
THE CHRISTIAN PROSPECT

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Symbolic Numbers

In the introductory essay we mentioned that numbers can be important symbols in our study of Revelation. However, the use of numbers should be considered carefully and with a healthy dose of skepticism toward overuse and abuse. We will not engage in numerology. It can be quite tempting to make more of symbols than we should. Symbols play a part in the interpretive process; they are not the whole of it.

In keeping with our intended method of study, we will begin by considering the most prominent numbers in scripture and see what information we might gather. This is not intended to be a complete examination of each number. Instead, we will focus on the most prominent or significant uses. We hope to find patterns that will help us understand how numbers are used in the book of Revelation.

We should note that all these numbers are used throughout scripture in ways that have no apparent symbolic meaning. We are concerned with finding general patterns to aid our studies.

In some cases, the differences between symbolic numbers can be subtle. As we will see, the numbers 3, 4, 7, and 10 all represent a type of completion, but each has a different nuance of meaning. We will need to allow the context to guide our interpretive process.

We will find that numbers can help us understand the symbolism of Revelation, but we should not try to make more of numbers than they are meant to say.

When we think of the number two we think of pairs of things, partnership, companionship, and binary situations: husband and wife, day and night, light and dark, on and off, good and evil, etc. Sometimes the pairings are complementary, sometimes they oppose each other. Often one depends on the other for its existence. The first man Adam existed for a time without the woman, but he could not be a husband unless there was a wife. Darkness can only exist in the absence of light.

There are many examples of partnership, agreement, mutual benefit in scripture.

- Old and New Testaments
- Two great lights to rule (Genesis 1:16)
- Man and woman (Genesis 2:18)
- Two of every animal, male and female (Genesis 6:19)
- Minimum of two witnesses for a capital sentence (Deuteronomy 17:6)
- Two are better than one (Ecclesiastes 4:9)
- “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:3)
- The disciples were sent out two by two (Mark 6:7, Luke 10:16)
- True worship has two parts – spirit and truth (John 4:24)
- Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12, Psalm 149:6)
- Two unchangeable things (Hebrews 6:19)

There are also examples of contradiction, contrast, and destruction.

- Two harlot sisters, Samaria and Jerusalem (Ezekiel 23:1-4)
- Man cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24)
- Two false witnesses (Matthew 26:60)
- Jesus and Barabbas offered (Matthew 27:17)
- Veil of the temple torn in two (Matthew 27:51)

- Adam brought sin and death, Jesus brought salvation and life (1 Corinthians 15:22)

When we encounter the number two, or two things, in Revelation we need to think about how these might work together or against each other. Are they complimentary or do they contrast? Do they provide strength to each other or try to do harm to one another?

3

The first example of the number three that may come to mind is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is what I think of. As we will see, three is often used in relation to things that are divine or divinely established.

- Three dispensations of time: Patriarchal, Mosaic, Christian
- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob repeatedly recognized as God's covenant parties (Genesis 50:24, Exodus 2:24, 3:6, et al.)
- God commands three days journey away from Egypt to offer sacrifice (Exodus 3:18)
- Darkness over Egypt for three days (Exodus 10:22), three hours of darkness when Jesus was crucified (Mark 15:33)
- Three annual feasts to God (Exodus 23:14)
- Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights (Jonah 1:17)
- Jesus was in the grave three days and three nights (Matthew 12:41)
- Peter, James, and John were Jesus' closest disciples, and He often consulted with them privately (Matthew 17:1)
- Peter denies the Lord three times (Luke 22:61) and answers for it three times (John 21:15-19)
- Saul of Tarsus was without sight for three days (Acts 9:9)
- Peter had a vision regarding Cornelius three times (Acts 10:16)
- Faith, hope, and love (1 Corinthians 13:13)
- Three witnesses on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood (1 John 5:8)

Considering these examples, we get a sense of divine completion or the whole of divinity. The existence of the Father, Son, and Spirit is not a matter of any creative act or appointment, they are, were, and will be. Some of these are divine appointments because God made them happen, such as the three dispensations of time or Jonah spending three days and nights inside a fish. Besides the three feasts, all of these are beyond man's control. The three feasts required man's participation, but were a remembrance of God's blessings, which are also outside man's control. When we encounter the number three, or things that come in threes, we need to think of divinity or divine arrangement.

4

Many things from the natural world come in fours:

- North, south, east, west
- The river out of Eden split into four riverheads (Genesis 2:10)
- The four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11:12)
- The four winds (Daniel 11:4, Matthew 24:31)
- Four destinations for the wicked (Jeremiah 15:2)
- Four kinds of judgment (Jeremiah 15:3, Ezekiel 14:21)
- Four things are not satisfied, four things not understood, four things the earth cannot bear, four things which are small, four things with a stately walk (Proverbs 30)
- Four horns representing nations that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem (Zechariah 1:8)
- Four soils representing the hearts of men (Matthew 13:3-9)
- Jesus' clothes were divided into four parts (John 19:23)

The common theme among these is earth, nature, things of this world, things that are created. We are surrounded by things with four sides. Most homes have four walls, divided into rooms with four walls, containing doors and windows that have four sides. Our tables usually have four sides surrounded by chairs with four legs. Most furniture has four sides. Four

is very natural. In Revelation we will expect the number four to point us toward created, natural things.

6

The number six does not appear in Revelation with any frequency, but makes one very high profile appearance in Revelation 13:18 in the number 666. For this reason, we mention it here.

- The world was created in six days (Genesis 1)
- Man was created on the sixth day (Genesis 1)
- In the wilderness the Hebrews had six days to gather (Exodus 16:26)
- The laws of Moses allowed six days of labor in a week (Exodus 20:9)
- Servants could only serve six years (Exodus 21:2)

Six has the distinction of not being seven, which we will see, is important with respect to things that are complete. We will observe that six days is not a full week, and they are the work days. Six years of labor was required for the seventh year of freedom. It is also associated with the work of men. A word we might think of is “almost.” In Revelation we would expect six to be associated with man, the work of man, failure, shortcoming, etc.

