

## **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 8**

### *Matters About Christian Conscience And Not Offending Those New Or Weak In The Faith*

The Corinthians had asked Paul in a previous letter if they could eat meat offered to idols. Paul had addressed issues of conscience stemming from the background of the Jewish Christians at Rome in Romans 14. Now Gentile Christians have an issue of conscience which comes from their pagan background. We have all been given spiritual knowledge and wisdom. The knowledge that the old covenant had been done away was new spiritual knowledge for the Jewish Christian. Many Jewish Christians due to strong religious upbringing as Orthodox Jews had weak consciences when it came to doing anything that would violate the old covenant. Now new in the faith Gentiles of Corinth have a similar weakness concerning eating meat which had previously been offered to idols. Verses 4-7, Most meat in the meat-markets of Corinth, or for that matter any pagan city, was meat that had been previously offered to some idol. I mean, why waste the meat? There was money to be had in the resale, obviously. Now Paul brings out that the Christians basically know that the pagan idols are just wooden or brazen statues, and are nothing. To eat or not eat the meat offered to pagan idols did not defile a Christian. Those older and more mature in the faith knew this, and it wasn't an issue with them. Those who were newer and more immature in the faith *were* bothered by eating such meat, just as the Jewish Christians were equally bothered by food that went against the Hebrew dietary laws of Leviticus 11 in the old covenant. The older and more mature members were using their head-knowledge about what was and wasn't permissible in a spiritually prideful way which was endangering the newly forming Christian consciences of the others. They weren't acting out of love toward the newer brethren. Love builds up and edifies, while indiscriminate use of head-knowledge only serves to puff up the user and potentially damage others spiritually. Knowledge and wisdom vary in degree to what maturity level the particular believer is at. So with this, let's see what Paul has to say about this issue in **1 Corinthians 8:1-3, "Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is**

**known by God.”** They weren't using knowledge aright, they were using it to tear down, not build up. How were they doing this? As I explained earlier, the Gentile convert had come out of paganism. All the local meat markets sold meat which had been offered to idols. **Verses 4-7, “So, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.”** Now, how were these older Christians using their knowledge to tear down and not edify? **Verses 9-13, “Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.”** (Sort of like taking someone you know who is a member of Alcoholics Anonymous out to the bar and grill for dinner and tossing down a cold beer with your dinner right in front of him!) **“For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple [where a lot of this meat was cooked and sold], won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.”** Knowledge should edify. Knowledge without love only tears down. **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:1-7, “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”** This is the crown statement of what Paul has to say about the right and wrong use of knowledge. If how we use knowledge doesn't fit the 1 Corinthians 13 pattern, you are not using it aright. Liberty does not

mean you have the liberty to cause your brother to stumble. If the exercise of your liberty does cause a brother to stumble you are not acting out of love and you are misusing your liberty. You are not being a truly mature Christian.

## ***1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9***

### *The Apostle Paul Warning The Corinthians About False Teachers Who Come Amongst Them Looking For Greedy Gain*

The concept of the relay race probably came from Corinth. The forerunner of the Olympic Games started in Corinth. The phrase "*Let those who have the light pass it on*" was first coined in Corinth, foreshadowing the passing of the torch in a race or the Olympics. Our concern should be that others see Jesus Christ in us. Our concern shouldn't be how "we" look before others. People with the puffed up mindset are always trying to show you what they know. The knowledge that we should be concerned about is the knowledge that we know God and love God, and that God knows and loves us. Then having the love of God fill us, we spill it onto others, God's light shines from us onto others. **Matthew 5:14-16, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."** Paul had Jesus Christ in him. He was just plain and serving them and not trying to impress anyone, and because of this many were ragging on him. Paul is now saying '*Don't I have a right to partake of the fruit of your labors when you are my harvest in the Lord? He who plows should have the right to partake of the fruit of the harvest.*' **Verses 1-12, "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. Don't we have the right to food and drink? Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?"** [Paul supported himself as a tentmaker.]

