

REVIEW

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Chapter 8: The front-end issue is food offered to idols – Should Christians eat food offered to idols. However, Paul does not deal with the issue directly though he introduced it at the beginning of the chapter. Instead, he dealt with the attitude of some of the believers @ Corinth, where they boasted in the knowledge that they had and acted in a loveless manner towards ‘weaker’ brethren in this matter. Paul calls them to view their ‘weaker’ brothers as those whom Christ has died for, and to fear lest by their insistence upon their rights, they cause these people to stumble!

Chapter 9: Paul gives a personal account of how he gave up his rights for the sake of the gospel. He is determined to do nothing that will hinder the gospel's advance. And in laying this before them, he is calling the Corinthian Christians to follow in his steps. What is crucial is the advance of the gospel, not our rights, our comforts, our enjoyment. Paul ends with these words in 9:26-27:

Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Now in Chapter 10, Paul continues and ends his instructions to these believers concerning this matter. This passage can be studied under three sections: (a) 10:1-14 (b) 10:15-22 and (c) 10:23-11:1.

10:1-14

Read verses 1-5. Who is Paul talking about in these 5 verses? What did they experience? What was their end? What relations/relevance do these people and their experience have with the Corinthian Christians and with us today?

Paul is talking about Old Testament Israel here, especially that generation who left Egypt during the Exodus. Note the word 'all' (5 times) in 5 verses. They all experienced great blessings: under the cloud, passed through the sea, baptised into Moses, ate spiritual food, drank spiritual drink. Yet most of them (all except two) died in the wilderness, their bodies scattered in the wilderness.

In verse 1, he called those Israelites "our fathers", though most of the Corinthian Christians are Gentiles. In other words, the Israelites in the Old Testament and the Corinthian Christians in the New Testament are one people, they shared the same history! In dealing with this issue, Paul points them back to the past, puts his hearers into the history of God's people and then draws applications and implications for them today.

Read verses 6-11. Paul referred to a number of incidents that the Israelites had in the wilderness. What are they?

- (a) V7 - cf. Exodus 32:6, the Golden Calf incident.
- (b) V8 - cf. Numbers 25, the seduction of the Moabite woman
- (c) V9 - cf. Numbers 21:4-9, the bronze serpent event. (Tempt: test, to see how far you can go)
- (d) V10 - cf. Numbers 16:41-50, the complaint and murmuring of the people after the incident of Korah's rebellion.

What's the root problem? What's the relevance of their wilderness encounters for Christians today? What's the link between verses 6-11 and verses 1-5?

Root problem == v6, lust after evil things. (*epithymeo - craving*). The problem here is people looking to created things for ultimate satisfaction. It is idolatry! Put in another way, it is self-worship, where the basic motivation is self-gratification and self-pleasure.

V6, 11 → examples

V11 → admonition

V6-11 elaborates on the reason for what verse 5 describes.

What's the message of verse 12? To whom (do you think) it is addressed?

Probably address to "strong" believers. The message is: *Don't be presumptuous, if you want to persevere.*

What's the message of verse 13? To whom (do you think) it is addressed?

Could be addressed to "weak" believers. God has provided a hedge and a bridge. A hedge is a filter, whereby God screens the temptations/trials first, so that what comes to us, no matter how great we view them, is something we can bear. It is never a situation where "I cannot help it but sin". A bridge is the way of escape laid out. The focus here is on God == He is faithful.

What's the message of verse 14? To whom (do you think) it is addressed?

Probably addressed to all @ Corinth. Flee idolatry, a summary statement of what was said above. The word 'flee' calls us to seek safety by flight, shun and avoid

something abhorrent. With speed and determination, to put as much distance between you and that idol.

What is the overall message of these 14 verses?

You can reach Glory Land safely. It is hard, but never too hard. To do that, you must constantly look to God, trust in Him, love Him. If you apostasize, it is because you choose to do it, because you love sin more than God.

Note that Paul is talking to Christians here. Past blessings guarantee nothing. Watch. Your faith and your love must be current.

10:15-22

In these 8 verses, Paul refers to a New Testament ordinance (v16-17), an Old Testament ritual (v18) and then draws the implications for Christians concerning attendance at idol feasts (v19-22).

What's the New Testament ordinance? What's the message that Paul is seeking to convey by making reference to this ordinance?

The New Testament ordinance is the Lord's Supper. The word 'communion' is used twice in verse 16. The message is that in eating the bread and drinking the cup, we have a participation in what Christ has done. We participate in His broken body and shed blood. We proclaim that we are one with Christ. In verse 17, the message is that we are one with Christ and hence one with one another.

What's the Old Testament ritual? What's the message?

Sacrifices offered at the altar in the Temple. By eating part of the sacrifices, it conveys participation, agreement, union with the sacrifice.

The reason for citing the New Testament ordinance and Old Testament ritual is found in verses 19-22. What's Paul saying here?

An idol is nothing. But behind the idol are demons. Remember that the devil is the father of lies. In view of this, how can we who belong to God have fellowship with demons and the devil?

Deuteronomy 32:15-21 and Psalm 106:36-37 tell us that in sacrificing to idols, people are sacrificing to demons.

10:23-11:1

Read verses 23-24. What does 'all things' mean? What's the message here? Here is a principle for Christian Living. What is it?

'All things' - what is in view are things not covered in the Ten Commandments, meaning things that belong to Christian Liberty. These things may be lawful, but not necessary helpful or edifying. Therefore the question to ask is not "What is my liberty?" but "How can I help others". Not liberty but duty.

The principle for Christian Living is stated in verse 24: not what pleases me but what edifies others.

Verses 25-30 contain two examples. What are they? What's the lesson?

(a) V25-26 ~ Meat sold in the market place. Don't ask. Eat with a clear conscience.

(b) V27-30 ~ Invited to an unbeliever's home for a meal. Don't ask. Eat with a clear conscience. If told that the meat has been sacrificed to idols, don't eat for the conscience of the person telling you.

10:31 ~ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

This can be understood as the 1st great commandment laid down by Jesus: Love the Lord your God with

10:32 ~ Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks, or to the church of God.

This can be understood as the 2nd great commandment laid down by Jesus: Love your neighbour

10:33 ~ Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Why bother? For the salvation of sinners!!

11:1 ~ Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

Look at Jesus and follow Him!

Write Down One Lesson You Have Learnt: