

1st Corinthians Chapter 10

Chapter 10

Bill Holdstock

Verse 1.

Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea. 2. And all were baptised unto Moses (the law giver and type of Christ) in the cloud (a type of the presence of the Lord) and in the sea (a type of water baptism). 3. And did all eat the same spiritual meat (the manna being a type of the Lord's Supper.)

The oldest manuscripts do not use the word 'moreover' but use the word 'for' in order to preserve continuity with the previous chapter which told the church to bring their bodies under subjection lest they cause an offence to their fellow man and should become a castaway. The meaning of a castaway in the Greek is 'adokimos' translated reprobate or rejected (as in Hebrews 6:8 and 2 Timothy 3:8).

Many of the new Christians at Corinth supposed they were secure enough in their new found faith because they had repented, were baptised and had partaken of the Christian ordinances. According to them nothing they did could cut them off from Christ, they could partake of idolatrous feasts and still be saved (1 Cor. 8: 4-13. 1 Cor.10 16-33). Paul did not agree with them hence the comments he made at the close of the last chapter suggesting they were reprobates and castaways. He now reminds them of the nation of Israel, their forefathers, who also had sacramental ordinances in the wilderness similar to those of Christians. But regardless of their baptism in verse 2 and their Eucharist in verse 3, their eating of the manna from heaven and drinking of the Rock of Christ, God was not pleased with many of them (one translation says 'most of them') and many were slain in the wilderness.

Verse 4

And they did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was a type of Christ.

What does this mean?

Ex.17:6 Num. 20:11. Ps. 78:15.

Behold I will stand before you there upon the rock in Horeb; and you shall smite the rock and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the Elders of Israel.

The children of Israel were to camp in Rephidim in the wilderness, and when they looked for water they found none. The people were thirsty and complained to Moses saying 'Moses give us water that we may drink'. Only in a desert could God reveal to them what He could do for them if they trusted Him.. Their own resources were not sufficient and God led them into the wilderness without food or water to prove His love for them. God wanted to teach them the unfailing faithfulness of their God in spite of the unbelief of their own hearts. So He led them to a Rock which was a type of Christ 1Cor. 10:v1-4 Moses was told to smite the Rock typifying Christ's death on the Cross (Isaiah 53:4). The water coming out of the Rock was a type of the Holy Spirit (John 7: 37-39). Note that the Holy Spirit was not available until after the Rock had been smitten i.e. Christ had died on the Cross.

Just as God was displeased with Israel's disbelief and unfaithfulness and caused many to die so God is telling the Church at Corinth through Paul's ministry that they too were in disobedience when they joined with idolaters and partook of idolatrous feast thereby giving way to sin. Verse 5-11 tells us God cut them off and destroyed them. God also warns the Christians of today that He will also cut them off from Christ if they sin (v11-14. Galatians 5: 19-21. Romans 8: 12-13. Hebrews 3: 6).

Paul explained to the church at Corinth that their Fathers in the wilderness were under the cloud that hid them from the enemy. The Greek word for *under* is 'hupo' and denotes over everything. Thus the Children of Israel were completely overwhelmed by the cloud and completely covered by the Divine Presence of God. This is called the Baptism in the cloud. (v2).

V3 And they did eat the same spiritual meat. The manna is called spiritual because it was provided supernaturally and because it was a type of the body of Jesus Christ.

V4 And they did drink of the same spiritual drink. They drank of the water from the Rock Christ Jesus which was a type of Christ's blood shed on Calvary.

V5 But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. God designed their destruction because of their rebellion.

V6 Now these were our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

The punishment which God inflicted on the Children of Israel shows us exactly what God will inflict upon us if we lust after the sins which brought down rebellious Israel. The Church at Corinth was guilty of double standards, lusting after the flesh in the idol feasts which they frequented to the detriment of their salvation and not taking the Word of God seriously, thereby living in rebellion to God. The apostle Paul shows them that their sin was just like that of the murmuring, rebellious Israelites whom God so severely punished. God was saying that if He did not spare the 'natural branches', there was no likelihood He would spare them.