**“Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say this merely from a human point of view? For it is written in the Law of Moses: ‘Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain [Deut. 25:4].’ Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?”** Paul was a tentmaker, and what is more, he provided for his own needs and for those that were traveling with him. He didn't charge anyone for the gospel. Paul's motive was pure--verse 18. Mike McIntosh and those that travel with him often travel around on gospel outreach tours and pay for all their own expenses. They don't charge admission and don't beg for money from the crowd. We don't demand money or offerings. People know where the offering box is, and they give freely because they are inspired to. God loves a cheerful giver. Finances should never hamper the gospel of Jesus Christ--and greed will kill your efforts to promote the gospel faster than anything else. Paul went for days without food in order to promote the gospel, rather than charge anyone. God always provides the means. God is greater than all of us. The universe is his! And somehow, when you're not demanding money, the money comes--and abundantly--if you're doing the will of the Lord. **Verses 12-18, “But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me. I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of this boast. Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. What then is my reward? Just this: THAT I MAY OFFER IT FREE OF CHARGE, AND SO NOT MAKE USE OF MY RIGHTS IN PREACHING IT.”** (Emphasis mine.) Wow! Beware of those who would charge you a hefty entrance fee at a revival meeting. Is their motive as pure as Paul's was? Think about it. God inspires people to see when the motive is pure, and then the

people freely and bountifully give, because they can trust those who exemplify a pure Godly motive.

### *The Philosophy of Paul's Ministry*

I am all things to all men. To Jews I am a Jew, to the weak I am weak--so that I can share the gospel with them all. **Verses 19-23, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings."** Paul adds to this the attitude of an athlete. Paul didn't have a lazy man's attitude toward Christianity and being a Christian, but an athlete's attitude toward being a Christian. Our primary focus should be as spiritual athletes. Desire that people see Jesus Christ in you. The standard is of love--building others up and edifying them. **Verses 24-27, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."**

related link: <https://unityinchrist.com/gifts.htm>

*1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10*

## *Paul Teaches Some Lessons From The Old Testament*

### *Take Heed To God's Dealings With Israel*

What taste do you have of Jesus, is it sweet or sour? This is still part of Paul's answer to the questions the Corinthians had asked Paul in a previous letter to him. **Verses 1-4, "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea. All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."** What Paul is saying is *'Take heed to God's dealings with Israel.'* Their experiences were written down for our good. The Israelites were under God's special covenant blessing. Paul says they were all given special intimate fellowship with God. As they departed from Egypt, they were brought into this covenant of blessing. They were symbolically baptized as they crossed through the Red Sea. In the Bible, Egypt is symbolic of this sinning world and it's societies. We leave this Egypt--world, it's ways and habits of sin--through baptism. And we receive spiritual baptism through the Holy Spirit--that's what the cloud symbolizes. Paul says they entered into a special union with God as His people, as they left Egypt and passed under His cloud, the shelter and blessing of God. The people of Israel were initiated and indoctrinated into a special communion and fellowship with God. Much of Paul's letters to the Corinthians is about communion or fellowship with God. Paul also says in verses 3 and 4 that they ate of the same spiritual food and they drank of the same spiritual drink. He's referring back to Exodus and Numbers. Exodus 16 & 17 and Numbers 20. In Exodus 16, this is just a few weeks after the Israelites left Egypt. After all that God had done they began to complain about the good Egyptian food they no longer had. God provided bread miraculously for them. **Exodus 16:1-15, "And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt [they departed on the fifteen of Nisan, the first month, exactly one month earlier]. Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, 'Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when**

**we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.' Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.' Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, 'At evening you shall know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord; for He hears your murmurings against the Lord. But what are we, that you murmur against us?' Also Moses said, 'This shall be seen when the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the Lord hears your murmurings which you make against Him. And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us but against the Lord. Then Moses spoke to Aaron, 'Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the Lord, for He has heard your murmurings.' Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God. So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, 'This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.'"**