7

Seven is one of the most commonly found numbers in scripture. By far, the most frequent usages are related to time.

- Seven days in a week, seventh day was sanctified (Genesis 2:3)
- For the Passover the Hebrews were to eat unleavened bread for seven days (Exodus 12:15)
- During Passover all leaven was removed from the house for seven days (Exodus 12:19)

- Aaron and his sons were consecrated, and atonement was made, for seven days (Exodus 29:35,37)
- Seven days was a common period of quarantine due to illness (Leviticus 14:9,38, 15:13)
- Uncleaness often lasted seven days (Leviticus 12:2, Numbers 19:14)

There are many other instances, but what all these have in common is the completion of a divinely appointed period.

Various actions were to be performed seven times.

- The blood of a sin offering was to be sprinkled seven times before the Lord (Leviticus 4:6)
- At the consecration of Aaron and his sons the anointing oil was sprinkled on the altar seven times (Leviticus 8:11)
- A leper was sprinkled seven times (Leviticus 14:7) and his house (Leviticus 14:51)
- Seven priests carried seven trumpets seven times around Jericho on the seventh day and the walls fell down (Joshua 6:4)
- Naaman had to wash seven times in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:10)

These are all divinely appointed acts by which various tasks were accomplished. Here again, seven demonstrates completion or fulfillment.

Seven is significant with regard to special items.

- Noah took seven male and seven female of the clean animals (Genesis 7:2)
- The lampstand in the temple had seven lamps (Exodus 25:37), a figure of which is identified as the word of the Lord (Zechariah 4:1-7)
- Hezekiah took “seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah” (2 Chronicles 29:21 NKJV)

Noah's collection of animals was not complete without seven each of the clean animals. The lampstand was not complete without seven lamps. If we use Jesus' description of the Old Testament from Luke 24:44 (the Law of Moses, the Prophets, the Psalms) there are seven divisions to the Bible: the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, the Gospels, the Acts, the Letters, and the Revelation. These are represented by the seven lamps on the lampstand. While Hezekiah may have chosen the number of his sacrifices on his own, we know he did what was right in the sight of the Lord (2 Chronicles 29:2).

The general sense of the number seven is completion, specifically, the complete number of divinely appointed things for man to accomplish. We might even think of it as 3+4, the addition of divine commandment and human fulfillment. God commanded these to happen, but it was left to man to obey. Each had a part to play. As we continue our study of Revelation, we will begin with the premise that seven represents something that is complete according to God's standard.

10

The number ten is often found in relation to mankind and human activity. Humans have ten fingers and ten toes, it is the basis of our number system.

- God gave man ten commandments to follow (Exodus 20)
- Egypt's people suffered ten plagues (Exodus 7-12)
- One tenth of a man's earnings were given back to God (Deuteronomy 14:22)
- Boaz took ten elders of the city as witnesses (Ruth 4:2)
- Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah tested their vegetable diet ten days (Daniel 1:12)

Based on these examples from the Old Testament we will expect the number ten in Revelation to be used in a way that relates to people, mankind, or human activity, and like some of the other numbers in our list, a type of completion.

12

Twelve occurs many times in the Old Testament specifically related to the twelve tribes. This is expected. The twelve tribes are the most significant group of people in ancient history. They were God's people. It is natural for things related to them to come in groups of twelve.

- An altar with twelve pillars (Exodus 24:4)
- Twelve stones with the names of the twelve tribes on the breastplate of judgment (Exodus 28:21)
- Twelve cakes in the tabernacle (Leviticus 24:5)
- The dedication offering for the altar of the tabernacle (Numbers 7)
- Twelve spies sent into Canaan (Numbers 13)

It should not surprise us that Jesus chose twelve men to serve as Apostles. There are incidental occurrences of the number twelve but in general it relates to God's people, the Hebrews in the Old Testament, and the Apostles in the New Testament. An exception might be the twelve princes of Ishmael (Genesis 17:20), but Ishmael was the son of Abraham too. He was not the son of the covenant, but he was still blessed by God.

Conclusion

This is not an exhaustive list of numbers used in Revelation, but it will provide a base to build on. Many of the others we will encounter are combinations of these. As we continue our study of Revelation we will use the references above to help guide our investigation of the symbols used in it.

- **Lance Stallcop**

A New Translation of 1 Corinthians 10

"For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that all of our fathers were under the cloud; and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in both the cloud

and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from the spiritual rock that was following them — that rock was Christ. But God did not approve of many of these, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

These things have become examples for us, to the end that we should not long for evil things, as they longed for them. Neither should you become idolators, as some of them did, as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink, then got up to amuse themselves." Neither should we commit sexual misconduct, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand died in a single day. Neither should we put Christ to the test, as some of them put God to the test, and were destroyed by snakes. Neither should we grumble, as some of them grumbled, and were killed by the destroyer. All of these things happened to them to serve as examples, and they were written down to warn us — those to whom the end of ages has come.

Therefore, everyone who thinks his footing is stable must be careful that he does not fall. You have not received any temptation that is not ordinary. But God is faithful; He will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability, rather, with each temptation, He will make a way out so that you will be able to endure. Therefore, my beloved brethren, flee from idolatry.

I am speaking as to wise men — you should judge what I say for yourselves. The cup of blessing, which we bless — is it not fellowship through the blood of Christ? The bread, which we break — is it not fellowship through the body of Christ, since there is only one piece of bread? We, the many, are one body because we all have a share in that one piece of bread.

Consider the physical Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices in fellowship through the altar? But what am I saying? That food sacrificed to idols has any significance? Or that idols have any significance? Rather, that whatever is sacrificed to idols is sacrificed to demons, and not to God. I do not want you to become fellows of demons. You cannot drink both the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot have a share at both the Lord's table and the table of demons. Would we rather provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than Him?

