

First Corinthians
Chapter Ten
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A Warning for the Church today.

1Cor 10:1 “For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

1Cor 10:2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

1Cor 10:3 and all ate the same spiritual food;

1Cor 10:4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

1Cor 10:5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.”

Many people are surprised to learn that most of the people God released from Egypt were destroyed by God because of their unbelief:

Jude 1:5 “Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.”

Only three people out of the original 6 million were allowed to go into the Promised Land! Think about all of the blessings they shared during the time of the wandering. Think about all in which they participated during this time. Despite being led by Jesus, being baptized, eating the same spiritual food, and drinking the same spiritual drink most of them did not believe. I think that we can compare this judgment with the coming judgment of people in the visible churches in the world, and particularly in the United States. Many people belong to a church, are baptized, participate in the Lord’s Supper celebration, and enjoy many other blessings from God because of their membership in a visible church. But most of those people do not believe by evidence of their lack of obedience to the Lord’s commands. If there were a total of 6 million people that were led out of Egypt, the percentage of people who were allowed into the Promised Land was about .00005. Applying the same percentage to a church of a 600 members would imply that the number of saved people would be .0003. Of course we cannot make such an application, but let’s say that the total church membership in the U.S. is 30 million. Then the same percentage applied to this total would say that 15 people are saved! We don’t stop to think about how awesome it is that only three of the people led out of slavery in Egypt were allowed into the Promised Land. (There were a few more people who were saved but physically died before reaching the Promised Land.) We also do not think enough about how non-trivial it is to be a Christian. Those six million people all received a lot of God’s general blessings because of His specific blessings to those three people. Today there are about 300 million people receiving many of God’s general blessings because of His specific blessings on a few Christians. But one day His judgment will fall.

1Cor 10:6 “Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved.

1Cor 10:7 And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play."

1Cor 10:8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.

1Cor 10:9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents.

1Cor 10:10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

1Cor 10:11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

1Cor 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

What a warning for us today! We have those examples but we do not seem to be paying any attention to them. All of these terrible events are happening to people attending churches in the U.S. today:

- 1.) They crave evil things.
- 2.) They are idolaters who attend sermons but leave unchanged into the world.
- 3.) They are trying the Lord.
- 4.) They grumble.

It is time for all church attendees to “take heed” for a great judgment will come one day. Few on visible church roles will see their names in the book of life and will then be denied entrance into Heaven.

Reference for verse 7;

Exo 32:6 “So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.”

Reference for verse 8:

Num 25:1 “While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab.

Num 25:2 For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.

Num 25:3 So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the Lord was angry against Israel.

Num 25:4 And the Lord said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the Lord, so that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel."

Num 25:5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you slay his men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor."

Num 25:6 ¶ Then behold, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

Num 25:7 When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation, and took a spear in his hand;

Num 25:8 and he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body. So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked.

Num 25:9 And those who died by the plague were 24,000.”

Reference for verse 9:

Num 21:5 “And the people spoke against God and Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food.”

Num 21:6 And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.”

Reference for verse 10:

Num 16:41 “But on the next day all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, “You are the ones who have caused the death of the Lord's people.”

Num 16:49 But those who died by the plague were 14,700, besides those who died on account of Korah.

Num 17:5 “And it will come about that the rod of the man whom I choose will sprout. Thus I shall lessen from upon Myself the grumblings of the sons of Israel, who are grumbling against you.”

Num 17:10 But the Lord said to Moses, “Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put an end to their grumblings against Me, so that they should not die.”

1Chron 21:15 “And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; but as he was about to destroy it, the Lord saw and was sorry over the calamity, and said to the destroying angel, “It is enough; now relax your hand.” And the angel of the Lord was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”

1Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

We cannot claim “Oh, Lord, you let me be exposed to temptations far greater than anyone could resist.” It is wise to remember that God is faithful and that He is always with us. The Holy Spirit knows us, He knows the worldly situation around us, and He knows God’s will so the perfect match will always be made. It is also a source of peace to know that God has provided a way of leaving from the tempting time.