### *Water From the Rock*

**Exodus 17:1-7, "Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink.**

Therefore the people contended with Moses and said, 'Give us water, that we may drink.' And Moses said to them, 'Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?' And the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against Moses, and said, 'Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?' So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, 'What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!' And the Lord said to Moses, 'Go out before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.' And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'" And then we have the same Israelites 40 years later in Numbers 20. **Numbers 20:1-13**, "Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there. Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: 'If only we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! Why have you brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink.' So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the Lord appeared to them. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.' So Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock; and he said to them, 'Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?' Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not believe me, to hallow me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.' This

**was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the Lord, and he was hallowed among them.”**

*What is the significance of God repeatedly bringing Israel to the point of hunger and thirst? And why do they continue to doubt God--after all the mighty miracles He had done for them going all the way back to Egypt? God had a greater purpose for Israel--that they should hunger and thirst for him. God brought them bread from heaven. They drank from the Rock, and Paul said that Rock was Christ. God wanted them to know that he was all they needed.*

### *Bread From Heaven, Jesus Our Bread Of Life*

He could provide all their needs, both physical and spiritual--and much more importantly the spiritual. God was telling them, ***‘I can fill your stomachs, but eventually you will die. I want you to partake of me.’*** In the Middle East (and this includes the Jewish people) there was a belief that partaking of a meal was much more than a physical thing--when you partook of a meal with somebody else. There was a oneness that took place. In the Middle East partaking of a meal together was highly regarded. It was probably the most intimate part of fellowship you could have with a person--each eating the same food and having that food become a part of you. Jews wouldn't have meals with Gentiles because they believed that this oneness was taking place. They also took this thought and transformed it to their worship. When you look at some of the sacrifices in the Old Testament you find the people were ordered (by God) to partake of the meal that took place as a result of the sacrifice, and the part that would be burnt would make smoke which would be wafted before the Lord and he would partake of it--and there was this oneness, and this oneness was between God and his people. God's purpose is to have a people for himself, and fellowship with them. Unfortunately the people of Israel were always concerned about their physical needs. Every time you read about them they're saying, *‘Oh I'm hungry, Oh I'm thirsty. I liked Egypt better because there we had physical food.’* God's point is this: The physical food will fill your stomach--but it won't keep you alive spiritually--it won't give you eternal life. Spiritual fellowship is so much more. God brought bread from heaven and water from a rock to show them he was there to satisfy their needs. Let's look at **John 6**, Jesus said, **"I am the Bread of life." John 6:25-62. "When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, 'Rabbi, when did you**

get here?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.' Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?' Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.' So they asked him, 'What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' 'Sir,' they said, 'from now on give us this bread.' Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They said, 'Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?' 'Stop grumbling among yourselves,' Jesus answered. 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: They will all be taught by God. [Isaiah 54:13]' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and

**drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.' He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum."** The physical doesn't truly satisfy. Partaking of Jesus Christ satisfies. That is what Jesus is saying. That is what Paul is saying. In 1 Corinthians 10:5 we read that God was not pleased with the Israelites. He did all these things--even bringing supernatural food from heaven and water from rocks. And he was not pleased with them. Most of them--all but two, died in the desert. Two entered the promise land. Why did they enter? They entered because of faith. Joshua and Caleb showed faith and trust in God when nobody else would.

### *Sin Of Idolatry*

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:5-7, "Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: 'The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.'" Exodus 32:1-10, "Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, 'Come, make us gods that shall go before us, for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And Aaron said to them, 'Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.' So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of**

**Egypt! So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord.' Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. And the Lord said to Moses, 'Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!' And the Lord said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.'"** Moses then pleaded for the lives of the Israelites and went back down, ground up the calf and threw the gold dust in the water and made the people drink of it, giving them stomach aches.

### *Sexual Immorality*

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:8, "We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died." Exodus 25:1-5,9, "Then Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel. Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the Lord, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.' So Moses said to the judges of Israel, 'Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor'...And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand."**

### *Tempting The Lord*

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:9, “We should not test the Lord, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes.”** Numbers 21:4-9, “Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And 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 food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.' So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, 'We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people. Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it shall live.' So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.” The symbolism here is very strong and points to Christ, who on the cross took on the sins of Satan's world, the great serpent. He had the appearance of a sinner by dying on the cross, yet without sin. And everyone who looks to Christ in faith is saved and receives eternal life, just as those bitten by the fiery serpents lived when they gazed upon the bronze serpent. We have all been bitten by *the fiery serpent*, for this is his world. When we gaze upon Christ in faith, we are healed of the spiritual death that Satan's bite inflicts and receive the promise of life eternal. The bronze serpent was a symbol of Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice on the cross, and of how we can be healed of Satan's bite and receive eternal life by looking to Christ in faith.

