

# 1 Corinthians 10:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

## Analysis

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**But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness**—After emphasizing **all** four times (vv. 1-4), Paul now introduces the sobering **but**. Despite universal participation in redemptive events, God was *ouk eudokēsen* (οὐκ εὐδόκησεν, "not well pleased") with **many** (actually most—only Joshua and Caleb of the exodus generation entered Canaan, Numbers 14:30).

The phrase **overthrown in the wilderness** (*katestrotē, κατεστρώθησαν*, literally "strewn about" or "scattered") evokes the image of corpses littering the desert (Numbers 14:29, Hebrews 3:17). This wasn't natural death but divine judgment—*thanatōsis* following covenant violation. Their bones testified to the deadly seriousness of covenant unfaithfulness.

Paul's warning to Corinth: sacramental participation doesn't override moral accountability. The church today can be "baptized," partake of communion, yet remain under divine displeasure due to unrepentant sin. External religiosity without heart transformation leads to spiritual death, just as it did in the wilderness.

## Historical Context

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Numbers 14 records Israel's refusal to enter Canaan after the spies' negative report. God decreed that the entire generation (20 years and older) would die in the wilderness over 40 years. This became the paradigmatic warning against

unbelief (Psalm 95, Hebrews 3-4). Paul uses this well-known judgment to warn Corinthian believers against presuming on grace while indulging sin.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. What specific sins might make you "overthrown in the wilderness" despite outward Christian participation?
2. How do you reconcile God's grace with His serious warnings about judgment for persistent sin?
3. Are there areas where you've confused religious activity with genuine transformation?

## Interlinear Text

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ἀλλ'	οὐκ	ἐν	τοῖς	πλείοσιν	αὐτῶν	εὐδόκησεν	ὁ	θεός
<b>But</b>	<b>not</b>	<b>in</b>	G3588	<b>many</b>	<b>of them</b>	<b>was</b>	G3588	<b>God</b>
G235	G3756	G1722		G4119	G846	G2106		G2316
κατεστρώθησαν	γὰρ	ἐν	τῇ	ἐρήμῳ				
<b>they were overthrown</b>	<b>for</b>	<b>in</b>	G3588	<b>the wilderness</b>				
G2693	G1063	G1722		G2048				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Hebrews 3:17** (Parallel theme): But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

**Jude 1:5** (Parallel theme): I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

**Numbers 14:37** (Parallel theme): Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD.

**Psalms 106:26** (Parallel theme): Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:

**Psalms 95:11** (Parallel theme): Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

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