Verse 7

Neither be you idolaters as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

Idol worship brought with it many sins that were an abomination to God. These idol festivities were very popular because much of the activities that went on was gratifying to the flesh but did nothing for the spirit. It was after the feasts and after the drinking of wine and merriment that they rose up to play. Play is used of fornication in passages of scripture like Deuteronomy 22: 21, Jeremiah 3:1-8, 19:44. Ezekiel 16: 15-16 and again in our study of the church at Corinth. Paul refers to this word fornication generally associated with immoral practices which was prevalent in all lands in that day. All idol gods had their consecrated women who were devoted to immoral practices. This is why idol worship was carried on in groves and high secluded places.

Not far from our house is a place called Cissbury Ring which is high up on the South Downs surrounded by thick trees. Some years ago the police found such practises were going on and a coven was found, I don't want to go into detail but I mention this to show that what Paul was dealing with at Corinth we in the UK have the same problem still.

When Moses was in the mountain talking to God about the Ten Commandments he was told by God to go down the mountain to the Children of Israel below because 'they have corrupted themselves'. All Israel had sunk so low in sin and moral depravity that God told Moses He was ready to destroy the whole nation and start again from the seed of Moses.

Numbers 25:1-10 tells us that Israel moved to Shittim and as soon as they settled they began to commit whoredom with the prostitutes of Moab and Midian. Read the rest of that chapter to find out the depths to which God's chosen people went to and cause the wrath of God to fall upon them. Moses was told to put the heads of the people, some 1000 chief men, rulers and captains and hang them up as an example to Israel. If you read the chapter carefully you will note that some of Israel were repentant over the state of their nation. Verse 7 says that Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron saved the day, which shows the input of Godliness passed on in the family from generation to generation is very important.

Phinehas killed the two involved and turned away God's wrath and Phinehas was rewarded with a covenant of peace from the Lord. 23,000 of the rest of Israel were killed in a plague. God hates idolatry and immorality and is determined to get rid of it from the earth and there is no place for such in heaven either.

Verse 9

Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

Numbers 21: 1-9 shows Israel tempting God time and again when repeatedly He fought their battles, fed them and answered their prayers. But their complaining and murmuring against Moses and God caused God to allow fiery snakes to bite and sting large numbers of Israel and kill them. This produced repentance and confession of sin, and again God forgave them. He instructed Moses to hang a serpent on a pole so all Israel could look up and see it and in doing so they would be healed. This was another type of Christ's death on the Cross and all who look to Jesus would be saved.

Verse 10

Neither murmur as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.

The plagues in the wilderness were no doubt caused by a destroying angel as in Exodus 12: and 2 Samuel 24:16, Isaiah 37: 36. On the way to Canaan they very often moaned and complained against God and Moses. This was the tendency of those in Corinth as well. God does not like moaners, He is looking for faith.

Verse 11

Now all these things happened unto them for an example and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

There is no need for these things being written if we cannot be cut off from God and be lost like some of the Israelites in these examples which are referring to sinning sinners as well as sinning saints.

Another translation says 'to whom the fulfilment of the ages has arrived, that is the Church Age' The history of the Jews was written as an example to us in the Church Age, the last age before the return of Christ. It is our duty and to our eternal benefit to receive instruction and act upon it.

Verse 12

Wherefore let him that thinks he stand take heed lest he fall.

This verse concludes the warnings given by Paul from verses 1 to 12 against backsliding and following the examples of the Children of Israel. He has spent much time warning the Church not to dabble with the things of the world and then warns us of complacency. We all think we are better than we really are before God, and just as Paul calls the church at Corinth to take stock of their walk before a Holy God his message is for the Church age in which we are living. Let him who is fully convinced in his conscience that his heart is right with God and his mind is right in the truth, take heed lest he fall from his faith and from the state of holiness in which the grace of God has placed him. Our standing in the faith depends on our continued union with the Lord and our continued prayer life.

Galatians 5: 19-21

Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying's, murders, drunkenness, revelling's and such like: of which I tell you as I have also told you in time past that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

No man who commits these sins will ever inherit the Kingdom of God unless he confesses and puts them out of his life. Let any man claim that he can be saved and still live in any of these sins take note, the Judgement of God will decide if he or the Bible is right...but then it will be too late anyway!

Remember Paul confirms there is a 'fall' and it is all the way down to hell to a Christ less eternity.

You may find it difficult to walk with Christ; you may find it hard not to give in to temptation. Well believe it or not God understands and He gives you the answer to that very problem.