Everything is permitted, but not everything is helpful. Everything is permitted, but not everything strengthens others. No one should pursue what benefits himself, but rather what benefits others. Eat anything that is sold in the market without asking any questions for conscience' sake, for "the earth and all it produces belong to the Lord." If someone who does not believe invites you and you want to go, eat anything he sets out for you without asking any questions for conscience' sake. However, if anyone tells you, "This was sacrificed to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, as well as for conscience' sake – but I say that this is not for your own conscience, rather for another's.

Why is my freedom restricted by another's conscience? If I eat with thanksgiving, why am I being called out because of something for which I am thankful to God? Therefore, whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything in a way that brings glory to God. You must live your lives in a way that does not harm others, whether Jews, Greeks, or the people of God, just as I accommodate everyone in everything I do, not pursuing my own benefit, but the benefit of many, so that they might be saved."

Notes:

7: "Then got up to amuse themselves." – Most translations use the word "play" (NASB 2020, NKJV, ESV, NRSV), while the NIV prefers "indulge in revelry," and Alexander Campbell's *Living Oracles* translates the same word as "dance." Broadly speaking, the Greek word παίζω (paizo) refers to all kinds of play and amusement. It is etymologically connected to the Greek word παῖς (pais), "child," and so probably originally meant "to act in a childlike or childish fashion." Its range of meaning, however, cannot be limited to childlike activities, especially in light of its occasional association with sexual activity¹. In our passages, this Greek word appears as a

¹ Walter Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and Frederick William Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 750. Logos; Georg Bertram, "παίζω, ἐμπαίζω, ἐμπαίγμωνή, ἐμπαίγμός, ἐμπαίκτης," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel & Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964). Logos.

translation of Exodus 32:6, where the Hebrew word **צִהֶק** (tsaheq) has a similar range of meaning².

Since both the Hebrew word and the Greek word have a wide range of possible meanings, there has been much discussion regarding its precise meaning in reference to the Israelites' idolatry. For our particular context, we need to understand why Paul mentioned the Israelites' amusement in connection with their idolatry. As I understand it, there are three possibilities:

1. The amusement itself was immoral. This seems to be the view taken by the NIV and Alexander Campbell (who most likely viewed dancing as an immoral pastime).
2. The association of amusement with idolatry indicated the superficiality of such religion.
3. The Israelites were drawn to idolatry *because* it was associated with amusement.

The first possibility does not seem likely to me. While both the Greek and the Hebrew words have been used to describe immoral activity in other contexts, they have also been used to describe morally neutral or even positive actions. Neither Exodus 32 nor 1 Corinthians 10 describe the Israelites' play in detail, so I cannot confidently assert that immoral amusement – sexual or otherwise – was present, outside of the general association with idolatry.

I consider the third possibility to be more likely than the second, though they may work in conjunction. Paul wrote this passage as a warning, meant

² Rüdiger Bartelmus, “**צִהֶק/צִהֶק** *śāḥaq/ṣāḥaq*;^{*} **צִהֶק/צִהֶק** *śḥōq/śḥōq*; **צִהֶק** *miśḥaq*; **צִהֶק/צִהֶק** *yiśḥaq/yiśḥaq*” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, & Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. John T. Willis, Douglas W. Stott, & David E. Green, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974). Logos.

to dissuade the Christians in Corinth from engaging in any actions associated with idolatry. He is not making a case for why idolatry is an invalid form of worship, but rather a case for why it is dangerous to their spiritual wellbeing. The idolatrous feasts in Corinth were social events, and it seems clear from the larger context that many Christians wanted to attend the feasts for amusement's sake. These thought that, because they saw nothing *morally* wrong with the activities at the feasts, they could attend and enjoy themselves without doing themselves any real spiritual harm. In response, Paul is reminding them that the Israelites once thought the same way, but their search for a cure to their boredom pulled them quickly and effortlessly into idolatry. The Corinthians needed to be aware that they were not immune to the same temptations.

9: *“Neither should we put Christ to the test, as some of them put God to the test”* – Here, I have supplied the word “God” to make the comparison completely clear. Setting aside any theological discussions about the work of Christ before He came to earth, the Israelites committed to follow God through the leadership of Moses. Whenever they challenged God’s directions, they were putting either His sincerity or His ability to the test. In the same way, the Corinthians, as Christians, had committed to follow God through the leadership of Christ. If they were to challenge any part of the gospel, they would be putting Christ to the test in the same way that the Israelites put God to the test.

13: *“You have not received any temptation that is not ordinary.”* – Most translations have something like the NASB 2020, *“No temptation has overtaken you except something common to mankind.”* In both cases, the context indicates that this verse is a warning – you have not grown past temptation. The same things that affected the Israelites and continue to affect those around you – you are still vulnerable to these things. No matter what you have learned as a Christian, you are still human, and you still have human weaknesses. Therefore, be careful.

16: *“Is it not fellowship through the blood of Christ?”* – Every translation agrees that the cup of blessing and the bread mentioned in verse 16 effectively

form a connection between two parties, but there is some disagreement about exactly what is involved in that communion. The NASB 2020 and NRSV place the emphasis on the connection between the believer (probably individually) and Christ: *"Is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?"* (NRSV). The ESV and NIV probably agree with this assessment: *"Is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?"* (ESV). By contrast, Alexander Campbell's *Living Oracles* places more emphasis on the congregation, that is, that Christians are bound together through the communion: *"Is it not the joint participation of the blood of Christ?"* Finally, the NKJV translates the phrase as literally as possible and, in the process, ambiguously: *"is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"*

The possibilities, which are not mutually exclusive, are as follows:

1. The cup and bread shared in the communion form or strengthen a connection between each individual believer and the blood and body of Christ.
2. The cup and bread shared in the communion form or strengthen a connection between the members of a congregation *through* the blood and body of Christ.

It seems likely to me that Paul had the second point in view when he wrote these verses, considering the context. Verse 17 makes it plain that Paul viewed the communion as an event that brought many individual members together into one body. He then goes on to apply the same principle to physical Israel and idol-worship. In each case, he points out that those who partake of the altar form a fellowship with everyone else who partakes from the same altar.