### *Grumbling, Murmuring And Complaining*

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:10, “And do not grumble, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel.”** This grumbling took place just after God had killed many leaders who had risen up with Korah in rebelling, trying to assume the right to be priests and serve as the Levites did in the temple service (Numbers 16:1-40). **Numbers 16:41-49, “On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, 'You have killed the people of the Lord.'** Now

it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Get away from the congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.' And they fell on their faces. So Moses said to Aaron, 'Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun.' Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped. Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident."

### *So, What Is The Bottom Line To All Of This?*

So what is the bottom line to all this? What is Paul trying to say? **Verses 11-12, "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!"** Then Paul goes on to talk about the trials we go through and a promise God makes about them to us. **Verse 13, "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful, he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can bear it."** God didn't necessarily say he would remove the "temptation" or trial, but that he would, 1) not let the temptation be more than we could bear, and 2) make it possible for us to bear it. **"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord to Zerubbabel"** comes to mind here.

### *About Eating Meals In Pagan Temples*

In verses 14-22 Paul goes on to talk about them eating meals in pagan temples as opposed to just buying the meat offered to idols in the open market place, showing there was an important difference between the two. Basically he was saying to flee idolatry, i.e. you can't partake in the fellowship meals in pagan temples because you are fellowshiping with demons. There is all sorts of application here for Christians today. Our conversations with other people in the world--what we watch on TV and videos--what we pull up on the Internet--are we in Christ's temple or a pagan temple of *this world*? **Verses 14-22, "Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? [referring to the Lord's supper/Christian Passover service] Because there is one loaf, we, who are many all partake of the one loaf. Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part both in the Lord's table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?"** And remember back a few verses where Paul was showing what arousing God's jealousy was like for the Israelites Moses was leading out of Egypt. 'The Lord is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow--so take heed.'

### *The Believer's Freedom*

In verses 23-30 Paul explains that they can eat this meat offered to idols when it ends up in the market place--but if someone invites you for a meal and points out that this meat was offered to idols, don't eat for the conscience sake of the one who told you. **Verses 23-30, "Everything is permissible--but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible--but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others. [Philippians 2:4,21] Eat anything sold in the market without raising questions of conscience, for, 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.' [Psalm 24:1] If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put**

**before you without raising questions of conscience. But if anyone says to you, 'This has been offered in sacrifice,' then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience sake--the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?"** Paul goes on to give his motive and says let it be ours also. **Verses 31-33, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God--even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved."** Then he goes on in verse 1 of chapter eleven, which really appears to belong here, **"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."**

## *1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11*

God wants order within his Church. God is a God of order. Nature is full of order. The universe is full of order. Why is there a movement toward disorder within many churches? God wants order in church services so we can represent God properly to the world. Remember when Moses misrepresented the Lord when he beat the rock and gave his angry little speech to the children of Israel? God didn't take that lightly. He didn't allow Moses to enter the Promised Land as a result.

In verses 1-2 we find the Corinthian church remembering the practices of the church [which would have been the 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan Passover service the early churches in Judea, Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece were observing right up through John, Polycarp and Policrates in Asia Minor], and Paul praises them for this, but as things unfold in the chapter we'll find they were forgetting Jesus. The church was in a period where their focus was on the rituals, ordinances and practices while they were forgetting their relationship with Christ. Today, we see a revival taking place where people want the joyful relationship with Jesus restored, but they are now throwing away the proper order and rituals--creating disorder. The balance is what Paul was pointing to. We need both--proper order and rituals and a restored joyful experience with Jesus Christ **Verses 1-2, "Follow my example, as I follow the example**

