



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians

Chapter 10

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Introduction

- In this chapter St. Paul brings to a conclusion his discussion concerning things offered to idols
- Learning from the example of Israel's apostasy he commands them to "flee idolatry" (1-14)
- He warns against provoking the Lord to jealousy by having fellowship with demons (15-22)
- This is a rebuke to what some at the church in Corinth were doing by eating sacrificial meat even in an idol's temple! (1 Cor 8: 10)



Introduction

- He closes by giving specific instructions concerning meat that was sold in the market place, or offered at the dinner of an unbeliever to which they might be invited (23-30)
- The Christian principle? Do all to the glory of God, and provide no occasion for others to stumble (31-32)
- In other words, imitate St. Paul, who sought to save others just as Christ did (33-11:1).

Example of Israel's Apostasy (10:1-14)



- In the preceding chapter St. Paul warned the Corinthian Christians to avoid all that might cause weaker brethren to fall, pointed to his own example, and showed that he spared no effort to win the crown for himself
- He now enforces the lesson of his own example by pointing to the warnings given in the journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, the type of the Christian's journey to heaven

Example of Israel's Apostasy (10:1-14)



- Were all under the cloud: God's gracious presence, which screened them from the heat of the sun by day, and gave them light by night
- All passed through the sea: God opening a way through the midst of the waters
- Baptized into Moses: the servant of God and representative of the Old Testament covenant of the law as the Lord Jesus Christ , the Son of God, is of the new covenant

Example of Israel's Apostasy (10:1-14)



- “The cloud” and “The sea” as symbolizing the Spirit and water respectively
- The same spiritual meat: The manna, called spiritual, because supernaturally supplied (communion)
- The same spiritual drink: The water supernaturally supplied called spiritual
- The waters at Rephidim (Ex 17:1-6) and Kadesh (Num 20:1-12) gushed from a rock

Example of Israel's Apostasy (10:1-14)



- The rock did not itself supply them, but the power behind, the spiritual Rock, even Christ
- The rock of Rephidim did not follow them, but the spiritual Rock did, and supplied their necessities
- As the rock of Rephidim became a fountain, so Christ is the fountain of living waters to the world (Holy Spirit – Christmation)
- As the rock when smitten sent forth the waters, so Christ, having smitten, sends forth the Spirit

Example of Israel's Apostasy (10:1-14)



- All were baptized, all were fed, all did drink, but many were overthrown in the wilderness because of their sins (Num 14:35; 26:65)
- A serious warning to Christians on the journey
- They were led astray by lusting after evil things, so let all beware of this source of destruction
- Idolatry was so prevalent in Corinth
- The people sat down to eat and drink at a feast in honor of the golden calf

Example of Israel's Apostasy (10:1-14)



- Rose up to play: To dance around their idol
- This is a warning to Corinthian brethren to shun the banquets in idol temples and their accompanying festivities
- Sexual immorality: With the Midianites (Num 25:1-10)
- In Num 25:9 it is stated that 24,000 lost their lives, St. Paul names 23,000 as the number who lost their lives by the plague

Example of Israel's Apostasy (10:1-14)



- Moses in Numbers includes all who died "in the plague"; St. Paul, all who died "in one day"
- One thousand more may have fallen the next day
- The number was between 23,000 and 24,000, and is stated in each place by a round sum, according to Jewish custom
- St. Paul naming the smaller
- Neither let us tempt Christ: The event referred to is narrated in Num 21:4-6

Example of Israel's Apostasy (10:1-14)



- We should not be discontented over hardships or long for the sinful pleasures of a former life from which we have parted
- Complain: upon the death of Korah and his company (Num 16:41,49)
- Their complaints against Moses and Aaron were virtually complaints against God
- St. Paul herein glances at the Corinthian complains against himself, the apostle of Christ

Example of Israel's Apostasym (10:1-14)



