
**Sunday School Lesson**  
**1 Corinthians 10:1-22**  
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**Lessons about Idolatry**



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This study in chapter ten of First Corinthians places us in the first century dilemma of believers living in a world where pagan gods were worshipped all around them. This worship saturated every aspect of life in that world. Your social life exposed you to gatherings and dinners where sacrifices to different gods began the festivities and the meal of the evening. Membership in trade unions, essential for practicing different crafts of that day, put you in the situation of belonging to a union group dedicated to its patron deity. Political life placed upon you the burden of worshipping the traditional Roman state deities as an expression of your political loyalty to the Empire. And at times worshipping the emperor as a god became the test of loyalty to the Roman Empire. Refusal exposed you to the charge of treason and likely execution. All around you, your neighbors freely worshipped not only their family patron deity, but many others presumed gods and goddesses as well. To them the idea of exclusive devotion to a single god seemed not only illogical but dangerous. Your exclusive devotion to Christ suggested that you were a trouble maker who could create unrest and possible sedition against the political forces of Rome. They would likely get caught up in any retaliation that came from the Romans against you for your religion. Besides, your religion, Christianity, did not possess the legal status of *religio licita* (legal religion), which meant that its practice was inherently illegal in the Empire. Thus, believers in ancient Corinth faced a real dilemma.



One very real aspect of that dilemma was with fellow Christians. How could a believer participate in society without eating meats that had been dedicated to some idol? It was virtually impossible. Then, could they do so without offending other Christians? The answer was mixed at Corinth. Some believers felt it was okay, but others strongly opposed eating such meat, and thus participating in social life outside either the Jewish or Christian communities. The heart of our passage, 10:1-22, is addressing this question in the context of the larger issue described above.

**I. Context**

From past studies in 1 Corinthians we will summarize the background issues that are common to the contents of the entire letter.

Paul's letter to the Christian community at the ancient city of Corinth represents a significant part of his writing ministry. Some irony exists concerning this community, and Paul's correspondence and personal ministry to them. First Corinthians reveals a community riveted by factions, extreme moral problems and theological assertions that border on the bizarre. Yet, for many Christian groups today, Corinth represents the model church, primarily because of the practice of speaking in tongues. Paul's writing ministry was intended as a substitute for his personal presence. And it was intended to answer questions and address some of these problems that had arisen in the various house church groups over this Greek seaport city.

The ongoing history of Christianity in this Greek city reflects a tradition of problems that continued for a long, long time after Paul led in the establishment of Christianity there during the middle 50s of the first

century. A fascinating letter to the church at Corinth came almost half a century after Paul's ministry from the spiritual leader in Rome. [First Clement](#) helps one see some of this problematic history decades after Paul. By AD 96, when 1 Clement was written, the tone of Christian experience had profoundly changed. Political language carried the day along with an intense demand for absolute obedience to those in authority. But through all this smoke screen from Clement of Rome, one can trace out a community of faith at Corinth still plagued with problems and struggles. In some ways that is helpful to us, in that it led to Paul putting in writing his thoughts on a number of important issues in the Christian experience.

### a. Historical

The **external history** of first Corinthians focuses upon the “reporter” questions about the composition of First Corinthians. Who wrote it? When was it written? Where was it written? To whom was it written? Why was it written? et al. In my reconstruction of [Paul's ministry to the Corinthians](#) at Cranfordville, this letter comes as the third point of contact with the Corinthians. The first was his initial preaching of the gospel there while on the second missionary journey in 50-51 AD. An initial letter was written to the Corinthians during AD 52, but is now lost, even though some feel that 2 Cor. 6:14 - 7:1 may preserve a part of it. While at Ephesus during the third missionary journey First Corinthians was dictated by the apostle during the spring of either 54 or 55 AD.

The body of the letter is divided up as a response to questions from the household of Chloe (chaps 1-6) and the Corinthian delegation (chaps 7-16). In 1:11, Paul said, “For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters.” Then in 7:1 we find: “**Now concerning the matters about which you wrote...**” Thus the letter deals with two sets of issues, each posed by a different source.

The **internal history** of our passage, 10:1-22, raises only the history of the Jewish exodus, and relevant parts of it for Paul's points to the Corinthians. He mentions their being under a cloud, their passage through the Sea of Reeds, and eating and drinking during the wilderness plus their sexual immorality at Mt. Sinai. The nature of his depiction strongly



suggests that he is responding to a particular interpretation of these events present among the believers at Corinth, as much as drawing from the Old Testament stories themselves. The details of these



allusions will be covered in the exegesis of the relevant scriptural references. Also, how Paul uses them for his discussion with the Corinthians will be considered, since it provides understanding of the ap-

plication by the apostle of these Old Testament events to a Christian congregation made up of both Jews and non-Jews in the first Christian century.

