

God's Wisdom in an Age of Confusion
1 Corinthians 10:1-22
No Rivals

Introduction

Good morning! Welcome to EBC, please open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 10.

Let's pray...

Background to Corinth: Review

Laying the Christ-exalting foundation for Christian identity and morals

The big challenge Paul faces is forming their identity. As I have tried to show you, IDENTITY INFORMS BEHAVIOR. As followers of Jesus, we are *people who have been given new desires for a new destiny: fellowship with Christ!*

We have seen how Paul warns the Corinthians to not go back to their former practices, particularly visiting the temple-cult prostitutes. However, while we are moving on to a new topic, we will see that the problems with the temple haven't quite ended yet. Over the next few weeks, the topic of what a Christian can and cannot (or should not) participate will be debated and discussed.

1 Cor. 10:31

How do I glorify God in my eating/drinking? This way...

1 Cor. 10:32

Giving no offense, no opportunity for anyone to be scandalized or anyone's faith to be damaged or anything that would bring the gospel into some kind of disrepute.

1 Cor. 10:33

And here is the great motive by which Paul evaluates his cultural decision making: that they may be saved!

1 Cor. 11:1

Imitating Christ means putting others ahead of yourself by prioritizing their spiritual needs as more significant than your own.

Exposition of 1 Corinthians 10:1-22

Can we eat food in the temple that is offered to idols?

Israel's unfaithfulness in the wilderness

1 Corinthians 10:1-5

The relationship between national/ethnic/historic Israel and the Jew/Gentile church of Christ – not replacement or division, but rather fulfillment. What does it mean that Christ is the rock? This is part of a Jewish myth that the “rock” of the wilderness followed Israel. However, Paul states that the “rock” is actually evidence that Christ is there with them. We call this a Christophany – a place where Christ “appears” in the OT. Yet as we know from history, God was not pleased with that initial generation in the wilderness.

Israel's example of what not to do

1 Corinthians 10:6-10

What is the “evil” they desired? What is idolatry? Simply stated: it's putting something else before God. It's taking a created thing, turning it into a “god thing” and thereby making it a “bad” thing. It is treating something else as your “god”

other than God Himself. Why even engage in idolatry? What's the supposed upside? Simple: to get something for oneself apart from God's appointed means. How does God give us the things we need? By trusting Him. What is idolatry? Treating something else that's not God as if it is "god". Let me show you an example:

Jer. 2:13

So here are Israel's bad examples:

Idolatry (golden calf)

Sexual immorality (sacrificing with Moabite women)

"Grumbling" and putting "Christ" (the Lord?) to the test (impatient with food/water)

God will provide the way out of temptation

1 Cor. 10:11-13

Do what Israel did not do and put your trust in the Lord!

Flee idolatry by NOT going to the temple anymore!

1 Cor. 10:14-22

So here is the prohibition at last: do not go to the temple, lest you go the way of Israel in the wilderness. Do not fool yourself into thinking that you can somehow withstand the temptations. You cannot! You are simply too weak and too dependent on Christ.

Why is all of this such a big deal?

Remember who Israel was called to be:

Isa. 54:4-5

Israel was called to be "the bride of YHWH" (God as "Husband").

Remember what Paul said earlier:

1 Cor. 6:17

1 Cor. 6:19

2 Cor. 11:2-3

Christians (church) are called to be "the bride of Christ" (Jesus as "Husband").

Rom. 7:4

Gal. 2:20

Since we belong to Jesus and have been united to Him by the Spirit, He is to be our "one and only" - without peer or rival.

Main Idea:

The spiritual union believers enjoy with the risen Christ needs to be guarded with the utmost diligence and care, for He tolerates no rivals. Thankfully, He always provides a way out when temptations to compromise occur.

Application: How do I safeguard my union with Christ?

Rejoice in the reality of your union with Christ.

Reject any rivals that threaten your union with Christ.

Renew your union with Christ with a daily intake of scripture, meditation, and prayer.

Discussion Questions

- 1) Why does Paul use Israel as an example of idolatry? How did Israel disobey God?
- 2) How does Paul describe the way we escape temptation?
- 3) What might be an example of idol/demon worship in our culture today?
- 4) Are there any “rivals” in your life that are threatening your spiritual union with Christ?