

Our Fathers Were All ...

"For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all drink the same spiritual food; and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ. Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (1 Cor. 10:1-5).

The apostle continues his thoughts and conclusions from the previous chapter by beginning this section with the word *"for."* In the previous section the apostle showed the necessity of exercising self-control, even to the point of foregoing liberties one might have in Christ for as he has consistently shown, the willful use of one's right, despite the effect his actions might have on others (not to say the spiritual damage he might do to himself) would bring about his own falling short of his goal. Now, to augment and further strengthen those conclusions, he makes an additional appeal, showing what sin did to those who had formerly been in a secure state with God.

The expression *"I would not, brethren, have you ignorant"* is found frequently in Paul's letters. Sometimes he will phrase the words a little different such as *"or, are you ignorant"* to jog the memory of his readers to a truth they should have learned long ago. In this section the words are stated *"I would not have you ignorant"* of a parallel between ancient, physical Israel and God's spiritual Israel -- the church in Corinth (as well as God's people from that time to the present age wherever they may be found).

Five times in these five verses the word "ALL" is found. *"Our fathers were ALL under the cloud;" "... ALL passed through the sea;" "ALL baptized unto Moses;" "ALL did eat the same spiritual food;" and "ALL did drink the same spiritual drink."* Some dispute, or at least doubt, that the baptism in the *"cloud and the sea"* has reference to the same time, yet it hardly seems that the apostle could have used the word *"baptism,"* or immersion, if there was not a symbolic sense in which Israel was "covered up" with the cloud above the walls of water on each side. Objections are raised that the cloud was not "over them;" it stood between them and Egyptians. But despite the fact that the cloud was between them and the Egyptians does not mean it could not have overshadowed them. They were *"baptized"* and if they were not in some way "covered up" or "overwhelmed," we have lost the inherent meaning of the word "baptize."

ALL were "*baptized*" unto Moses, certainly no formula was uttered in this baptism, they were baptized unto Moses because they followed Moses, just as we follow Christ as we are baptized into Him.

They ALL ate of the same spiritual food and ALL drank of the same spiritual drink. Likely the references is to the daily manna which Israel gathered and which was "*spiritual*" because it was recognized as coming from heaven from God just as the Psalmist declares, "*He gave them manna from haven*" (Psa. 78:24). In the same way, they drank of the same spiritual drink. On two separate occasions water was miraculously provided for them through Moses' smiting a rock (Ex. 17:6; Num. 29:8ff).

Israel drank of a spiritual rock which followed them and that rock was Christ. Moses called God a "*rock*" when He charged that Israel had forgotten the Rock that "*begat them*" (Deut. 32:18). We are not to suppose that a literal rock followed them; the intent is that Christ, as their provider, followed them, watching over them, making provisions for their needs, just as He did for the Corinthians and as He does for us. Can any doubt that the apostles paints a picture of a people who belonged to God and whom God had richly blessed? This point must not be forgotten as the apostle continues his warning to the Corinthian church.

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