## b. Literary

**Genre.** The literary pattern of [10:1-22](#) follows a rather typical style in Paul's writings. His sentences vary in length and complexity, as the [Block Diagram](#) in the internet version of this study illustrates. He communicates his ideas as a part of the body of the letter via a combination of declarations, admonitions, and rhetorical questions. Several of his assertions are backed up with causal declarations. For details see the γάρ connectors in the [Block Diagram](#). In fact, at least vv. 1-13, if not vv. 1-22, stand as a justifying basis for his personal discussion in 9:1-27. In chapter ten he moves from his own experience to that of the Corinthians. This shift stands as an amplification of his personal experience applied to the Corinthians.

### Literary Context.

The larger literary setting for [10:1-22](#) is his answering of a series of questions posed by the delegation sent from Corinth to Ephesus with concerns about various issues (chaps. 7-16). This passage is a part of his discussion "concerning food sacrificed to idols" (Περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων) that began in 8:1. This discussion continues through 11:1 with the concluding admonition, "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (μιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε, καθὼς καὶ γὰρ Χριστοῦ). The narrative viewpoint shifts from "you" (chap 8) to "I" (chap 9) then back to "you" (chap 10). The entire discussion comes to its climax in [10:31-11:1](#) with a mixture of "you" and "I":

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. 11.1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

One important note with Paul's stance in 10:33, "just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved." Caution should be exercised here in how widely this should be applied, or even understood in Paul's thinking. The reason is his seemingly opposite statement in [Gal. 1:10](#):

10 Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

His assertion in [2 Cor. 4:2-4](#) has some relevance here also:

2 We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Paul's being "all things to all people" principle did not apply to what he con-

sidered foundational beliefs that constituted his gospel message. His foremost loyalty was to Christ, even when that meant severe offense of other people. This sometimes happened inside the Christian community, even such as at Corinth where the 2 Corinthians passage is a part of a vigorous defense of his claim to apostleship and the preaching of a gospel message based on that divine calling. Some scholars

**The burning issue at Corinth was whether they could eat meat after it had been dedicated to a pagan god.**

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"If any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple," —1 Cor. viii. 10.

are convinced that some of the contents of this first letter to Corinth may have led in part to the severe disruption of relationship between Paul and many in the believing community at Corinth.

Paul's conclusion in 10:31-11:1 should be taken mostly as urging Christians to be flexible in their hab-

its so as to not unnecessarily offend other people, particularly those outside the church that need to confess Christ as Savior and Lord. An unselfish flexibility about nonessentials is the appropriate posture.

## II. Message

**Literary Structure.** A close examination of the internal rhetorical structure of vv. 1-22 uncovers a two fold thought structure revolving around the reference to the Jewish Exodus (vv. 1-13) and its implication for Christians struggling with the issue of meat offered to idols (vv. 14-22). The use of "brothers" (ἀγαπητοί) in vv. 1 and 14, where "brothers" (ἀγαπητοί μου) is coupled with "therefore" (Διόπερ), provides the basic signal for this structure. The [Semantic Diagram](#) graphically illustrates this structure. An [exegetical outline](#) developed from this structure is provided in the larger internet version of this study. Some question could arise over the connection of 10:23-30. It certainly stands as a part of the larger discussion of 8:1-11:1. Mostly, it turns a new corner in the discussion with the axiomatic principles introducing it in v. 23: "All things are lawful, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful, but not all things build up" (Πάντα ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ). Here Paul quotes a probable Corinthian stance "all things are lawful" and responds by limiting its open "endedness" with the two codicils: "but not all things are beneficial" and "but not all things build up." This reaches back to the discussion in [8:7-13](#).

Our passage, vv. 1-22, provides a helpful illustration of how the apostle used OT events to provide insights into contemporary Christian issues in his day. Additionally, this most likely provides further insight into how Paul re-interpreted these Jewish events against misuse of them in the Corinthian community.

### a. The Exodus, vv. 1-13

#### Greek NT

10:1 Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλην ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διῆλθον 10:2 καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ 10:3 καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον 10:4 καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα· ἔπινον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας, ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός. 10:5 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός, κατεστρώθησαν γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ. 10:6 ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν, εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν,

#### NASB

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were 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 were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. 6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 7 Do not be

#### NRSV

1 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were 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 from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. 6 Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. 7 Do not become idolaters as some

#### NLT

1 I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, what happened to our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. God guided all of them by sending a cloud that moved along ahead of them, and he brought them all safely through the waters of the sea on dry ground. 2 As followers of Moses, they were all baptized in the cloud and the sea. 3 And all of them ate the same miraculous food, 4 and all of them drank the same miraculous water. For they all drank from the miraculous rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ. 5 Yet after all this, God was not pleased with most of them, and he destroyed them in the wilderness. 6 These events happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things



καθὼς κἀκεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν. 10:7 μηδὲ εἰδωλολάτραι γίνεσθε καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν, ὡς περ γέγραπται, Ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν. 10:8 μηδὲ πορνεύωμεν καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν καὶ ἔπεσαν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ εἴκοσι τρεῖς χιλιάδες. 10:9 μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπέειρασαν καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ὄφρων ἀπόλλυντο. 10:10 μηδὲ γογγύζετε, καθάπερ τινες αὐτῶν ἐγόγγυσαν καὶ ἀπόλλυντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ. 10:11 ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινε ἐκεῖνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήνηκεν. 10:12 ὥστε ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι βλεπέτω μὴ πέση. 10:13 πειρασμὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος· πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεός, ὃς οὐκ ἐάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε ἀλλὰ ποιήσει σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἐκβασιν τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν.

idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY." 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 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. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. 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, so that you will be able to endure it.

of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." 8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. 9 We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. 10 And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. 13 No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

as they did 7 or worship idols as some of them did. For the Scriptures say, "The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged themselves in pagan revelry." 8 And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day. 9 Nor should we put Christ to the test, as some of them did and then died from snakebites. 10 And don't grumble as some of them did, for that is why God sent his angel of death to destroy them. 11 All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close. 12 If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into the same sin. 13 But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

### Notes:

Paul begins his discussion with the typical signal of a topic shift, "I do not want you to be ignorant that..." In this instance, it signals a shift inside a larger discussion (8:1-11:1). In the content of what he seeks to say initially to his readers, five points are made about the Jewish exodus in the "that" clause of verses one through four: (1) "our ancestors were all under the cloud," (2) "all passed through the sea," (3) "all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea," (4) "all ate the same spiritual food," (5) "all drank the same spiritual drink." This depiction of the exodus will serve as the foundation for his discussion in vv. 6-13. He adds, as a stronger assertion, to this depiction the

note of judgment in verse five: "Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness." By elevating this aspect to a primary clause level he signals a major motif that he will use in applying the exodus experience to the situation of meat offered to idols at Corinth: the displeasure of God. The positive tone of the Jewish experience (vv. 1-4) is counter balanced by the negative side (v. 5).

Twice he signals his interpretive strategy: (1) "Now these things occurred as examples for us" (v. 6; ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν); and (2) "These things happened to them to serve as an example" (v. 11; ταῦτα δὲ

τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκεῖνοις). The connecting link to the OT experience is labeled by Paul as a *τύπος* (typos), translated as “example.” This method of interpretation is usually labeled “typology” after the Greek word used here by Paul. This means that an event or person stands as a “type” or example for us today. The key to making a connection between the “then” and the “now” is to find common associations between the past and the present. Although a legitimate interpretive methodology in its essentials, it is subject to enormous abuse. The key is in the legitimacy of the connecting links that are set up. They can be natural and have a clear sense of connection. Or, they can be artificial and depend upon questionable reasoning.

This first part (vv. 1-4) urges identification with the Israelites in that experience; note “our ancestors” in v. 1. Note the observations of J. Paul Sampley (*New Interpreters Bible*, iPreach):

Clearly, Paul first tells the old story in ways designed to encourage his auditors to identify with its characters. Those of the original exodus were “Our ancestors” (οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν *hoi pateres hemon*) (10:1 NRSV); they, too, were baptized (10:2); they, too, partook of spiritual food and drink (10:3-4; cf. Exod 16:4, 35; 17:6; Deut 8:3; Num 20:7-11); and they, too, were related in a special way to Christ (10:4).

But in the first “exposition” of the exodus experience (vv. 6-10), the “majority” upon whom God’s displeasure fell (cf. v. 5) turn out to be negative examples, as Sampley further observes:

In 10:6-13 we gain an insight into one way Paul understood Scripture: Its events and characters provide examples, instructions, warnings for contemporary believers (10:6, 11). So what Paul tells about the old event and its characters should have a clear relevance for what he thinks is going on in Corinth. With 10:6, Paul’s second telling of the exodus story has a very different spin. Now the persons with whom the readers were encouraged to identify in 10:1-4 turn out to be those who desired evil (v. 6), were idolaters (v. 7; Exod 32:4-6), engaged in sexual immorality (porneia; v. 8; Num 25:1-2), tested the Lord (v. 9; Deut 6:16; Ps 78:18; Isa 7:12), and grumbled (v. 10; cf. Num 21:5; Deut 1:26-27). God’s judgment is noted in the retelling: Thousands fell in one day (v. 8; Num 25:9), snakes killed others (v. 9; Num 21:6), and others were killed by “the destroyer,” that is by an avenging angel (v. 10; Exod 12:23; cf. 2 Sam 24:16; 1 Chr 21:15; Wis 18:20-25). In effect, Paul says, “Fair warning!”

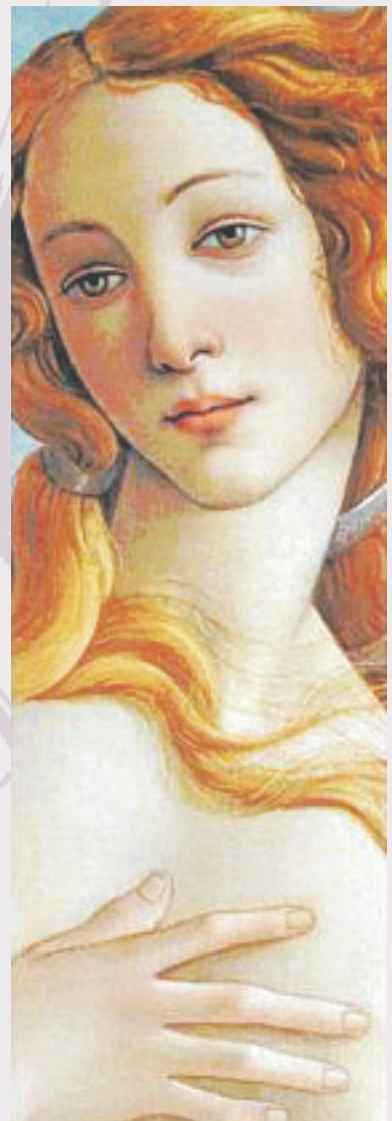
Thus Paul sees in the typology of the exodus bonds connecting the Corinthians to the Israelites in the exodus. The positive aspects are based on spiritual identification with the Israelites, not racial or eth-

nic links. Once the connection is established, he now sees the exodus experience, particularly the divine judgment aspect, as a warning to the Corinthians.

This warning has two elements: a) vv. 6-10 and b) vv. 11-13.

A series of admonitions are set forth in vv. 6-10 with a common qualifier: “*as they did*.” The admonitions are 1) “do not become idolaters” (μηδὲ εἰδωλολάτραι γίνεσθε); 2) “we must not indulge in sexual immorality” (μηδὲ πορνεύωμεν); 3) “we must not put Christ to the test” (μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν); 4) “do not complain” (μηδὲ γογγύζετε). Note the pattern “you,” “we,” “we,” “you.” The provides an inclusive frame making sure the readers see these as universal responsibilities, rather than the apostle just “dumping” on the Corinthians. They may possibly suggest a chiasmic thought flow: A/B//B’/A’. If so, then the idolatry links up to complaining, as was the case in the exodus experience. Sexual immorality is linked to putting Christ (God) to the test, a concept certainly found in the exodus narratives.

Paul thus knits together the common themes of idolatry and sexual immorality, both topics he has already introduced and discussed in this letter. When one studies the traits of the pagan religions in that world, and especially the worship of [Aphrodite](#) in Corinth, it doesn’t take “rocket science” to see why these two topics would be linked together. The temple had hundred of sacred prostitutes and sexual intercourse by the “worshipper” with a temple prostitute was a major aspect of “worship” in the temple. Paul is dealing with believers who not only came out of such a background, but now are trying to





life out their Christian faith surrounded by this.

The second element (vv. 11-13) applies the exodus experience as a warning against spiritual arrogance and elitism. He sees the Corinthians as “us, on whom the ends of the ages have come.” The perception of living close to the coming judgment of God in the second coming of Christ provides even greater incentive for avoiding the mistakes of the Israelites. But spiritual arrogance can lull one into failure to pay attention. Then a “fall,” that is, a slip into either idolatry or sexual immorality -- or both -- can easily happen. This was the significance of Paul’s warning to the Corinthians. One has to wonder whether Paul is speaking hypothetically or whether some screwy religious thinking had lulled some of the Corinthians into such naive spiritual arrogance. Given the problems with sexual immorality discussed in chapters five (a man living in sexual union with his birth mother) and six (Christian men still frequenting the brothels in Corinth), it may very well have been the case that some kind of twisted thinking had found a place among some of the Corinthian Christians.

The hope that Paul holds out to the Corinthians, and to us, is found in verse 13. God will not allow any “test” (πειρασμός) to overwhelm us. For His children, He promises to help us find a way **through** it without being crushed by it. We are not promised exemption from testing. Rather, the spiritual stamina to “endure” (τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν) the testing.

What is the possible connection of Paul’s words to us? For one thing, we can learn from the Israelite exodus experience. What we can learn is in proportion to the commonality of our experiences to theirs. The more our experiences are like theirs, the more application theirs has to us.

Second, although we don’t live yet in the US, where temples to pagan gods are surrounding us, the temptation to worship pagan gods is growing. This has not only to do with the growing presence of

religions such as Hinduism in our country. Perhaps the greater danger in our day is the “re-creating” the idea of God into a more manageable and likeable idea of the divine. [Scientology](#) is a major illustration of what I’m referring to here. The New Age generation is uncomfortable with the God of the Bible, and has set out refashioning the idea of god to its own liking. Here is the real idolatry of our day.

Thirdly, we can learn how passionately God hates sexual immorality among His people. Earlier Paul had warned the Corinthians, in reference to his letter written before First Corinthians ([5:9-13](#)):

9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons— 10 not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber. Do not even eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge? 13 God will judge those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you."

Finally, we have God’s promise of strength and leadership through times of testing. We must get it stuck in our minds that God doesn’t promise to bail us out of testing. Rather, He promises to strengthen us so that we can manage to hold up under the weight of the testing. Testing as Paul is talking about here is an experience of real pressure put upon the believer. For the Corinthians, the context suggests this came a two key points: idolatry and sexual immorality. For us, other points in our life will most likely bring pressure moments when giving in to sinful actions seems the easiest approach. But the example of the Israelites calls us to resist such temptation. And God promises to get us through it unscathed.

## b. Its Implications, vv. 14-22

### Greek NT

10:14 Διόπερ,  
ἀγαπητοί μου, φεύγετε  
ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας  
10:15 ὡς φρονίμοις λέγω  
κρίνατε ὑμεῖς ὃ φημι.  
10:16 τὸ ποτήριον τῆς  
εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν,  
οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ  
αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν

### NASB

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say. 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 shar-

### NRSV

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. 15 I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The

### NLT

14 So, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. 15 You are reasonable people. Decide for yourselves if what I am about to say is true. 16 When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, aren't we sharing in the benefits of the blood of Christ? And when we break

ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστίν; 10:17 ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σῶμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν, οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν. 10:18 βλέπετε τὸν Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ σάρκα· οὐχὶ οἱ ἐσθίοντες τὰς θυσίας κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου εἰσίν; 10:19 τί οὖν φημι; ὅτι εἰδωλόθυτον τί ἐστίν ἢ ὅτι εἰδωλὸν τί ἐστίν; 10:20 ἀλλ' ὅτι ἃ θύουσιν, δαιμονίοις καὶ οὐ θεῷ [θύουσιν] οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι. 10:21 οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποτήριον δαιμονίων, οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων. 10:22 ἢ παραζηλοῦμεν τὸν κύριον; μὴ ἰσχυρότεροι αὐτοῦ ἐσμεν;

### Notes:

Paul sets up this section with a foundational admonition growing out of and based on the previous discussion: “flee from the worship of idols” (φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας). Everything else in vv. 15-22 sets out to undergird this admonition. The central thesis affirmed in this material is the linking of the observance of the Lord’s Supper by Christians to the offering of sacrifices by the Israelites. That is the point of commonality between the Corinthian believers and the ancient Israelites. And both faced the temptation to idolatry. When idolatry steps in, the religious rituals of both sacrifice and communion are seriously damaged.

Why is this?

Paul’s conviction is found first (vv. 14-18) in the association of the ritual with spiritual experience. One key word is repeated on both the Lord’s Supper side and the Israelite sacrifice side: “sharing” / “partners” (κοινωνία / κοινωνοί). When the Israelite

ing in the body of Christ? 17 Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread. 18 Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar? 19 What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 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. 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. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?

bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 18 Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? 19 What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. 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. 22 Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

the loaf of bread, aren't we sharing in the benefits of the body of Christ? 17 And we all eat from one loaf, showing that we are one body. 18 And think about the nation of Israel; all who eat the sacrifices are united by that act. 19 What am I trying to say? Am I saying that the idols to whom the pagans bring sacrifices are real gods and that these sacrifices are of some value? 20 No, not at all. What I am saying is that these sacrifices are offered to demons, not to God. And I don't want any of you to be partners with demons. 21 You cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons, too. You cannot eat at the Lord's Table and at the table of demons, too. 22 What? Do you dare to rouse the Lord's jealousy as Israel did? Do you think we are stronger than he is?

priest ate the meat offered in sacrifice on the altar he became a κοινωνός with the altar (v. 18). He was bonded with the altar (the place of meeting God) where the sacrifice was made (κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου). When the believer eats the bread and drinks the cup he/she becomes bonded with Christ who offered his own life up as a sacrifice. Here is our meeting place with God: the sacrificial Lamb of

God (our κοινωνία τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ).

This text doesn’t provide a basis for the Roman Catholic view that the believer literally takes in the blood and/or body of Christ in the Eucharist. But it does stress that observance of the Lord’s Supper should be a supremely sacred and worshipful experience for each believer. And Paul will have a lot more to say on that subject in 11:17-34.

What happens when idolatry steps in? In vv. 19-22, Paul addresses that question to





the Corinthians. Earlier he had asserted the nonexistence of idols as actual deities (8:4-6), as some Corinthians themselves had affirmed. Now he reaffirms this in v. 19 but with a sharp twist: “What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?” Eating meat that has been dedicated to a nonexistent idol will have no actual spiritual impact on a believer. But what is the deeper reality going on here? Verse 20 provides Paul’s rather astounding answer: “No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons.” When pagans offer sacrifice to their nonexistent god, they actually are bonding with demons (κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων). The demonic is very much present in paganism -- both then and now.