- Destroyed: fourteen thousand seven hundred perished
- The destroyer: The same destroying angel sent by God as in Ex 12:23
- These are historical facts designed to teach us great lessons
- Upon whom the ends of the ages have come: Our age is called the end, for it is the culmination of all the ages

Example of Israel's Apostasy (10:1-14)



- Presumption is the greatest of all dangers
- He who realizes his danger will be on his guard.
- The safe way is to acknowledge our weakness and not to hang around temptation
- Perhaps the Corinthians thought their temptations were severe, but these were only what human nature is exposed to
- But God will keep His promise, and hence will not allow you to be tempted above that you are able

Example of Israel's Apostasy (10:1-14)



- God Will give them strength and deliverance in every temptation if they trust in Him
- None who devoutly follow Christ, who pray constantly for strength, and trust God, will fall
- Flee from idolatry: In idolatry, the greatest temptations at Corinth were combined, lust, drinking and other forms of evil
- The way to avoid all these was to flee it
- Sin must not be lingered with, but shunned

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper (10:15-22)



- St. Paul Appeal to their own powers of judgment to weigh the force of the argument that follows
- The cup of blessing which we bless. A name applied to the cup used in Eucharist
- Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? Very clear statement about reality of communion
- Is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Another clear statement about the change of the elements into the Body and the Blood of the Lord

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper (10:15-22)



- By communion, we Christians, though many, are all one body, the body of Christ (St. Basil prayer after the coming down of the Holy Spirit)
- St. Paul had no conception of a divided church
- Israel after the flesh: The natural Israel, in contrast with the spiritual Israel, the church
- As a part of the sacrifice was eaten by the people and a part was burnt on the altar, as an offering to God, so they were partakers with God in the feast

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper (10:15-22)



- So, too, those who partake of an idol feast, will be worshipers of the idol
- He had said an idol was nothing (1 Cor 8:4). Does he not now imply an idol is something?
- Not at all, on the contrary, that what the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils
- Such in reality are the gods of the heathens; and with such only can you hold communion in those sacrifices

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper (10:15-22)



- The idol is nothing, but to the worshiper it is a reality
- That reality is not God, but really a demon
- You cannot have communion with the table of the Lord and the table of the demons
- We provoke God to jealousy by dividing our fellowship between Him and idols
- Are we stronger than He, that we can risk a dispute with Him?

All to the Glory of God (10:23-33)



- All things are lawful for me: All meats are especially referred to here
- But all things are not helpful: But things that are lawful, i.e. not sinful in themselves, are not helpful when they are not edifying to my neighbor
- Let no man seek his own rights, but consider the interests of others
- An application: whatever is sold in the market, you may buy it and eat it

All to the Glory of God (10:23-33)



- Asking no question whether it has been offered to an idol or not
- For conscience' sake: If on asking you should hear it had been offered to idols, a doubt would arise in your conscience which was needless, and never would have arisen had you asked no questions
- All that is offered for sale is the Lord's gifts
- If invited to an unbeliever's house, go, and eat without question on account of conscience

All to the Glory of God (10:23-33)



- If someone points out that a part is from an idol's sacrifice, then it is not to be eaten; not because the food is sinful, but because the conscience of others might be offended
- When one eats what he knows to be simply food, his own conscience is not offended, but that of another man
- Do not eat lest your liberty be judged (condemned) by the other's conscience

All to the Glory of God (10:23-33)



- Do not eat lest you be evil spoken of concerning that for which you gave thanks
- We must order ourselves that we seek not ourselves, but God's glory
- This implies thanksgiving to God and not doing what offend the weak brethren
- Give no offence. Do nothing that would produce a scandal, whether to Jews, or Gentiles, or brethren
- As I try to please all not seeking mine own profit



Conclusion

- What attitude is most likely to precede one's fall?
- What promises do we have that should encourage us in times of temptation?
- What is the Lord's Supper according to verse 16?
- What does partaking of the one bread demonstrate?
- In considering a matter, what must be considered besides its lawfulness?
- To whom are we to give no offense?