

History Repeats Itself

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The proverb “History Repeats Itself” is recorded as being stated all the way back to around the 1500s. Although the English phrase itself is only 500 years old , the principle is one that has been around long before. How many children do we often see making the same mistakes their parents made? How many elected officials still pass legislation that will end in failure as so many countries have done before? It often seems that we are doomed to commit the very same mistakes of those who have gone on before us.

One of the beautiful things about history is we can read of the mistakes that are made and learn from them. Paul had this in mind when he wrote in 1 Corinthians (10:11-12) “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. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall”. Paul knew that we will often make the same mistakes of the past, but at the same time if we are wise, we will observe what happened in the past and learn from it.

One of the key purposes of the Old Testament today is for us to read through it and learn from the many mistakes that God’s people made. We are not so far removed from them to think that we do not struggle with the same things. They struggled with immorality, materialism and pride in the same way that we do. We need to be wise and utilize the tools that God has given us to overcome temptation. We can learn from the Old Testament, history does not always have to repeat itself. “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 Corinthians 10:13).