This is what Paul wanted the Corinthians to avoid. In verse 21, Paul asserts the impossibility of bonding with both Christ and demons at the same time: “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.” For the Corinthians to attend trade union meetings, social gatherings etc. conducted in the pagan temples and eat the meat dedicated to these gods ran the risk of bonding with the Satanic elements present. And this he wanted them to avoid at all costs. Not only was there the risk of bonding with the demonic, Paul asserted (v. 22) they risked arousing God’s wrath: “Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?” Again, note the inclusiveness of Paul’s “you” / “we” frames in vv. 21-22.

Paul subsequently in vv. 23-30 basically proposes a “don’t ask questions” strategy. The believer can freely purchase meat in the market place for consumption, even though almost all of it had been dedicated to a pagan god before being put up for sale (vv. 25-26). If the believer is invited to a meal by a nonbeliever, he/she should feel free to eat whatever is placed before him without asking any question about the prior dedication of the meat (v. 27). But if questions about it should be raised, then the believer is not to eat the meat (v. 28). This is based on the “liberty of conscience” principle (vv. 29-30):

“29 I mean the other’s conscience, not your own. For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else’s conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks?”

But such is not a “blank check” situation, as vv. 31-

11:1 make clear:

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. 11.1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

What a mine field Paul had to negotiate through in trying to help the Corinthians! Although parts of his reply to their question may not make logical sense to us today, his response fit the situation at Corinth and offers us some valuable insight.

Any dabbling with paganism in our day runs two serious risks: 1) bonding with the demonic; and 2) incurring God’s wrath. That supernatural evil is rampant in our time is without serious question. Non-Christian religious traditions do have spiritual power, but not that which comes from God. Any effort to combine them with Christian commitment is utterly impossible. It’s an either/or situation; never a both/and situation.

Yet believers do live in a pagan saturated world, even in our day. Navigating through that world without spiritual damage is not easy. Our realization is that the claim of existence for their gods by these non-Christians is nothing but empty air, since no god exists except God. Yet, the demonic is fueling much of these religions, and Christian association with them is very risky.

Paul’s concluding admonition is the best advice:

“31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved.”

We must seek to be a positive, but deeply convinced witness of Christ. Consistent commitment to our Christian principles is essential. But we can live out those principles without making a fool of ourselves as well. To be sure, this is easier said than done. But yet it is very possible with God’s leadership and help.

May God help us flee idolatry and remain faithful to Him in all situations.

**Greek NT**

10:1 Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλην ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διῆλθον 10:2 καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ 10:3 καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον 10:4 καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα· ἔπινον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας, ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός. 10:5 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός, κατεστρώθησαν γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ. 10:6 ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν, εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν, καθὼς κάκεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν. 10:7 μηδὲ εἰδωλολάτραι γίνεσθε καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν, ὡς περ γέγραπται, Ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν. 10:8 μηδὲ πορνεύωμεν καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν καὶ ἔπεσαν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ εἴκοσι τρεῖς χιλιάδες. 10:9 μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπείρασαν καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ὄφεων ἀπώλλυντο. 10:10 μηδὲ γογγύζετε, καθάπερ τινὲς αὐτῶν ἐγόγγυσαν καὶ ἀπώλοντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ. 10:11 ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινε ἐκεῖνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήνηκεν. 10:12 ὥστε ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι βλέπετω

**NASB**

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were 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 were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. 6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 7 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." 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 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. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not

**NRSV**

1 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were 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 from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. 6 Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. 7 Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." 8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. 9 We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. 10 And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. 13 No test-

**NLT**

1 I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, what happened to our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. God guided all of them by sending a cloud that moved along ahead of them, and he brought them all safely through the waters of the sea on dry ground. 2 As followers of Moses, they were all baptized in the cloud and the sea. 3 And all of them ate the same miraculous food, 4 and all of them drank the same miraculous water. For they all drank from the miraculous rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ. 5 Yet after all this, God was not pleased with most of them, and he destroyed them in the wilderness. 6 These events happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did 7 or worship idols as some of them did. For the Scriptures say, "The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged themselves in pagan revelry." 8 And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day. 9 Nor should we put Christ to the test, as some of them did and then died from snakebites. 10 And don't grumble as some of them did, for that is why God sent his angel of death to destroy them. 11 All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close. 12 If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into



μη πέση. 10:13 πειρασμός ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μή ἀνθρώπινος· πιστός δὲ ὁ θεός, ὃς οὐκ ἐάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε ἀλλὰ ποιήσει σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἔκβασιν τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν.

