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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

1 Corinthians 10.

(2013)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

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1 Corinthians 10.

Topics.

- Old Testament fathers drank from the rock and the rock was Christ.
- The people ate and drank and rose up to play.
- God is faithful, and will not let you be tempted beyond your ability.
- No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.
- The cup of blessing that we bless is a participation in the blood of Christ?
- Pagans sacrifice offerings to demons and not to God.
- All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful.
- Why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience?

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter Paul spoke about those serving the Lord having the right to be supported by those they ministered to, nevertheless though he had the right to be supported he preferred to support himself so as not to place a burden on others and hinder the gospel. The chapter ended with Paul telling the Corinthian brothers and sisters to endure the hardships and troubles of life as an athlete runs a race so that they endure to the end and receive the prize.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

- In certain chapters this letter is written as though Paul is having a conversation with the Corinthians (i.e., he asks them a question and then answers it etc.).
- Though Paul's letter is directed to the Corinthian church the content applies to any church or believer in the same situations.

Old Testament Fathers Drank from the Rock and the Rock was Christ.

1 Cor. 10:1-5 ----- ¹I want you to know, brothers that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²and all were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea ³and all ate the same spiritual food ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. ⁵Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

The Cloud refers the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day: -

- The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people" (Exod 13:21-22). When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses and when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door (Exod 33:9-10)

The Sea refers to Israel's deliverance from Egypt (called the house of bondage): -

- The LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea and the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh not one of them remained, but the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore (Exodus 14:27-30).

All ate the same spiritual food refers to the manna from heaven: -

- The LORD rained down on them manna to eat and gave them the grain of heaven (Psalm 78:24) and the people of Israel ate the manna forty-years, till they came to the border of the land of Canaan (Exodus 16:35) and the manna ceased the day after they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan (Josh 5:12). Israel's fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat (John 6:31)

All drank the same spiritual drink; refers to the waters that flowed from the rock in the wilderness: -

- The LORD split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep He made streams come out of the rock and caused waters to flow down like rivers (Psalm 78:15-16).

All were baptised into Moses: carries the idea that all the people of Israel not only embraced Moses as their head, but accepted as from God all the words he spoke and commanded.

The Spiritual Rock that followed them and the Rock was Christ.

To understand the words, "They drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ" (v4) we need to understand that Christ manifested the word of God in every aspect in fact so perfectly that he is given the title, the word of God made Flesh so the Rock in this context carries the idea that the Spirit of Christ was with the Old Testament fathers through the following: -

- The word of God that came through the prophets.
- The spirit of Christ that followed them through the Messianic prophecies.
- The blood sacrifices that symbolised Christ.
- The continuing line of the Promised Seed.

The writer of Psalm seventy-eight puts what Paul is saying this way: -

- They forgot his works and the wonders that he had shown them, in the sight of their fathers the LORD performed wonders and in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan He divided the sea and let them pass through it and made the waters stand like a heap. In the daytime he led them with a cloud and all the night with a fiery light. He split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep and made streams come out of the rock and caused waters to flow down like rivers (Psalm 78:11-16).

Putting this all Together: Paul is saying that all the people of Old Testament Israel were delivered from the house of bondage (Egypt) by the power of God and lead by His presence (the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night) to the sea which not only miraculously delivered them but also destroyed their enemy.

God nourished them with heavenly food and they not only drank water that miraculously flowed from a rock, but also drank of the word of God through the prophets and lived in the glorious hope of the coming of their Messiah the Christ the promised Seed of Abraham.

The following should be noted: -

The main point Paul is making in these verses is not about having a perfect theological understanding, but that all the people of Old Testament Israel shared in all the wonders of God and yet God was not pleased with some of them.

With most of the Old Testament Saints God was not Pleased.

1 Cor 10:6-10 ----- ⁶Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.
⁷Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." ⁸We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did,

and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. ¹⁰nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.

The way God judged or blessed the people of Old Testament Israel are recorded for our example meaning for our benefit, i.e., so we learn that at the judgment seat of Christ those who have sinfully lived to satisfy self, ego, pride, greed and lust etc., while being in the family of Christ will suffer loss while the faithful who have lived to honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will be rewarded.

The people Ate and Drank and Rose up to Play.

The words, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play" (v7) are a reference to the people of Israel after Aaron had made the golden calf and said to the people of Israel, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" And then the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play (Exod. 32:4-6).

Twenty-Three Thousand Fell in a Single Day.

The words, "We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day" is a reference to the time the people of Israel not only began to whore with the daughters of Moab but they also bowed down and sacrificed to their gods yoking themselves to Baal of Peor and the jealousy of the Lord consumed twenty-four thousand by a plague (Num. 25:1-9).