17: *"Since there is only one piece of bread?"* – As I understand it, this clause can either be attached to the end of the sentence in verse 16, or it can be attached to the beginning of verse 17. The earliest manuscripts are ambiguous, since punctuation was introduced much later. It does not change the meaning of the passage significantly either way, but the flow of thought seems to work better to me when this phrase concludes Paul's line

of thought. Christians have fellowship through the body of Christ, represented by the bread, because we each individually connect ourselves to the same body in the bread. The rest of verse 17 serves to explain the connection more clearly.

32: “The people of God” – This is literally, as in the NASB 2020, “*the church of God*.” I have translated it differently to make it clear what Paul is talking about. The English word “church” generally brings to mind an organization, not the people who belong to it. The context makes it clear that Paul is talking about personal offenses here, not an offense that brings public shame or ridicule on an organization.

- M. S.

“Flee from Idolatry”

Comments on 1 Corinthians 10:1-14

Chapter 10 marks the conclusion of Paul’s discussion of food offered to idols, which began in chapter 8. In chapter 9 and in the first half of chapter 10, his immediate focus has shifted from idolatrous food – but he has used this space to establish principles that can be readily applied to the situation at hand. In chapter 9, he has shown that it is not always helpful to exercise the rights and freedom we have or think we have in Christ, especially if using those rights will do harm to our brethren in Christ. Paul showed that he had given up even his most secure rights as an apostle because he feared that using them might harm his relationship with the congregation at Corinth. Instead, he showed that he had trained himself and mastered his body so that his every effort and every decision would help him reach his goal and save others along the way.

He changes his approach a little in 1 Corinthians 10 – the two chapters address two separate concerns with the claims that some Corinthian Christians had made about their rights. Chapter 9 encouraged them to use their rights constructively, not haphazardly, and chapter 10 encourages them to reconsider whether they have the rights they think they do in the

first place. Paul's message here is that idolatry is not something to be dealt with lightly. The Corinthians needed to be very careful how they interacted with idolatrous festivals, even if they were firmly committed to the one true God.

1-5

Paul wants the Corinthians to know that there is a lesson they may be overlooking in this whole theme, and it centers around the Israelites who left Egypt in the exodus. These Israelites experienced great spiritual blessings – in some ways, they were more blessed than any generation that came before them or has arisen since – and yet many were lost. How could this happen? How could those who have come as close as anyone to seeing God forsake Him and give themselves over to their vices? This was important for the Corinthians to understand, and it is important for us to understand, so that we do not fall into the same trap.

First, Paul outlined the advantages that the Israelites experienced – the marks of their spiritual conversion and growth under the watchful care of God:

- All of them were under the cloud – they saw how God led them through the wilderness as a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22). They needed neither map nor guide to find their way through an inhospitable wilderness, because God showed them the way.
- All of them passed through the sea – they witnessed God's power over His creation and His concern for their wellbeing when He parted the sea to help them escape the Egyptian army that was pursuing them. They saw how He folded the waters of the sea back over those who wished to do them harm, so that they were destroyed (Exodus 14).
- All ate the same spiritual food – God fed the Israelites with manna, bread that was given to them supernaturally (Exodus

16:4). In doing so, He cared for their physical needs in a land that was not cultivated and was not prepared to support a population of about 2 million people. He led them where they could not provide for themselves, but He Himself cared for their every need.

- They drank the same spiritual drink – Twice, in Exodus 17 and Numbers 20, God provided water for the thirsty Israelites so that they would not perish. Their life was truly provided by God.

All of these things are made parallel to our Christian experience. Paul says that the Israelites were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea – These experiences served the same purpose for them as baptism does for Christians today. By following the cloud into the wilderness, and by stepping onto the dry land where the sea had been moments before, the Israelites committed themselves to trust in God's leadership through Moses, just as the Corinthians had committed themselves to Christ and His guidance when they were baptized.

Likewise, the spiritual food and drink is connected to Christ, when Paul says that the rock, the source of the Israelites' spiritual drink, was Christ Himself. The metaphor of Jesus as food and drink certainly is not unique to this passage. Jesus Himself taught a broad spiritual principle in John 6:47-51 (NKJV), when a crowd challenged Him to feed them the way that Moses had fed the Israelites with manna in the wilderness:

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

Likewise, in a slightly different context with the woman at the well, Jesus spoke of living water:

Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

John 4:13-14 (NKJV)

In both passages, Jesus compared the physical sustenance provided by bread and water to the spiritual sustenance provided by sincere faith and obedience to Him. The Israelites experienced physical blessings from God that were able to sustain their physical life, which would have been lost without His care, while Christians who have obeyed Christ have partaken of the spiritual bread and spiritual drink that gives eternal, spiritual life. Thus, the experience of the Corinthians in their conversion and their spiritual growth was parallel to the Israelites' experience in the exodus. Both groups had been converted to God, and both were nourished by His providential care.

But with the Israelites, whose stories have been told to the end, we see that not many were saved. Paul says rather bluntly that their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Why? What could lead those who had trusted God and relied on His care to turn against Him and suffer the consequences?

6-10

The reason the Israelites died in the wilderness was because they "pursued evil things," that is, they desired to do what was not right *despite* all the wonders they had seen and all the care they had received in the wilderness. They knew God, they had trusted Him, but they did not *want* to follow Him. Therefore, they rebelled at almost every opportunity.

Paul warned the Corinthians that these things serve as examples for Christians, even today. They needed to be careful that they would not fall into the same traps, so the Corinthians needed to understand how and why each of these temptations overtook the Israelites in the wilderness. Paul gave four examples:

- They became idolaters – Paul quotes a passage from Exodus 32:6, “*The people sat down to eat and drink, then got up to amuse themselves.*” The context in Exodus 32 shows that Moses went up on Mount Sinai to receive the law, and he was there for forty days and forty nights. When Moses delayed his return, the Israelites decided to take their religion into their own hands and create an idol for themselves, then attribute all of God’s accomplishments to it. We could say that the Israelites fell prey to *impatience* and *boredom*, since they lost interest in God when they did not hear from Him for 40 days, but this was only the gateway back into idolatry.