10:14 Διόπερ, ἀγαπητοί μου, φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας 10:15 ὡς φρονίμοις λέγω· κρίνατε ὑμεῖς ὁ φημι. 10:16 τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστὶν; 10:17 ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σῶμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν, οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν. 10:18 βλέπετε τὸν Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ σάρκα· οὐχὶ οἱ ἐσθίοντες τὰς θυσίας κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου εἰσὶν; 10:19 τί οὖν φημι; ὅτι εἰδωλόθυτόν τί ἐστὶν ἢ ὅτι εἰδωλόν τί ἐστὶν; 10:20 ἀλλ' ὅτι ἃ θύουσιν, δαιμονίοις καὶ οὐ θεῷ [θύουσιν] οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι. 10:21 οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποτήριον δαιμονίων, οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων. 10:22 ἢ παραζηλοῦμεν τὸν κύριον; μή ἰσχυρότεροι αὐτοῦ ἐσμεν;

fall. 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, so that you will be able to endure it.

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say. 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? 17 Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread. 18 Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar? 19 What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 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. 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. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?

ing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. 15 I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 18 Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? 19 What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. 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. 22 Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

the same sin. 13 But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

14 So, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. 15 You are reasonable people. Decide for yourselves if what I am about to say is true. 16 When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, aren't we sharing in the benefits of the blood of Christ? And when we break the loaf of bread, aren't we sharing in the benefits of the body of Christ? 17 And we all eat from one loaf, showing that we are one body. 18 And think about the nation of Israel; all who eat the sacrifices are united by that act. 19 What am I trying to say? Am I saying that the idols to whom the pagans bring sacrifices are real gods and that these sacrifices are of some value? 20 No, not at all. What I am saying is that these sacrifices are offered to demons, not to God. And I don't want any of you to be partners with demons. 21 You cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons, too. You cannot eat at the Lord's Table and at the table of demons, too. 22 What? Do you dare to rouse the Lord's jealousy as Israel did? Do you think we are stronger than he is?

## Greek NT Diagram

10:1 γάρ  
**1 Οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν,**  
**ἀδελφοί,**

ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες...ἦσαν  
 καὶ ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλῃν  
 διατῆς θαλάσσης  
 πάντες...διῆλθον

10:2 καὶ  
 εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν  
 πάντες...ἐβαπτίσθησαν  
 ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ  
 καὶ  
 ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ

10:3 καὶ  
 πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον

10:4 καὶ  
 πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα·

2 γάρ  
**ἔπινον**  
 ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας,  
 δὲ  
**3 ἡ πέτρα ἦν ὁ Χριστός.**

10:5 ἀλλ'  
 ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν  
**4 οὐκ...εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός,**  
 γάρ  
**5 κατεστρώθησαν**  
 ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ.

10:6 δὲ  
**6 ταῦτα τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν,**  
 εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν,  
 καθὼς κάκεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν.

10:7 μηδὲ  
**7 εἰδωλόατραι γίνεσθε**  
 καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν,  
 ὡσπερ γέγραπται,  
 Ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς  
 φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν  
 καὶ  
 ἀνέστησαν  
 παίζειν.

10:8 μηδὲ  
**8 πορνεύωμεν**  
 καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν  
 καὶ  
 ἔπεσαν...εἴκοσι τρεῖς χιλιάδες.  
 μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ



10:9 μηδὲ  
9 **ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν,**  
καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπίειρασαν  
καὶ  
ὕπο τῶν ὄφρων  
----- ἀπόλλυντο.

10:10 μηδὲ  
10 **γογγύζετε,**  
καθάπερ τινὲς αὐτῶν ἐγόγγυσαν  
καὶ  
----- ἀπόλοντο  
ὕπο τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ.

10:11 δὲ  
11 **ταῦτα...συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις,**  
δὲ  
12 **ἐγράφη**  
πρὸς νουθεσίαν ἡμῶν,  
εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰῶνων κατήντηκεν.

10:12 ὥστε  
13 **ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι**  
**βλεπέτω**  
μὴ πέση.

10:13 **πειρασμός ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν**  
εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος·  
δὲ  
15 **πιστός δὲ ὁ θεός,**  
ὃς οὐκ ἐάσει  
ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι  
ὕπερ ὃ δύνασθε  
ἀλλὰ  
σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ  
καὶ  
-- ποιήσει...τὴν ἔκβασιν  
τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν.

10:14 Διόπερ,  
**ἀγαπητοί μου,**  
16 **φεύγετε**  
ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας  
10:15 ὡς φρονίμοις λέγω·  
17 **κρίνατε ὑμεῖς**  
ὃ φημι.

18 <sup>10:16</sup> τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας...οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν  
ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ;

19 τὸν ἄρτον...οὐχὶ κοινωνία...ἐστὶν;  
ὃν κλῶμεν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ  
<sup>10:17</sup> ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος --- -----, ἔν σῶμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν,  
γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἄρτου  
20 οἱ πάντες...μετέχομεν.

