

1 Corinthians 10:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

Analysis

Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand—Paul references Israel's sexual immorality with Moabite women at Baal-peor (Numbers 25:1-9). The Israelites joined pagan worship through sexual rituals, provoking God's wrath. The verb *porneuōmen* (πορνεύωμεν, "commit fornication") covers all sexual immorality, not just prostitution.

Paul states **three and twenty thousand** died, while Numbers 25:9 records 24,000. This minor discrepancy may reflect that 23,000 died by plague in one day, while others died subsequently, or Paul rounds the number. The emphasis is the swift, devastating judgment: **in one day** (*mia hēmera*, μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ)—divine wrath fell suddenly on covenant breakers.

For Corinth, this warning had urgent application. The city was notorious for sexual immorality, and the church struggled with it (5:1, 6:12-20). Some Corinthians apparently viewed temple prostitution or sexual license as compatible with Christianity. Paul warns: sexual sin joined to idolatry brings swift judgment. God's holiness hasn't changed from Sinai to Corinth.

Historical Context

The Baal-peor incident combined idolatry and sexual sin—Moabite women seduced Israelite men into both physical immorality and worship of Baal. This syncretism

nearly destroyed Israel before Phinehas's zealous action stayed the plague. Corinth's culture similarly blended religious ritual, sexual activity, and social dining. Paul insists Christians must maintain absolute separation from such compromise.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does our sexualized culture make sexual purity seem unrealistic or extreme?
2. What connection exists between sexual immorality and idolatry (worship of pleasure, self, etc.) in your life?
3. How can you cultivate holy fear of God's judgment while resting in Christ's forgiveness?

Interlinear Text

μηδὲ	ἐπόρνευσαν	καθὼς	τινες	αὐτῶν	ἐπόρνευσαν	καὶ
Neither	committed	as	some	of them	committed	and
G3366	G4203	G2531	G5100	G846	G4203	G2532
ἔπεσον	ἐν	μιᾷ	ἡμέρᾳ	εἴκοσι	τρεῖς	χιλιάδες.
fell	in	^{G1520}	day	and twenty	three	thousand
G4098	G1722		G2250	G1501	G5140	G5505

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 6:18 (Parallel theme): Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

Psalms 106:29 (Parallel theme): Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.

1 Corinthians 6:9 (Parallel theme): Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

Revelation 2:14 (Parallel theme): But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.