They were Destroyed of Serpents: the words, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents (v9) is a reference to the people of Israel when they set out from the Red Sea and became impatient on the way and spoke against God and against Moses saying: -

- Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food, then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died (Numbers 21:4-6).

The writer of Psalm seventy-eight puts what Paul is saying this way: -

- Yet they sinned still more against the LORD, rebelling against the Most High in the desert they tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved and spoke against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the wilderness? He struck the rock so that water gushed out and streams overflowed. Can he also give bread or provide meat for his people?" Therefore, when the LORD heard, he was full of wrath; a fire was kindled against Jacob; his anger rose against Israel, because they did not believe in God and did not trust his saving power (Psalm 78:17-22).

Israel Grumbled and were Destroyed by the Destroyer.

The following words of Moses, clearly shows that the destroyer is death: -

- The LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the *destroyer* to enter your houses to strike you (Exodus 12:23).

The words, "Nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer" (v10) is a reference to the time the whole congregation of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron saying: -

- Would that we had died in the land of Egypt or in this wilderness! (Num 14:2).

And because of Israel's constant rebellion, complaining and grumbling the LORD said: -

- All who have grumbled will die in the wilderness, only Caleb, Joshua and Israel's children will enter the Promised land because all the faithless and wicked congregation have gathered together against me they shall die in this wilderness (Num. 14:29-37).

Paul is using these examples to teach the brothers and sisters in the Corinthian church that they should take heed and not test God in the same manner as their father did in the Old Testament.

Tested God.

Tested in this context means that Israel acted wicked and committed gross sins which eventually forced the LORD to respond in discipline or act in judgment it is in this sense that Paul is saying Old Testament Israel tested God. It is very much like the child whose parents have told them not to do something or they will be disciplined and the child then tests their parents to see how far they can go before their Mum or Dad will intervene with the discipline they have said they would it is in this sense Israel tested God.

God is Faithful, and will not let you be Tempted Beyond your Ability.

1 Cor 10:11-14 ----- ¹¹These things were written down for instruction to those on whom the end of the ages has come. ¹²Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability (above what you are able in the KJV) but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it. ¹⁴Therefore, my beloved flee from idolatry.

The words, "These things were written down for instruction to those on whom the end of the ages has come" refers to the age after Christ death and resurrection i.e., all New Testament brothers and sisters in the Lord.

No Temptation has overtaken you that is Not Common to Man.

Paul focus so far has been warning the brothers and sisters of the Corinthian church not to live a life of sinfulness like the people of Old Testament Israel who God was not pleased with since they constantly tested Him, meaning they continually entered into gross iniquity and wickedness and persistently rebelled against God.

Paul in these verses is saying that every temptation, enticement, impulse, longing, turn-on and lure every brother or sister in Christ faces is common to all humans and that no-one in Christ faces any temptation that is unique to themselves because there are literally thousands of other humans on planet earth who face the same temptations every day and therefore God has given all of us the ability and the choice to overcome each temptation, enticement, impulse, longing, turn-on and lure.

After explaining this Paul then goes on to tell the Corinthian brothers and sisters how to endure and overcome any of these temptations which is of course to flee the temptation.

Temptation: it should be mentioned that temptation is not restricted to sexual attraction (it is just the obvious temptation), but temptation embraces many things i.e., the craving to eat excessive amounts of food, the temptation to cheat in life to succeed, lie about tax returns, the temptation to drink too much, oppress workers to make more profit, put Christ aside to be famous, pretend to be righteous so as to appear holy to others, exaggerate spiritual experience to appear superior, important or to have the praise of others and the list goes on.

Temptation appeals to our self-centeredness thus the reason it is powerful because it not only appeals to what self wants but also to human selfishness, pride, lust, greed and our avariciousness toward materialism, our overeating of tasty foods the enticement to drink excessive alcohol the craving to be important or esteemed, our sensual and lustful desires and the longing to be rich etc.

Though the answer to escape temptation is to flee it, i.e., get away from it as quick as possible should be clearly obvious to us all, it is not always that simple since many temptations start from very small beginnings and slowly grow until we are entrapped by them. Added to this is our fallen and corrupted nature which is mostly dominated by self, ego, pride, lust and greed etc., and the fact that our emotions

are often influenced by these entities which blind us from the wisdom needed to foresee the end result of the temptation and the trouble that the temptation is enticingly taking us toward. It is interesting to notice that the book of proverbs says that one of the aspects of godly wisdom is to be able to foresee the future ramifications of an action done in the present moment. A wise man once told me: -

- If sin wasn't so pleasurable it would not be a problem to anyone.

