



## **1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-17**

**DECEMBER 13 and 20, 2020** (NOTE: I'm confident this will take two Sundays. I will be preaching on the 27 and won't be available for class. The following week is when Ron begins the Daniel study.)

Thanks for your support, patience, and confidence.

Ted

### **1 Corinthians 10:1-6. God was not well pleased**

*1. Now I would not have you ignorant, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2. and were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3. and all ate the same spiritual food; 4. and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. 5. However with most of them, God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted..*

Most Commentaries note the parallel structure between verses 1-4 and 6-10. In verses 1-4, Paul notes FOUR SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES enjoyed by the Israelites. All of them:

- “were...under the cloud, and all passed through the sea” (v. 1).
- “were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (v. 2).
- “ate the same spiritual food” (v. 3).
- “drank of a spiritual rock” (v. 4).

In verses 6-10, Paul gives FOUR ADMONITIONS, given so that Corinthian Christians “should not lust after evil things, as they (the ancient Israelites) also lusted” (v. 6). Paul counsels them:

- Not to “be idolaters, as some of them were” (v. 7).
- Not to “commit sexual immorality, as some of them committed” (v. 8).
- Not to “test the Lord, as some of them tested” (v. 9).
- Not to “grumble, as some of them also grumbled” (v. 10).

#### **1a. “Now I would not have you ignorant, brothers”**

Here, Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that, although the ancient Israelites enjoyed many spiritual advantages, they committed idolatrous sins that cause them to lose their spiritual race—to come under God’s judgment.

Corinth has a large Gentile population, and many Corinthian Christians are Gentiles rather than Jews.

#### **1b. “that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea”**

Paul speaks of the ancient Israelites as fathers or ancestors—even though many of the Corinthian Christians are Gentiles rather than Jews.

Ancient Israel is the predecessor for both. Because of this continuity, the church is often referred to as the New Israel.

The cloud and The sea through which the ancient Israelites passed was the Red Sea. For the Jews, these were foundational stories that every Jewish child would know in detail.

## **2. “and were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea**

It might seem peculiar that Paul would refer to Israel’s experience “in the cloud and in the sea” as a baptism. The Israelites practiced a number of cleansing rituals, most of which involved water and...(did you know that) ... Jews baptized Gentiles who were converting to Judaism

We think of the word “baptism” as a New Testament rather than an Old Testament word.

I won’t write all the examples here, but I’ll share a few of them with you in class. Unless I don’t notice this line while we are discussing the text.

## **3. “and all ate the same spiritual food**

By “spiritual food,” Paul means manna, the miraculous food with which God fed Israel during their wilderness journey.

## **4. “and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ”**

By “spiritual rock,” Paul means the rock from which the Israelites received water from a rock miraculously (These examples are all found in Exodus Numbers and Deuteronomy)

### **4b. “For they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them**

In what sense did the spiritual rock follow the Israelites? Commentaries vary and offer multiple options...here’s a few

Israel wandered in the arid wilderness for years and needed water on a daily basis—lots of water for thousands of people and their livestock.

What do think Paul is saying here?

The word rock is often used in Hebrew Scriptures to refer to Yahweh (Genesis, Deuteronomy, both Samuels 2:2. When Paul says that the spiritual rock followed Israel, he is probably talking about Yahweh.

In any event, I believe the eating from verse 3 and drinking of verse 4 bring to mind the Lord’s Supper, where Christians receive their spiritual food and drink.

### **4c. “and the rock was Christ**

We can only guess about the meaning of this phrase. Most likely, Paul is equating Yahweh and Christ.

## **5. “However with most of them, God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness**

The journey of the Israelites in the wilderness was the story of one faith-failure after another. Finally, God had enough. When the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would that we had died in this wilderness!” (Take time to read Numbers

14:2 plus a few verses after to get the picture of God's temperament), Yahweh decided to take them at their word and let them die in the wilderness.

What do you know about the rest of that story?

#### **6a. "Now these things were our examples"**

I'll share a few ideas about "examples", but not list them here.

In this chapter, the things that Paul lists as types are:

- The cloud and the Red Sea—a type of Christian baptism.
- Partaking of spiritual food—a type of the bread of the Lord's Supper.
- Drinking from the spiritual rock—a type of the wine of the Lord's Supper.

#### **6b. "to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted"**

I think it is safe to consider the punishment rendered by God on the ancient Israelites as a type of the punishment that the Corinthian Christians can expect if they are unfaithful.

