasions God's mercy was present in that the nation was spared.
 - ii. Yet, we must not miss the *justice of God* seen here in sending a personal agent/angel of death to bring *swift destruction* upon those who were discontent with His judgments!
 - c. The point: The Corinthians were on the verge of God's judgment in their dissatisfaction with God's restrictions and the judgment He brings upon those who violate them!
 - 2. Do these cases of God's judgment seem harsh?
 - a. Complaining about God's restrictions implies we know better than Him, that He is unjust in restricting our freedom, that we are ungrateful for the salvation and freedom He has given us, and ultimately questions His sovereignty!
 - b. We would do well to listen to Paul admonition (Phil. 2:14-15 – “Do all things without complaining and disputing,¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world”).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. I will conclude by first reminding you of the final words of our text which reads, “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:11-13).
- 2. I encourage you to 1) learn the lessons of these examples/types/shadows; 2) take heed to yourself and your actions lest you fall into God's judgment; 3) know that God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear and will provide a way of escape from temptation for all who desire it.
- 3. My friends, God wants you to be saved. But you must make the decision to follow His will without discontent and complaining, knowing that you can be faithful and be saved if you so desire!
- 4. Why would you not serve a God like this so that you can be free from His judgment and live in His grace that forgives and gives life and hope for all who will faithfully serve Him? B-R-C-B-LF!