The quote that Paul chose to represent the Israelites’ idolatry was probably designed to strike directly at the division in Corinth. He explains later in this chapter that the meat that had been sacrificed to idols is, itself, a neutral thing. The problems that came with it were *social* in the sense that they stemmed from a Christian’s interaction with those around him. If they go to an idol’s temple, eat and drink, then amuse themselves with those who have come to worship the idol – they commit idolatry. It isn’t the meat that defiles them, but it is their participation in the social worship in the temple, whether they believe the idol is anything or not. Their desire for amusement could easily draw them toward idolatry.

- Next, the Israelites committed sexual misconduct – In Numbers 25, the children of Israel camped near the territory of the Moabites, who determined to win an alliance with the Israelites through social means rather than military might. They sent women to entice the Israelite men into sexual immorality, and these women convinced the Israelites to worship the idol called Baal of Peor. God, in His displeasure, ordered that the rulers of His people execute those who abandoned God in this way, and more than twenty thousand people were killed in a single day.

Paul warned the Corinthians against sexual temptations because, like unchecked amusement, it can quickly draw a Christian away from God. Sexuality can be a powerful force for good within a well-grounded marriage,

but it can also become a horrifyingly destructive force when used improperly. If someone pursues sexual immorality, he is moving away from God.

- Next, Paul says that the Israelites tested God – His description of how they were destroyed by snakes shows that he is talking about an incident in Numbers 21, when the Israelites lost perspective and began to blame God. Their complaint is recorded in Numbers 21:5-6 (NKJV):

“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.”

The Israelites took it upon themselves to test or to judge God’s work. They didn’t question His power, nor did they ask whether He really did do the things that they had seen. Instead, they questioned whether God was *right* to do these things. Their challenge was against God’s character.

Likewise, the Corinthians needed to keep a proper perspective toward God. God has developed a plan for our redemption and glorification in His Son; He has asked us to leave behind all that is comfortable in this life to follow Him, because He knows that what awaits us is better. We need to be careful that we do not question His qualifications to lead us during the journey. We do not know better than God.

- Finally, the Israelites complained – This probably refers to a series of incidents recorded in Numbers 11, where the Israelites first complained about something that was not specified, and the Bible says that the “fire of the Lord” burned among them and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. This fire did not deter them from complaining, though, as they went on to remember all of the good foods they had while they were enslaved in Egypt – fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic – while at the time they ate only manna. God responded to this

circumstance by sending them meat; flocks of quail descended around the camp, providing far more game than the Israelites could hunt. However, all who rushed out to gather the quail died while they were still eating it.

The same principle that governed these incidents applies to Christians: is it very pleasant to provide help for someone who does nothing but complain in response? Only God kept the Israelites alive in the wilderness, but they complained about the very bread that sustained them. Likewise, the Corinthians needed to be careful about how they interacted with their service to God. Becoming a Christian *did* close certain social and religious doors to them, but it was not right for them to complain about it. When they realized that it was not helpful for them to attend feasts in idols' temples, they needed to take a mature attitude toward that fact and avoid dwelling on how much good food and good company they were missing just because they were Christians.

11-14

Paul tells us that all these things were recorded so that we could know how to serve God. The experiences of the Israelites in the wilderness and the sins that prevented them from entering into God's rest should tell us a lot about what we need to avoid today. We serve the same God, and He will react the same way in the judgment when He assesses our actions and attitude in this life.

This means that we need to be careful and introspective about our Christian lives. Paul tells everyone who thinks his footing is stable to be careful that he does not fall. It seems likely that this statement is intended for those who confidently claimed their right to eat in idols' temples. These people claimed their baptism and their knowledge of the gospel and of the one true God was proof that they were above idolatry. They claimed that idol worship was entirely neutral and meaningless to them, and that it had no impact on their ability to serve God. In other words, they thought that they stood entirely above the temptations that governed the idolaters around them.

But Paul warned them very strictly: you may think that you are above idolatry, but the same temptations that affect those around you may still seize *you*. Often, we read verse 13 as a reassuring statement – “You have not received any temptation that is not ordinary. But God is faithful; He will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability.” There is reassurance to be found there, but there is also a dire warning in the first part of the verse – you have not received any temptation that is not ordinary. You are a Christian, you may have been a Christian for a very long time, and you may have experienced real, measurable spiritual growth in that time, but this does not mean that you are immune to the temptations that run rampant in the world around us. We have not reached a transcendent state where the desires of the world cannot touch us. We must be careful.

But there is reassurance as well; God in His providence has made sure that we will always be able to serve Him. We will never encounter a situation where we *must* compromise our Christianity. There will always be a way out. However, we must have the will and determination to use it, because it will not always be the most comfortable choice. Further, the choice will usually involve *escape*, not necessarily *endurance*. Paul told the Corinthians very plainly that the best way to handle idolatry is to *flee* from it, not to steel themselves against it. God’s way of escape will not always preserve our social connections, it will not always allow us to keep doing what we want to do, but it will protect our souls.

- M. S.

“The Many Are One”

Comments on 1 Corinthians 10:15-33

The first part of the chapter offered a warning: the Christians in Corinth who insisted on participating in idolatry were tempting themselves with forces that had ruined the Israelites so many generations before. However, the fact that the Israelites had failed when confronted with these temptations did not mean that the Corinthians would fail in the same way.

God had made a way of escape, and there was a proper way for them to live in an idolatrous society without compromising their responsibilities toward God through Christ and toward one another as Christians. The remainder of the chapter provides practical guidance for the Corinthians' daily lives.

15-22

Paul discusses three different contexts of worship in these verses, but they are all united by the theme of fellowship. He mentions the Lord's Supper in Christian worship and the sacrifices of Israelite worship in order to express his concern for the Corinthians who would participate in worship at idols' temples. In each of these cases, he demonstrates that worship does not only create a connection between an individual and God (or an idol), but it also creates a community of fellowship between those who participate in the worship together. Paul urged the Corinthian Christians to be aware of this fact so that they would understand the consequences of their thoughtless actions.