21 <sup>10:18</sup> βλέπετε τὸν Ἰσραὴλ  
κατὰ σάρκα·  
22 οὐχ οἱ ἐσθίοντες τὰς θυσίας κοινωνοὶ...εἰσὶν;  
τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου

<sup>10:19</sup> οὖν  
23 τί φημι;  
24 ὅτι εἰδωλόθυτόν τί ἐστὶν  
ἢ  
25 ὅτι εἰδωλόν τί ἐστὶν;

<sup>10:20</sup> ἀλλ' (φημί)  
ὅτι ἃ θύουσιν, δαιμονίοις (θύουσιν)  
καὶ ----- οὐ θεῶ θύουσιν  
δὲ  
27 οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς...γίνεσθαι.  
τῶν δαιμονίων

28 <sup>10:21</sup> οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν  
καὶ ποτήριον δαιμονίων,

29 οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν  
καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων.

<sup>10:22</sup> ἢ  
30 παραζηλοῦμεν τὸν κύριον;

31 μὴ ἰσχυρότεροι αὐτοῦ ἐσμεν;





## Exegetical Outline

### I. (1-15) Paul believed the Exodus warns believers against yielding to those testings that come our way.

- A. (1-12) The Jewish Exodus teaches valuable lessons to believers.
  - 1. (1-5) The Exodus brought about an important point: God's judgment
    - a. (1-3) The Jewish Exodus contained important implications for the Corinthians
      - i. (1) Paul did not want the Corinthians to be ignorant of the Jewish fathers' experience of the Exodus.
      - ii. (2-3) Their spiritual nourishment was Christ.
        - 1) (2) They drank from the spiritual rock that followed them
        - 2) (3) That rock was Christ.
    - b. (4-5) God's displeasure with them resulted in the deaths of many in the wilderness.
      - i. (4) God was not pleased with most of them
      - ii. (5) This was the reason some of them were struck down in the wilderness.
  - 2. (6-10) Paul saw in the example of the Israelites Exodus several lessons for Christians
    - a. (6) The Exodus serves as an example for Christians not to become desirous of evil.
    - b. (7-10) Paul saw several lessons to be learned from the Exodus
      - i. (7) Paul admonished the Corinthians to not become idolaters
      - ii. (8) Paul admonished the Corinthians to not indulge in sexual immorality
      - iii. (9) Paul admonished the Corinthians to not put Christ to the test
      - iv. (10) Paul admonished the Corinthians to stop grumbling
  - 3. (11-12) Paul believed the exemplary nature of the Exodus formed a written warning to believers.
    - a. (11) The judgments in the Exodus serve as an example
    - b. (12) This is based on the written account serving as a warning to Christians living at the end of the ages.
- B. (13-15) Paul wrote to the Corinthians that testings to believers will be limited to their ability to withstand it in God's grace.
  - 1. (13-14) Paul asserted that believers dare not believe that they are immune to testing
    - a. (13) Those who think they're okay need to be warned
    - b. (14) Testing comes to all, rather than just a few
  - 2. (15) Paul claimed the trustworthiness of God to limit testing to our capacity to withstand it.

### II. (16-31) The implication of this was that Christians should flee idolatry because of its consequences.

- A. (16-22) Paul's admonition to flee idolatry grew out of his theology of Israelite sacrifice and its connection to Christian observing of the Lord's Supper.
  - 1. (16) Paul admonished the Corinthians to flee idolatry
  - 2. (17-22) Paul instruction linked the sacrificer to the altar of sacrifice as foundational to the Lord's Supper observance.
    - a. (17) Paul admonished the Corinthians to pay close attention to what he said
    - b. (18-22) Paul asserted that Christian participation in the death of Christ is based on the principle of the connection of Israelite sacrifices linking the person to the altar of sacrifice.
      - i. (18-19) Paul claimed that the Lord's supper is sharing in the death of Christ
        - 1) (18) Paul raised the claim that the cup of blessing is sharing in the blood of Christ
        - 2) (19) Paul raised the claim that the broken bread is sharing in the body of Christ
      - ii. (20-22) This was based on the principle of Israelite making sacrifices at the altar.
        - 1) (20) Paul asserted that all believers share from one bread
        - 2) (21-22) Paul asserted that the Israelites offering offerings share in the altar
          - a) (21) Paul admonished the Corinthians to pay close attention to Israel
          - b) (22) Paul raised the claim that all who offer sacrifices share in the altar
- B. (23-31) Paul asserted the worthlessness of idols since they are linked to demons resulting in a dangerous situation for individuals attempting to serve Christ and demons at the same time.
  - 1. (23-26) Paul declared the worthlessness of idols but linked them to demons
    - a. (23-25) Paul claimed that worship of idols has no real significance since they don't exist.
      - i. (23) Paul asked the Corinthians to understand his words.