As I and most commentaries believe, Paul's intent in this chapter is to warn the Corinthians so that they might avoid the punishment.

#### **1 Corinthians 10:7-11. Neither be idolators**

*7. Neither be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8. Neither let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them committed, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell. 9. Neither let us test the Lord, as some of them tested, and perished by the serpents. 10. Neither grumble, as some of them also grumbled, and perished by the destroyer. 11. Now all these things happened to them by way of example, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.*

#### **7a. "Neither be idolaters, as some of them were"**

This draws us back to the problem that Paul began to address in chapter 8 (keep in mind that chapters 8-10 form a unit)—"things sacrificed to idols" (8:1)—more specifically, eating food sacrificed to idols, particularly when that is done in a pagan temple (8:10).

#### **7b. "As it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play'"**

As noted above, Paul counsels the Corinthian Christians to avoid four ancient Israelite sins. This verse introduces the first sin. The other three are:

- Indulging in sexual immorality (v. 8).
- Putting Christ to the test (v. 9).
- Complaining (v. 10).

Paul cites here that Aaron making a golden calf and proclaiming that the next day would be a festival to Yahweh. "They rose up early on the next day, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play" (Exodus 32:4-6 if you want to read more about it).

### **8a. “Neither let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them committed**

Sexual immorality is the second of the four sins that Paul counsels the Corinthian Christians to avoid.

While the word “revel” rather than commit (same Greek word, 2 meanings) in Exodus 32:4-6 can suggest sexual play, the account in Exodus doesn’t make the link between sexual play and idolatry explicit.

Just so you know, Corinth’s reputation as “sin city” has been exaggerated according to commentaries, but all acknowledge that prostitutes were available in some of the city’s temples.

### **8b. “and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day**

In the example cited above from Numbers 25, twenty-four thousand died by the plague (Numbers 25:9). There have been various attempts to reconcile Paul’s twenty-three thousand with the twenty-four thousand cited in Numbers 25, but we have no definitive answer to that discrepancy.

Have you experienced the comments about Covid 19 being a “Holy purging”  
YOUR THOUGHTS?

### **9a. “Neither let us test the Lord, as some of them tested**

Putting Christ to the test is the third of the four sins that Paul counsels the Corinthian Christians to avoid.

I DECIDED TO ADD IN SOME INSOMNIA READING RELATED TO THIS TOPIC...SO HERE YOU GO

The Old Testament includes many references to Israel testing God (Exodus 17:2; Numbers 14:22; Deuteronomy 6:16; Psalm 78:18, 56-57; 81:7; 95:9; 106:14; Isaiah 7:12; Malachi 3:10)—accounts where people question God—complain about God’s providence or lack thereof—or rebel against God. The ancient Israelites lacked faith and behaved unfaithfully. This testing attempts to wrestle control from God.

In New Testament accounts, Jesus’ enemies tested him in an attempt to embarrass him and destabilize his authority. Paul warns the Corinthian Christians not to put Christ to the test. The implication is that they would be testing Christ if they were to eat at both his table and an idol’s table.

### **9b. “and perished by the serpents**

You could read Numbers 21 and several more to get grossed out by what the people experienced, but I’m giving you a few examples:

“The people spoke against God and against Moses, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, and there is no water; and our soul loathes this light bread.’ Yahweh sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many people of Israel died” Numbers 21:5-6).

When the people confessed their sin to Moses, he prayed for the people. God responded by telling Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole. When anyone was bitten by a serpent, he/she had only to look at the bronze serpent to be saved (Numbers 21:7-9).

While the word “test” does not occur in this Numbers 21 account, that story fits the sense of testing that we see in other Old Testament passages.

#### **10. “Neither grumble, as some of them also grumbled, and perished by the destroyer**

Complaining is the fourth of the four sins that Paul counsels the Corinthian Christians to avoid.

Israelites often complained against Moses (Exodus 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Numbers 14:2), but their complaints against Moses were really complaints against Yahweh (Exodus 16:7-12; Numbers 11:1; 14:27).

When Paul talks about the complainers being “perished by the destroyer,” he probably has one of these two accounts (Numbers 11 or 14) Good luck with the reading.

#### **11a. “Now all these things happened to them by way of example**

The point of each of these verses is that God has provided examples so that we need not repeat the sins of those who went before us.

The Old Testament example for punishment will not have a New Testament counterpart if these people heed Paul’s advice.

Commentaries require both an Old Testament predecessor and a New Testament fulfillment.  
YOUR THOUGHTS?