**of Christ. I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you.”**

In verses 3 and 17 Paul focuses on the structure of authority. In Galatians it says we're all equal in Christ. In society we recognize the need for authority and the Church itself has levels of authority within it. This teaching only appears once, in verses 3-16. Things of great importance God inspires to be written two or three times. Paul shows women do pray and prophesy within the church. But historically in the temple of Aphrodite the temple prostitutes had their head shaved. It is a potential theory that Paul was addressing them in this matter. It could be a historical reason more than anything. Also, in the Middle East women wore veils in public to show they were unavailable. Verses 8-9 show the woman is the glory of the man. In the 90's the feminization of man and the masculinization of woman has taken place. This goes against the Godly established order Paul was stressing here. Verse 10 potentially indicates the angels assigned to us like this order. This shows there is heavenly emphasis pointing towards order in our families and within the Church. God even divided up his mental/psychological gifts to men and women. There is a complementary created order here, even in the way our minds are hardwired and in the mental software. Men and women are not the same mentally, but complement each other. The trinity even reflects the order and authority structure. Verse 14 is the controversial "hair-length" scripture. If you're a man and like to have long hair, you have to search your own conscience with the Lord. Also what one person considers long is not considered long by another. We mustn't be judgmental of others. This is a personal matter. Verse 14 could also be the modifier for the previous verses about being covered and uncovered--being covered referring to having long hair and uncovered referring to having short hair. We just don't know for sure. You have to search your conscience and follow what you believe is right, for what is not of faith, as Paul says in Romans, is sin. Paul leans more on our exercising and using our Christian conscience in matters than in adhering strictly to firmly established do's and don'ts as legalists try to do. There is a balance. Legal authority and order within church services and government is needed so God and Christ are properly represented to the world. But many matters are left up to individual Christian conscience.

**Verses 3-16, “Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head--it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace**

**for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved off, she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For the man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head. In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. [verses 13-15] Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice--nor do the churches of God."** [Last underlined sentence again shows the name the early Church was going by, it's Biblical name.]

## The Lord's Supper, Communion Ordinance

Paul points out a divisive attitude they were showing during their observances of the Lord's Supper [which was the Quartodeciman Passover the early churches of God were observing right up past 250AD in Asia Minor under John, Polycarp and Policrates]. They were having agape feasts, big pot lucks at which they were eating and getting drunk. [i.e. they had turned their Passover observance into this big potluck feast/meal.] They've remembered the ordinance, but had forgotten the passion. There are four reasons the passion dies.

1. We become overly familiar,
2. We seek man's approval in front of others,
3. Our environment around us absorbs us (Corinth did this to the Corinthians),
4. We can get distracted by the details, vs. 24, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' Don't forget the purpose--to remember Jesus and his sacrifice.

Paul was saying, *'The way you guys have been doing this is totally wrong.'* He then goes on to share a warning with them. **Verses 17-32, "In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God [again, the name of the first century Church Jesus founded] and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not! For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner [without proper respect or reverence for what the ceremony represents] will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep [died]. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world."** [Some fellowships and denominations call this Communion or Holy Communion, or the Lord's Supper, and observe it on a regular basis, sometimes twice a month, while some few chose to observe this once a year as a true *memorial*, kept on the 14 Nisan as the apostle John, Polycarp and Policrates did. The Bible doesn't say either way is right or wrong. It is one of those matters left up to the individual conscience. To see the Holy Days the early churches of God observed, see <https://unityinchrist.com/lamb/holyday.htm> and <https://unityinchrist.com/history2/index3.htm>] In verse 33 Paul reminds them to come together with a right heart. In these first two elements of Church order they were dishonoring God. **Verse 33, "So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat [and**

**by context here, he's talking about eating the Lord's Supper, Communion, the early church Passover observance], wait for each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come I will give further directions.”**

related links:

What were these early churches of God like which Paul founded? See <https://unityinchrist.com/history2/index3.htm> and <https://unityinchrist.com/lamb/holyday.htm>

For the last six days of Jesus' life before his crucifixion and the Passover service he kept and instituted, see <https://unityinchrist.com/lamb/lastsix.htm>