He opens with the Lord's Supper (communion) in Christian worship. The next chapter (11:23) demonstrates that Paul had already taught the Corinthians about the significance of the communion, so we can surmise that he is drawing on common beliefs in these verses. He is not teaching this for the first time but is rather using a fact already known to challenge the Corinthians to think more deeply about the problem of idolatry. Chapter 11 does make it clear that the Corinthians needed to reconsider their views on the communion as well, but it seems that the basic intention behind the practice was well understood.

Paul's case is simple: he had taught the Corinthians to commune by sharing a single piece of bread and drinking out of a single cup. This created a bond of fellowship between those who communed together. Each was individually proclaiming his commitment to Christ through His body and blood, but in doing so, each was anchoring himself to the same point. On a global scale, everyone who belongs to the body and blood of the Lord

shares fellowship with all others who do the same, because we all have a common purpose in life. However, this sense of community is appropriately enhanced in a local congregation because Christians who commune together not only share an abstract fellowship, but they actually sit at the same table, eat the same bread, and drink out of the same cup. Their regular meetings and sharing at the Lord's table make them members of a practical community devoted to showing His presence in the world.

The same thing could be said about the physical nation of Israel. Even when they had no king or central political power, every family that belonged to the tribes of Israel traveled to a single altar to offer worship to God. This created and maintained a meaningful sense of communal identity between families who would otherwise have very little to do with each other. Their common devotion to God through the altar gave them a good reason to honor and support one another, and it helped them identify who belonged to their community and who did not.

When the same principle is applied to idolatrous festivals, it becomes clear why Paul warned the Corinthians so strictly against them. Even if the idols at the center of the festivals did not have any real significance or power, they still represented forces in the world that are antithetical to God's purpose for His creation – hence, idol worship can be described as demon worship. Those who participated in the sacrifices on an idol's altar were forming a practical community devoted to those principles, and everyone who participated in that worship proclaimed his commitment to that principle and his honor and respect toward those who worshiped with him. Every Christian who attended an idol's feast announced his fellowship with demons *along with* his fellowship with God.

This is what Paul wanted the Corinthians to see. On a spiritual level, idol-worship is diametrically opposed to the worship of God. Even if some of the Corinthians had convinced themselves that their knowledge of the true God allowed them to see through the false worldview preached in the temples of Corinth, their actions still had a meaning to those around them. Their participation in idolatry supported and encouraged a community that

was dedicated to the destruction of God's creation, and it made them active and willing participants in that process. They needed to realize that they were fighting against God and everything that He has stood for since the beginning of time.

23-29a

Paul brings the discussion back around to a principle he had already established earlier (6:12). Yes, there is freedom in Christ. The new perspective we have learned through God's word has enabled us to see through the power and wisdom of the world around us, and it has given us the boldness to disregard the will of the so-called gods in the world around us (8:4-6). However, that freedom of the mind does not free us from the consequences of our actions. Our freedom should not become an excuse to neglect our responsibilities and do harm to our neighbors. Instead, our freedom should give us the opportunity to use our actions to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those around us. We should not only ask, "What am I allowed to do?" but also, "What will help me grow?" and, "What will help others grow?"

Paul did not write this to say that we should neglect our own needs and sincere desires, rather that we need to think about how our actions affect others. If anything we do brings physical or spiritual harm to another, we need to very seriously reconsider that habit – especially if it is a matter of desire, not a matter of necessity. We need to appreciate the value that God has placed on every human being, regardless of whether each one is a Christian or not. To illustrate the principle, Paul presented two plausible scenarios outside of an idol's temple:

First, he encouraged the Corinthians to eat everything that was sold in the market without asking any questions. Evidently, it was common practice that whatever was left over after a sacrifice would be sold publicly for a profit. For that reason, the marketplace was saturated with food that had been offered to idols. Earlier, Paul had agreed with the knowledgeable Corinthians that such food had not been defiled in a meaningful way. In

itself, it could be neither beneficial nor detrimental to a Christian's spiritual life (8:8). Therefore, if the food could be isolated from the context the idol's worship and the community that met in its temple, then there was nothing wrong with a Christian eating it.

Second, he encouraged the Corinthians to eat whatever was given to them in an everyday context – in this case, if an unbeliever invited them over for dinner. In all likelihood, this unbeliever did worship idols, and it was conceivable that he would bring some of the sacrifice home to share with his guest. As in the previous case, the food would have been isolated from the idol to which it had been sacrificed, as well as the worshiping community at the temple. There was nothing intrinsically wrong with the food, so the Corinthians could eat with confidence.

However, the same food in both situations could quickly become a problem if somebody mentioned the fact that it had been offered to idols. In this case, the food itself had not been defiled, but the Christian would have become aware that his actions would be interpreted differently than if no one had said anything at all. Now, the food was being offered as an invitation to join in an act of worship that had already taken place. This was an invitation that a Christian could not accept in good conscience, for all the reasons discussed above.

Paul is careful to explain that a Christian's actions in this case served not to improve that Christian's own spirituality, but to build the right kind of relationship with others. His choices would affect both the one who offered the food, as well as anyone else who was standing by. A polite, but firm refusal to participate in idols' sacrifices could both communicate the Christian's allegiance to God *and* show their concern for everyone present.

29b-33

Paul imagines a couple of challenges that will certainly be posed against what he has just taught. One of the challenges is based on the concept of freedom, and the other is, perhaps, a well-meaning religious challenge. If I am free, why do I find myself enslaved to someone else's interpretation of

the world? Doesn't the process of thanksgiving or prayer purify the food I'm eating? If I dedicate it to God, how can it be viewed as an act of worship toward idols?