Verse 13

There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able (to bare) but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

The thing to do is talk to Jesus about it and ask Him to help you. He said He will make a way for you to overcome that problem and if you are serious about this He will give you what you need to be victorious. No matter how big the temptation is to you God will with that temptation will show you a way of escape. But it is up to us to decide to walk out of the captivity of an habitual sin and into the new life of holiness and freedom that He has prepared for us. God will give us the strength to overcome each and every temptation, but the strength is activated by our decision to follow Him to take the escape route. The reality is, sometimes we prefer to give in to temptation and sin, Satan is never allowed to completely overcome us without God making a way out for us: but it is down to us to decide which path to follow.

1 John 2: 15=17

Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world the love of the Father is not in him.

Back to 1 Corinthians 10.

Verse 14

Wherefore my dearly beloved flee from idolatry.

As I have said before an Idol need not be an image of wood or stone, in the days in which we live we do not have to bow down to such an image, idolatry is anything we put before the Lord. It is anything that takes up an inordinate amount of our time so we neglect our prayer time, our Bible reading, our Christian fellowship with other saints. God has given a lot of time to this subject of idolatry because He knows it is very easy to swap our love for the Lord for the idols in our lives.

Verse 15

I speak as to wise men; judge you what I say.

I don't know about you but I sense Paul's heart is overflowing with concern for the church at Corinth. There is no doubt the church was in a poor state and many of the congregation lacked spiritual growth, and before he could teach more of the Word of God he had to clear away the false teaching we studied in the first chapters of Corinthians to lay a good firm Godly foundation for what was to follow. Paul compliments the believers in Corinth for being wise men but judging by what we have studied so far they were a long way from being wise. If they didn't change their ways they could lose their salvation and Paul told them so. Even so he exalts them, encourages them, he calls them my dearly beloved, a true shepherd of the flock indeed.

Verse 16

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

When we partake of the Holy Communion together around the Lord's Table we should understand we are remembering the Lord's death on the cross where He took away our sin and made us whole and clean. It is as if we join with Jesus in that upper room two thousand years ago where Jesus shared the first communion with His disciples and said we were to commemorate this as often as we wished. We are partakers of the blood and His body and have become one with Christ. It is a special Holy time for Christians as we partake of that table and worship Jesus.

It is good to realise that as believers we partake of Jesus at the communion table and that likewise, anyone who sits at the table of the idolater partakes in the sin and wickedness of idolatry. Both will reap very different rewards in due time.

Verse 18/19/20

Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19. What say I then? That the idol is anything or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything. 20. But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils.

Paul was distinguishing between the Lord's table and fellowship with the one true God and the Gentile sacrifice to idols and fellowship with devils. Paul is offering the church two examples to prove his point. 1. Those who join together in celebrating the Lord's Supper are partakers of that one bread the body of Christ and have fellowship with Christ. 2. All who join at the table of idolaters and partake of sacrifices offered to idols give proof they are in fellowship with the object of their worship which is not Jesus Christ. So they who eat the meats offered to idols give proof that they are in communion with the demons they worship.

So we either follow Jesus and live for Him or we follow the ways of the world and eat from Satan's table and reap its consequences in this world and the next.

Verse 21

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. You cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table and of the table of devils.

It would appear that the church at Corinth had their feet in two camps. They attended the Lord's Table and drank of the cup of the Lord commemorating His death and resurrection to wash away their sins and then ate and drank at the feasts of demons, by spending their time indulging in the permissiveness of the Greek culture they had been brought up in.

Verse 22

Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy are we stronger than He?

God is provoked to jealousy by the sins of His people, particularly by those who profess His name but dabble with worldly things. God commands there are no other gods before Him that is the law of God. God is under obligation to judge those who indulge in worldly pleasures and yet profess to worship God. This is exactly how the Corinthians were living.

Verse 23

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me but all things edify not.

Paul was not only talking about our behaviour, our daily walk, the things we do that hinder others who are weaker in the faith but also foods that were eaten. He is saying all foods are lawful but not all are profitable to others. It is the surroundings and the company those foods are eaten with and where they are eaten that not only hinders our fellow man from encountering Jesus, but at the same time gives honour to the dishonourable host of the feast.

Eating with devil worshippers honours the devil, eating at the Lord's Table honours the Lord. It might appear that Paul is allowing all things or all foods into his life but he is not. We must not use this portion of scripture as an excuse to dabble with the world and think we are inherently strong enough to stop when it gets 'too hot'! The world and its pull is strong and we only overcome it by living out of Christ in us which is the only hope of glory.