#### **11b. “and they were written for our admonition**

The history of God’s people is the history of rising and falling—learning and forgetting—sinning, being punished, and receiving forgiveness.

The cycle is repeated with each successive generation, but that need not be so. The scriptures provides us with a record of that which has gone before so that we DON’T repeat the sins of those who went before us. GOOD LUCK WITH THAT..

#### **11c. “on whom the ends of the ages have come**

With the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, a new age has begun. The church is the New Israel—the new people of God. They (and we) are no longer waiting for the Messiah’s advent, which has already happened.

We are looking toward his Second Coming, when Christ will complete his salvation work. In that day, “The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ. He will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 11:15).

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS VERSE?

ARE PEOPLE ALL IN AGREEMENT ABOUT IT’S MEANING?

WHY?

#### **1 Corinthians 10:12-13. Be careful that you do not fall**

*12. Therefore let him who thinks he stands be careful that he doesn't fall. 13. No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

**12. "Therefore let him who thinks he stands be careful that he doesn't fall"**

Because we have the example of the ancient Israelites who, in spite of their spiritual advantages suffered God's judgment in the wilderness, we must be careful not to repeat their sins and their fate.

We have the spiritual advantage of our savior, Jesus Christ and need to take care that we don't fall as those ancient Israelites did.

**13. "No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it"**

Paul has been warning the Corinthian Christians that they are in danger of falling. Now he offers three notes of encouragement:

- The first encouragement is that any tests they might experience is common to humans.
- The second encouragement is that the Lord is faithful. Paul says, "But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you, and guard you from the evil one" (2 Thessalonians 3:3). We shouldn't worry whether God will be there when we need him or that he loves us. God is rock-solid faithful.
- The third encouragement is that God will not allow us to be tested beyond our breaking point, but with the testing will provide the resources to pass the test. God isn't trying to break us, but instead is loving us and rooting for us and helping us.

The implication of these three encouragements for the Corinthian Christians is that they can expect God to help them if they experience ostracism or the loss of a job because of their refusal to eat meat sacrificed to idols.

I love the following 2 verses for many reasons, but didn't include them in the discussion study. When you read these two verses, see if you don't agree that there is no room to talk about the chastisement Paul is directing their way...

14. So then, my dear friends, run away from the worship of false gods! 15. I'm talking to you like you are sensible people.

However, I believe verse 13 that proceeds these two is wonderfully encouraging, and bears memorizing. Paul says:

"No temptation has taken you except what is common to man.  
God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able,  
but will with the temptation also make the way of escape,  
that you may be able to endure it."

I have nothing to add, so let's move on to verses 16 and 17

## 1 Corinthians 10:16-17. The cup of blessing

**16.** *The cup of blessing which we bless, isn't it a sharing of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, isn't it a sharing of the body of Christ? 17. Because there is one loaf of bread, we, who are many, are one body; for we all partake of the one loaf of bread.*

### 16a. “The cup of blessing which we bless, isn't it a sharing of the blood of Christ?”

HERE IS A LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE LITURGY USED IN CATHOLIC, EPISCOPAL, AND METHODIST WHEN WE EXPERIENCE THE LORD'S SUPPER:

The cup of blessing was the third cup, drunk at the end of the meal and accompanied by a prayer of thanksgiving for blessings received from God. It was probably this third cup that Jesus used to institute the Lord's Supper. “He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, “All of you drink it, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:27-28). He commanded, “Do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25). Paul says, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Paul is saying that our participation in the Eucharist puts us into a deep fellowship with Christ and his Passion. It reminds us that Christ suffered death on the cross for our benefit—that he shed his blood for us. It gets very personal!

### 16b. “The bread which we break, isn't it a sharing of the body of Christ?”

The Eucharistic bread brings us into deep fellowship with Christ and his Passion.

### 17. “Because there is one loaf of bread, we, who are many, are one body; for we all partake of the one loaf of bread

There is no “loaf of” in the Greek. It just reads “one bread.” That's an important distinction, given that most Christians take communion using hosts or wafers instead of sharing a single loaf of bread.

When we eat the bread and drink the wine, that act unites us. We become one body of believers, as Christ intends us to be.

NOTE: I really couldn't say much about 18-21 in light of the way Paul chastises his readers...Here they are for you thoughts and consideration of comments. It's okay if you will add something to Paul's words...

“Consider Israel according to the flesh. Don't those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? What am I saying then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God, and I don't desire that you would have fellowship with demons. You can't both drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You can't both partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons (vv. 18-21).

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the lord make his face to shine on you  
and be gracious to you  
and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26