He was not only referring to sexual pleasure, but the lust for richness, abundant wealth, material possessions, fame, importance, power, and the wealth of enjoyments this world has to offer.

A Common Misunderstanding of Paul's Words.

Since many religious teachers misquote the words "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability (above what you are able in the KJV) (v13) as a cliché of comfort to those who are suffering a serious sickness, a crisis in life or the loss of a loved one etc., by saying (out of love and care) "Have faith, God will not afflict you with anything you cannot endure" though they mean well this is not only a perfect example of isolating a verse and taking it out of context but also a gross misunderstanding of it.

This is because the context of this chapter so far has been on, Old Testament Israel's wickedness, complaining and grumbling against God and a warning for us not to be like them. It is not about enduring non-sinful trials like sickness and poverty etc., nor is it an appropriate verse to use as comfort since Pauls answer to endure in this chapter is to flee, abscond, bolt and run away whereas a brother or sister in Christ who is suffering great hardship or a crisis in life are encouraged to run to the Lord to find comfort and strength so they can endure their sorrow.

Ponder for a Moment.

The husband of a sister in Christ watches his wife or child slowly die of a terminal cancer or disease (this happens I have seen it) is not going to find comfort in the words: -

- God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability.

Neither is a Christian Mum or Dad with three young children who have just lost their family home and everything in it through fire or floods nor is a mother who holds her still born child in her hands. To say to people in such suffering circumstances: -

- God will not let you be tempted beyond your ability.

Just makes God look like some cruel task master, (i.e. what more can they suffer except death), nevertheless there are many beautiful verses that can be quoted to comfort those in extreme sorrow one that comes immediately to mind are the following words Paul clearly tells us to encourage each another with: -

- For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God and those who have fallen asleep in Christ will rise first then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (1 Thes. 4:14-18).

Add to this the glorious and comforting words from the book of Revelation: -

- God himself will be with them as their God and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:3-4).

These of course are just a mere handful of the many majestic, eternal and comforting Scriptures that the Bible contains for those who have faith in God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Cup of Blessing that we Bless is a participation in the Blood of Christ?

1 Cor 10:15-17 ----- ¹⁵I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because there is *one bread*, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the *one bread*.

Paul asks the Corinthians to discern for themselves if what he is saying is correct, then he goes on to give an even clearer example by saying the cup and bread the apostles and the Corinthians share represents one body and though there are many individual believers they are actually all one because they share the same cup and bread which is a symbol of the one body of Christ.

This does not mean that if someone drinks a thimble full of wine and a piece of crisp wafer bread every Sunday they are all one body in Christ since faith has to be involved, i.e., a person can be partaking of the cup and bread simply because of tradition or because they have been born into such a practice, but live a life devoid of God during the week, while another is partaking because of their faith and aim to live their life to honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

These two are not in the same spiritual family since partaking of the wine and bread devoid of faith means nothing to God since is only those who are partaking because of their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that are accepted into his family since it is the 'faith' that is what counts and not whether a person drinks a thimble full of wine and eats a tiny crust of wafer bread every week.

When Paul says we are One Bread he has in mind those who are by faith trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation and who from their heart desire to honour God and aim to live a lifestyle that brings respect to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: in Paul's generation partaking of the blood of Christ and the bread was about brothers and sisters who were of noble standing or poor, educated or illiterate, rich or penniless having a meal together and sharing their food and drink with each other in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was about sharing conversation, food and drinks in equality and love regardless of status in life because of the bond those in Christ have with each other through their common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

For further information see the title, The Lords Supper in: -

- 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.
- In, Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Pagans sacrifice offerings to Demons and not to God.

1 Cor 10:18-22 ----- ¹⁸Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? ¹⁹What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons (daimon) and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹You 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. ²²Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

Paul in these verses is saying that all Old Testament Israel who ate of the sacrifices also had a part in the Altar of the temple that the sacrifices where offered on then says in the same way all New Testament brothers and sisters in Christ who eat the bread and cup together all have a part in Christ as the Old Testament father did in the Altar. This is because the bread and wine has replaced the Old Testament Passover sacrifices. In the Old Testament all the people ate the Passover sacrifice to remember their Exodus from Egypt (called the house of bondage) whereas now in the New Testament all believers are to eat the Passover meal which is now called The Last Supper together sharing their food and drink with those who have none (1 Cor. 11:17-34) in celebration of their deliverance in Christ from the law of sin and death which states: -

- The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 6:23)

This means all who trust in Christ have been granted the free gift of God which is: -

- Eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 6:23), because, “The law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death (Rom 8:2)

Thus the law of sin and death has no power to condemn to eternal death those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him. (This is one of the reasons the Gospel of Christ is called the Good News).