Paul's answer to these challenges does not answer the questions directly, but rather provides a counter challenge. You have a responsibility to ensure that your decisions bring glory to God. You have not been set free to enjoy life however you wish, but you have a purpose in life. Does it reflect your relationship with God when you disregard someone else's conscience and concerns? Does it help bring others closer to Him when you loudly insist that your interpretation of things is better than others, so you get to do what you want regardless of what they think? Or does it bring more glory to God to live a life sensitive to those around you and carefully protect your relationships with them?

Paul did not only preach this principle, but he demonstrated it throughout his life. Here he ties everything he wrote in chapter 9 into this discussion of things offered to idols. Paul had thought carefully about how his choices would affect others, and he willingly made himself a slave to all so that he could do his work as an apostle and evangelist effectively. The same principle should have guided the "strong" Corinthians to take it seriously when their brethren expressed a concern about their proximity to idolatry. The same principle should guide us today as we navigate our daily lives. How do our choices affect those around us? What message do we send to the world? What community do we really belong to?

- M. S.

A New Translation of Mark 5:21-43

"Then, after Jesus had crossed back to the other side in the boat, a great crowd gathered around Him, and He remained by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came to Him. When he saw Him, he fell down at His feet and begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter is close to death! Please come and lay your

hands on her so that she will be saved from her illness and will live!’ Then Jesus went with him. A great crowd followed Him, and they were pressing against Him.

There was a woman who had experienced a flow of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much at the hands of many doctors, and who had spent everything she had without receiving any help, but rather became worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came in the crowd behind Him and touched His clothes. For she had said, ‘If I touch even His clothes, I will be saved.’ Immediately, her fountain of blood was dried up, and she knew in her body that she had been healed of her torment. Then, when Jesus recognized that power had gone out of Him, He immediately turned around in the crowd and said, ‘Who touched my clothes?’

His disciples said to Him, ‘You can see that the crowd is pressing against you, and you ask, ‘Who touched me?’”

And He looked around to see who had done it. The woman, afraid and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down in front of Him, and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be healed of your torment.’

While He was speaking, some men came from the leader of the synagogue’s house, saying, ‘Your daughter has died; why bother the teacher any further?’

But Jesus, overhearing what they said, said to the leader of the synagogue, ‘Do not be afraid, just trust me.’ Then He would not allow anyone to accompany Him except for Peter, James, and James’ brother John. They came into the house of the leader of the synagogue, and He saw a commotion with many who were weeping and wailing loudly. When He came in, He said to them, ‘Why are you making such a commotion, and why are you weeping? The child is not dead but is rather sleeping.’ And they laughed at Him.

After He had sent everyone out of the house, He took the child’s father and mother, as well as those who were with Him, and went into the place where the girl was. Then He took the child’s hand and said to her, ‘Talitha kum,’ which, when translated, means, ‘Little girl, I say to you, get up!’ And immediately, the girl stood up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And the others were deeply astounded. Then He strictly

warned them that no one should know what had happened. Then He told them to give the girl something to eat.”

Notes:

23: *“She will be saved from her illness”* – Most translations have something like *“She will get well”* (NASB 2020) or *“She will be healed”* (NIV). These translate the sense of the word, but I think it is worth recognizing that the Greek word used here and in several verses throughout this passage, σῶζω (sozo), is the same one used to describe salvation from sin throughout the New Testament. Mark has already highlighted one incident (2:1-12) in Jesus’ life to draw a direct comparison between His ability to heal physical and mental diseases and His ability to forgive sin. It does not seem accidental to me that he has translated the words used by Jesus (v. 34), Jairus (v. 23), and the suffering woman (v. 28) with the same vocabulary. For that reason, I have translated the same word as “save” throughout this section.

36: *“Just trust me”* – The concept of faith, embodied by the Greek word πίστις (pistis) and related terms, deserves a great deal of exploration. This concept is usually translated into English with the words “faith” and “belief,” as in the common translation of this verse, *“Only believe”* (NASB 2020, NKJV, ESV, NIV, NRSV, etc.). However, we often discuss the idea of faith in terms of faith vs. atheism – or simple belief in the existence of God. While this belief is and should be an integral part of our faith as Christians, it is only one aspect of biblical faith. The Greek word πίστις is primarily concerned with confidence and reliability³. Faith is, first and foremost, a matter of trust, and this kind of confidence is what Jairus needed in this moment. Jesus had promised to heal his daughter, and even though she had died before the promise was fulfilled, he needed to trust that Jesus could and would keep His word.

³ Walter Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and Frederick William Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 818-820. Logos.

41: “*Talitha kōum*” – There is a minor variation between manuscripts in this place, so that some sources have *ταλιθα κουμ* (*Talitha kōum/cum*), while others have *ταλιθα κουμι* (*Talitha kōumi/cumī*). This explains why some translations (NASB 2020, NIV, NRSV) have the former, while others (NKJV, ESV) have the latter. These words are a transliteration from Aramaic, and the translation Mark provides for them is the same in any case, so there is no difference in meaning between these manuscripts.

- M. S.

“Your Faith Has Saved You”

Comments on Mark 5:21-43

Already, Jesus had experienced great scrutiny and betrayal from His own people and even from His own family, who believed that He was out of His mind. In response, He carried the gospel across the Sea of Galilee to the region of the Gerasenes, a people who knew very little about God and the promise of a Messiah who would save them from their sin and suffering. However, Jesus found that these people were not yet ready to come face-to-face with the power of God, so He left behind a representative, the man who had been possessed by a legion of demons, to remind them of what had happened and to help them come to terms with the gospel that Jesus preached. He returned to His own people, but this time He found that not everyone was so skeptical. In these verses, we read of two Israelites whose trust in Christ gave them greater hope and stability than they had ever found without Him.

21-24

It seems that the accusations the Pharisees had brought against Jesus had done little to curb His popularity. As soon as He returned to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, He was thronged by a crowd once again. As before, Jesus found it easiest to stay by the seashore. There were simply too many people trying to reach Him for Him to function normally in town.