Paul is asking the church to consider if what you are planning to do is edifying. As Christians we are the temple of the Holy Ghost the Spirit of God dwells within us, all we do, say, read, watch and hear should

edify, build up, strengthen our spirits so that at the return of the Lord at the rapture we will not be found wanting.

Verse 24

Let no man seek his own but every man another's wealth.

Let no one live for his own gratification or live a way of life that would injure the soul of another. I have mentioned this before but in this context it bears repeating. I witnessed to a good friend of mine for many years and he and some others in the Studio invited our boss who was a Christian to a restaurant that had topless waiters. I didn't go but you can imagine the conversation and sordid remarks that went on with a crowd of fellows fuelled by drink. The whole company knew the Christian stand of the boss and they knew mine too. My friend told me of the remarks and indeed disappointment of those at the table and that is exactly what Paul was talking about in our study. We must be careful we do not put a 'stumbling block' in the way of our testimony or the testimony of others. My friend died some years later without Christ. We must live, not for ourselves but for every part of the great family of God ever mindful the world is watching us.

Verse 25/26

Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat asking no questions for conscience sake; 26 For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

The Shambles is the name for the market place and the slaughter house. It was customary to bring the flesh of the animals to market to be sold. The blood would have been poured out in sacrifice to idols the rest was cut into three parts, the first part was consumed at the feasts of idols, the second part was eaten by the sacrificer, and the third part belonged to the occult priests and was often sold in the shambles or the market. Paul absolutely forbids the eating of the second part thereby sharing with devil worshippers at the idol altar. It is the association with idol worshippers that shows the heart of those that eat.

This was a million miles from receiving the sacrament of the Lord Jesus Christ. There was nothing wrong with the food at the restaurant that my boss went to but the association with those who did not have Christ in their hearts and their choice of a particular restaurant that was unseemly they ate with a totally different motive that was not edifying to the Holy Spirit who dwelt within him.

Verse 27/28

If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast and you are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

If anyone invites you to a common meal that is not an idol feast you are free to go. Generally it will be made known if the feast is in honour of an idol, to such no Christian should lawfully go.

The whole chapter deals with idol feasts and festivals which some new Christians carried on attending, despite their new found faith in Christ. Idol worship happened in all parts of the country bearing in mind many of the towns and villages were pagan which the disciples and apostles had to deal with. The message of the gospel was new to them and therefore much had to be given up and ways of living changed in line with the Word of God that was difficult for them. It was obviously a problem for the church at Corinth so Paul had to teach them without giving offence.

Paul said 'all things are lawful to me' the Bible says 'the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof' so God is saying I have created all things perfect, so don't call what I have created cursed or unclean, and Paul is saying I am entitled to anything that God has created, it is lawful for me to enjoy. So what is the problem with Idol feasts? Paul says nothing, because the idol is nothing, there is no life in an idol, there is no seeing in an idol, there is no speech in an idol and there is no comparison to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ who can save us from a lost eternity.

The real point about idol worship is to whom is the honour given? When we are at the Lords Table we give honour to our Lord and Saviour and we sing and worship Him. When at an idol feast or festival the devil is the object of worship and God forbids that in the 10 commandments. (Exodus 20: 3, 4, 5,).

In today's world it is our thoughts, what we see, and hear that can lead to sin. Do you think Jesus was the subject of conversation around that restaurant table my friend sat at? Do you think that if any of us had attended and half way through the meal started to give our testimony that it would have been well received when all eyes and thoughts were on the waitresses scantily dressed and their thoughts fuelled by being full of wine?

Do our minds get contaminated with what we see on television? Do you switch over when sordid scenes come on? Oh come on Bill we are living in the 21st Century things are different today! That's what they said in the Corinthian Church the stuff that Paul had to deal with was the norm, they all did it but it was wrong in the eyes of a Holy God. Paul said in the last verse of chapter 9 that even after he had preached to others if he was found in association with the wrong people he would become a castaway, and we found that to mean rejected by God, so 21st Century or not God wants faithful followers.

May God help us all to live as though the rapture will occur at any moment, and when Jesus comes there will be no hesitation at all to follow Him: we will be fully prepared because as a part of His true Bride we will already have oil in our lamps!

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Be blessed

Bill@Holdstock.com