Food offered to Idols.

To fully understand what the term “Food offered to Idols” (v19) means it is helpful to understand that the people of the Old Testament brought their animal and grain sacrifices to the Altar at the temple where the priests cooked it and it became food for the priesthood and their families, it was in this way that it was offered to God since it provided food for the LORD'S priests and their families.

Now in the New Testament when brothers and sisters bring their food and share it amongst other brothers and sisters it can be referred to as their sacrifices to the Lord since they are freely giving to others what has cost them time, money and effort to obtain.

Now back to, “Food offered to Idols” it appears that some Corinthian brothers and sisters have joined together with pagans to share the cup and bread of the Lord (meaning a meal in Christ's name) because they believed that the pagans were also offering their food to God thus the reason Paul tells them that they cannot eat the Lord's Supper with those who deny Christ.

Paul is pointing out to the Corinthian brothers and sisters that if a person does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ then whatever offering they believe they are making to God is in reality being made to no god at all, but rather demons. It seems the Corinthian brothers and sisters believed that the pagan sacrifices (since it was only food) was being offered to God and it is certain that in the mind of the pagans they believed they were offering their sacrifices to God which is the reason Paul is saying to the Corinthians: -

- Though it is OK to eat meat that is sold in the markets even if it has been sacrificed to idols since it is only meat, it is not OK to sit down in fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ breaking bread together in the Lord's name with others who deny Christ and worship idols.

It is not the meat itself that provokes the LORD, to jealousy or anger, it is the association of sharing the intimacy of Christ with those who deny him and worship other gods.

For further information on Demons see the title: -

- Demons in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

NOTE: this does not mean that when brothers and sisters gather together to share a meal in the Lord's name they have to exclude a non-believing family member of another brother or sister. We know this because Paul in (1 Cor. 7:14) teaches that they are made holy by the believing family member which simply means that though they are not saved to eternal life for the sake of the believing brother or sister they should be treated as we would treat those who are in Christ.

Therefore we should be sharing our food and drink with them and in the same manner with anyone who is seeking Christ. The major problem with the Corinthians was that they did not discern the difference between eating a meal in Christ's name and eating with those who believed in other gods, they were blinded to the fact that they were partaking of the pagans' faith since they were accepting them as worshippers of the God of Israel.

All things are Lawful, but not all things are Helpful.

1 Cor 10:23-33 ----- ²³All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. ²⁴Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour. ²⁵Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁶For "the earth is the LORD'S and the fullness thereof." ²⁷If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁸But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience. ²⁹I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? ³⁰If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced (Evil spoken of in KJV) because of that for which I give thanks? ³¹So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³²Give no offence to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, ³³just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

The words, "All things are lawful" is not referring to sinful things, but rather traditions, religious practices, ceremonial laws, cultural customs and in this context eating of foods offered to idols, but though they maybe lawful it does not mean they are necessarily helpful for building others up in the faith.

Paul is telling the Corinthian brothers and sisters no-one need be anxious about what meat they buy or eat because of their conscious because "The earth is the LORD'S and the fullness thereof" (v26) which means all foods are OK to eat therefore if an unbeliever invites a brother or sister in Christ to dinner they are to eat whatever is set before them without asking any questions on the ground of their conscience.

NOTE: this is not about health or foods a person maybe allergic to, i.e., if someone serves food that look unhealthy, or that they maybe allergic to common sense dictates they should ask questions should this be the case. The focus is food offered to idols.

Paul is telling the Christian brothers and sisters if a group of them are at an unbelievers home eating a meal and one of the brothers or sisters in Christ realises that the meat they are being served has been offered to an idol in sacrifice and therefore would feel guilty to eat it then the others in Christ should refuse to eat it even though it would not be a problem to their conscience, since for them it is just meat, nevertheless they should refuse to eat it for the sake of the conscience of their brother or sister in Christ.

Why should my Liberty be Determined by Someone else's Conscience?

The words, "Why, should my liberty (freedom) be determined by someone else's conscience? Means no-one's conscience should feel guilty because of what foods others in Christ believe are acceptable to eat and not to eat and by extension no-one should impose what they believe is right or wrong for them in regards to non-sinful traditions, religious practices, ceremonial laws, cultural customs etc., onto another brother or sister in Christ since we should all be walking with our own conscience before the Lord and allowing him to influence us and not man.

The Principal.

The principal is that we should do all things with thankfulness and to the glory of God and not allow others to make us feel guilty by speaking badly of us simply because their conscience is in a different place to ours, nevertheless we should not be seeking our own good (v24) and what will benefit us but rather live to please others and as much as it is in our power avoid being an offense to anyone so that others may be encouraged in the faith and saved.

End.