While He was interacting with the crowd, Jairus, one of the leaders or appointed officials in a nearby synagogue (probably in Capernaum), arrived to beg for mercy on behalf of his daughter. We aren't given a detailed description of his daughter's ailment, but we know that her father was (correctly) certain that she was about to die. It is probably fair to surmise that this was not something she had suffered from for a long time, but that she had suddenly fallen ill, and her condition had deteriorated very quickly. If her father had looked for help in the past, it had not been effective. In any case, Jairus had clearly heard of Jesus before, and he knew that Jesus had healed many others of their diseases. Now that his daughter was in urgent need, he knew where to look.

His faith in Jesus was already well-formed before he arrived. His request itself betrayed that trust; he left his daughter's dying bedside to go out of town to find Jesus and bring Him back to his house. We can imagine that his thought process was straightforward. He knew what he needed to do to save his daughter, so he went out to do it. Jesus quickly agreed to help, and the two of them set off back toward the town with the entire crowd in tow.

25-34

While the crowd followed Jesus into town, a woman with a longstanding, probably painful medical condition became aware of His presence. None of the gospel writers describe her illness in great detail, but it is likely that she suffered from an irregular or continuous menstrual flow. This makes the most sense of Mark's note in verse 29 that she "knew in her body that she had been healed." She was not bleeding from an open wound that she could see as it was being healed, but she could feel as her internal organs began to function properly again.

Mark mentions her twelve-year history with her illness to show that, unlike Jairus, she had been aware of her need for a very long time. She had tried desperately to find a cure, searching out every doctor and submitting herself to every treatment she could find in hopes that something, anything, might bring her some relief. Nothing helped; every change only worsened her

condition. She was at her wit's end, and probably expected the rest of her life to be a pattern of suffering and isolation. Then she heard of Christ, whose power was supposed to be able to heal any disease.

According to the Law of Moses, a woman suffering from this condition would have been isolated from society to a significant degree (Leviticus 15:19-30). Since she had been suffering for twelve years, she probably had a routine that she followed in order to meet her physical needs while avoiding crowded areas. This might explain why she had not heard of Jesus sooner, even though He had been popular for some time. However, as soon as she heard about who He was and what He was able to do, her faith in Him compelled her to dive into the crowd and press toward the center.

She did not have it in mind that she would speak to Jesus when she found Him. Perhaps her isolation had hurt her interpersonal skills. Socially, she was the opposite of Jairus. Jairus was a leader in the local synagogue; he was a highly respected member of society, and his daily life probably involved interactions with both people he knew well and dignified travelers who were passing through his town. While he had been humbled by his daughter's urgent need, he approached Jesus directly to ask for His help. By contrast, this woman did not seem to carry herself with confidence when she approached Jesus. Her desire to be healed just by touching His garment instead of speaking to Him directly may have stemmed from anxiety. She wanted to be healed, but she did not know how to get Jesus' attention, how to introduce herself and her illness, or how to ask for help.

In any case, her faith that He could heal her was well-founded. In fact, Jesus Himself told her later that it was her faith that allowed her to access His power, not His clothes. Jesus did not miss what had happened, He knew that He had healed someone, so He turned to find her. It is not necessary to assume that Jesus was taken by surprise when she was healed, nor that He had no part in the process. In fact, His question and His disciples' response makes it clear that He understood the situation better than anyone else around Him. It seems that Jesus handled the situation with compassion

for the woman's fears and anxieties. By asking who had touched Him, He gave her an opportunity to make herself known.

When she did approach Him directly, He continued to show nothing but compassion for her. Her faith had brought her to Him, and He had ensured that her faith was not in vain. Even though their interaction was brief, it changed her life forever. Her faith had saved her.

35-43

Even though His conversation with the woman was brief, it was long enough for messengers from Jairus' house to arrive and tell him that his daughter had died in his absence. Jesus overheard what they said, and reassured Jairus that his faith was not in vain. Even though the situation seemed hopeless, Jairus' faith would yet save his daughter.

What follows is the first record of a resurrection in connection with Jesus' ministry. While Jairus' daughter would not be the only person Jesus restored to life, neither the crowd nor His disciples were aware of just how far His power extended. They had all witnessed Him doing incredible things – casting out demons, healing the sick, and stilling a storm – but if they saw Him raise the dead, the sensationalism surrounding His ministry could reach an even greater degree of intensity. Perhaps this is why He left behind all but His three closest disciples, Peter, James, and John, as soon as He heard that the girl was dead. Perhaps this is also why He reassured the mourners at Jairus' house. Whatever His reason, He did not want word of the girl's resurrection to spread far and wide.

Mark's account of Jesus' words to the girl stands out from the other two gospels that record this event (Matthew and Luke). Mark was acutely aware of the fact that he was translating Jesus' words from Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke during His day-to-day ministry) into Greek. At a few points throughout his book (in this verse; 7:34; 14:36; and 15:34), Mark recorded the actual words that Jesus spoke along with a translation. This is probably meant to help us, his readers, sense the tender compassion and intense emotion that Jesus felt in these moments. When Jesus was on the earth, He

was not an abstract idea or a dispassionate deity. He formed real connections with those who needed His help, and the relationships He had with others really mattered to Him.

The miracle itself was not a matter of showmanship. He simply told the girl to stand up, and she did. Jairus had made a request in faith on behalf of his family, and out of a sincere love for that family, Jesus did what had been asked of Him. Even after His work was finished, He was still concerned about the girl's wellbeing. The passage concludes with Him making sure that she gets something to eat.

Conclusion

As we noticed in the course of our study, Jairus and the woman who touched Jesus' were social opposites. Jairus was at the center of society, and there is little doubt that he could have turned any which way for help. Nonetheless, he had heard of Jesus, he believed in Jesus' power, and his faith led him to look to Jesus for help. By contrast, the woman had already suffered from her illness for more than a decade before Jesus began His ministry. She had used every connection she had to find a solution, all of which had failed. It could be that she had given up long ago. Nonetheless, when she heard of Jesus, she believed in His power, and her faith led her to look to Him for help. In both cases, that faith saved them from what was causing them harm.

- M. S.

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