1Cor 10:14 “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

1Cor 10:15 I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say.

1Cor 10:16 Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

1Cor 10:17 Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.

1Cor 10:18 Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?

We are not to dally with the temptation but we are to flee from it just as Joseph fled from a temptation.

Gen 39:12 "And she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside."

Again, they have the written documents of past people's actions for their benefit and they should show wisdom by paying attention to the past. Paul then refers to the Holy Communion service that we still practice today. The cup of blessing does not mean that the cup itself is of any value but by drinking from this cup we are participating in the shedding of blood by our Lord. Similarly taking the bread is also an act of participation. The Communion service is a very special time when we who partake demonstrate that we are one through Jesus and thus one with each other. This act of oneness is a fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus:

John 17:20 "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

John 17:21 that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.

John 17:22 "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one;

John 17:23 I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me."

Whenever church members act to disavow this oneness they slander Jesus and will bring punishment upon themselves and, by virtue of their identification with the church, upon the church. Because of the possible damage to the church, church leaders must always act quickly to deal with problems within the church. Again these people have the example of the history of physical Israel for when they participated in sacrifices made at the altar they also demonstrated a oneness in their fellowship.

1Cor 10:19 What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?

1Cor 10:20 No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons."

Idols do not exist but demons do exist and demons develop philosophies of idols to mislead people. Therefore whenever we participate in something developed by demons we are fellowshiping with demons. This is a frightening thought! Satan has lost the people chosen to be God's children but he can still do a lot of damage to the actions of those people by clever deceptions initiated and carried out by his demons.

1Cor 10:21 “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

1Cor 10:22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?”

There is no common ground with evil and good. If anyone truly serves Jesus as Lord then he will not willingly participate in any worship service developed by demons. He has been assuming that anyone who participated in such an evil table would be doing so in ignorance so he clearly explains the situation to them. But there is the possibility that some of them knew that the sacrifice to idols was developed by demons and were participating anyway. It may be that some thought that they were more powerful than Jesus and therefore they could participate at an evil table without being affected by such an activity. Such an action would be extreme folly and at least demonstrating a significant lack of understanding of the danger in participating in evil.

1Cor 10:23 “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.

1Cor 10:24 Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.

1Cor 10:25 Eat anything that is sold in the meat market, without asking questions for conscience' sake;

1Cor 10:26 for the earth is the Lord's, and all it contains.”

As a Christian I enjoy a lot of liberty, but such must be used wisely. If we have Christian love we need no other guide to life. Other religions have rules to follow to attain some stated status within that religion but Christianity is not about achieving salvation through proper living. However we show that we are indeed children of God by acting in love in every aspect of our life. We will not practice sin anymore because of our relationship to God and to the other members of His family. As a child of God my attitude should always be that other children of God are more important than I am. The meat market contained all sorts of meat and it was impossible to determine which had been offered to idols. But the Jews would offer many questions of the seller as they attempted to determine which meats that their conscience would allow them to eat. Paul brought forward the revolutionary concept that idols do not exist and therefore it is immaterial as to whether someone says that the meat was offered to idols or not. It was critical for the Christians to understand that idols are creations of man and they do not exist. The real things of the world all belong to the Lord so we have freedom in participation of such.

1Cor 10:27 “If one of the unbelievers invites you, and you wish to go, eat anything that is set before you, without asking questions for conscience' sake.

1Cor 10:28 But if anyone should say to you, "This is meat sacrificed to idols," do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience' sake;

1Cor 10:29 I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience?

1Cor 10:30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?

1Cor 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

**1Cor 10:32 Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;
1Cor 10:33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but
the profit of the many, that they may be saved.”**

Again Paul gives them the importance of being concerned about the other people. We can go to a party and freely eat of anything put before us that we can eat without dietary problems. (I do not eat sushi! I also am allergic to bananas.) But if someone tells us that the meat was taken from an idol’s table then we should show respect for the friend’s conscience and not eat that meat. Although we have a clear conscience regarding such matters we must respect the other person. We are to strive for peace in our interactions with other people. All that we do should be for the glory of God.

References

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