



1 CORINTHIANS 10-11 FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS; THE VEIL; PASSOVER SERVICES

We continue in **1 Cor. 10**, where Paul finalizes the topic of *meat offered to idols*, for it was a contentious issue back then. Some in Corinth were *abusing of their liberty* and falling back to their pagan ways. Hence, Paul reminds them of what happened to that *first generation of Israelites*, who didn't pass the test of faith, obedience and avoiding idolatry, so they didn't enter the Promised Land.

He warns but also encourages them, saying, "If you think you are standing firm you had better be careful that *you do not fall*. Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and He will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, He will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out. So then, my dear friends, *keep away from the worship of idols*" (1 Cor. 10:12-14, GNB). *Expositor's Commentary* adds, "[Here is] the antidote to falling into sin through temptation. The Gk. *peirasmós*, 'trial' or 'temptation' is not itself sinful. God allows it as a way of *purifying us* (Jam. 1:12), but the Devil uses it to entice us into sin (Mt. 4:1)...When we are tempted, God *will* help. He *will* provide a way out, *not to avoid the temptation but to meet it successfully and firmly*."

This is why they shouldn't use their liberty by eating *at a pagan temple* and remind them of their idolatrous ways, also possibly offending a member who might see them. As Paul says in another place, "*Avoid every appearance of evil*" (1 Thes. 5:22, TPT).

To prove the point, he contrasts the Passover ceremony to a pagan one, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar [or are linked to that religion]? What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? [No, but] rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons [at a

temple]. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy [with your idolatry]? Are we stronger than He? (1 Cor. 10:16-22). As *Expositor's* points out, "It is clear that '[the communion] in Christ's blood' is meant to be a *memorial symbol* of fellowship with Christ, and *not a literal drinking of his blood* from the fact that Christ *had not yet died* when He instituted this [Passover] supper and that this participation is in *remembering him, not in drinking him*."

Thus, some Corinthian brethren, because the meat in question was biblically clean, thought eating inside those pagan temples was fine. Yet they were angering God, who wants us to be pure and avoid all pagan cults and practices. Today, this principle can be applied if we observe the New Testament Passover and then go to a church full of religious images and eat their communion wafer. It would be a serious violation of God's First Commandment (only obey & love God) and the Second Commandment (not practice idolatry).

He says they can eat at home the meat of a clean animal that might be sacrificed to an idol, but not inside a pagan temple. He explains: "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one *the other's well-being*. Eat whatever is sold *in the meat market*, asking no questions [about idols] for conscience' sake; for 'the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness' [Ps. 24:1]" (1 Cor. 10:23-25).

Remember, the pagan temples supplied a lot of the meat sold in the butcher shops, but once there, they could buy this meat without asking questions about its origins and eat it at home. Paul then quotes Psalm 24:1 which *Expositor's* says, "The O.T. quotation from Ps. 24:1 was used *as a Jewish blessing at mealtimes*." So, it clearly *was not pork*!

In 1 Tim. 4:3-5, he gives *the total criterion* about proper food. He says of false teachers "commanding *to abstain from foods* which God *created to be received with thanksgiving* by those *who believe and know the truth*. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received *with thanksgiving*; for it is *sanctified* [set apart for holy or proper use] *by the word of God* [Scripture] and *prayer*." So, food has to be *sanctified by God's Word*.

Now, what happens when a member is invited to the home of an unbeliever to eat? Paul says: "If any

of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. But if anyone says to you, 'This was offered to idols,' *do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake*; for 'The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness.' 'Conscience,' I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience? But if *I partake with thanks*, why am I evil spoken of for *the food over which I give thanks*? Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, *do all to the glory of God*. Give *no offense*, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the *church of God*, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, *that they may be saved*. *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ*" (1 Cor. 10:27-11:1).

We see this topic is always about meat *sacrificed to idols*, and as long as an unbeliever doesn't use it to test whether one has abandoned their old false beliefs or not, it can be eaten. This is *not* the same principle as someone serving pork, because it is not meat *created by God for human consumption and is not "sanctified" by God's Word*. Lev. 11:7 says, "You must *never* eat pigs. (Because pigs have completely divided hoofs but do not chew their cud, they are also unclean)" (GW). Never do we see in the Bible *any* believer ever eating pork. If it happens *accidentally*, it only affects the human body and one may get sick. But the important point is to always try to prevent it from happening again.

Paul then moves to **chapter 11** about certain matters regarding Church services. He says: "I commend you, brothers, because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I delivered them to you [concerning Church services]. But I want you to understand that *Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ*" (11:2-3).

First, notice here about *no third person in heaven*. It is just *God the Father* as overall head, and under Him, *Jesus Christ*—and then on earth *are humans*, with the man as the head of the home, then the wife and finally, the children. So, when a man is present at a gathering, he should normally give the prayer and not the woman. But when only women are present, one of them can ask the blessing.

Next is the issue about hair-lengths at Church: "Every man praying or prophesying, having his

head covered [Gk. *kephale*], dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered [very short hair] dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason, the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. *Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord*. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God. Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not even nature itself teach you that *if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him*? But if a woman *has long hair*, it is a glory to her; *for her hair is given to her for a covering*. But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God" (1 Cor. 11:4-15).

So, the problem in Corinth likely was about women wearing their hair too short, and looking like men. This scandalized the angels, who saw this lack of respect for the established order between the appearance of men and women. They should not look like men, nor should men look like women. The principle is found in Deut. 22:5, "Women must not *pretend to be men*, and men must not *pretend to be women*. The Lord your God is disgusted with people who do that" (CEV). In Ez. 44:20 it says, "They shall neither shave their heads, *nor let their hair grow long, but they shall keep their hair well trimmed*." In Greek art and history, it is noted that Greek women normally wore their hair unveiled and sometimes very short, especially the sacred prostitutes of the temples in Corinth.

The Explanatory Bible Commentary mentions: "Evidently, in Corinth some women were going to church with their heads uncovered as they should, and were causing disorder and disrespect in the services. Paul says that if they come like that, with their hair too short, it would be as offensive as if they came with their heads shaved or bald...He reminds them that men have short hair to

distinguish themselves from women with their long hair...If a man has long hair like a woman, he falls into disfavor with God; on the other hand, with longer hair, a woman pleases God, for she shows that she recognizes her role and is subject to the man. Furthermore, her hair is given as a natural veil when she worships...Christian men and women should remember that although they are equal before God, He made them with different sexes. Paul says that in all the churches it is taught that men should come to worship with short hair and women with longer hair, thus showing that the man holds the position of authority (v. 16). This teaching, which comes from apostolic authority, should counteract those who want to be contentious about this matter." Paul adds, "But if anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no such custom [of women having very short hair, or men having very long hair], nor do the churches of God" (1 Cor. 11:16).

Since Paul had touched on the coming Passover ceremony (mentioned in chapters 5 and 10), he was also concerned about an embarrassing incident that had occurred there in the past. He says: "Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together *not for the better but for the worse*. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are *divisions* among you, and in part I believe it. *For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you*. Therefore, when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. *For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk*. What! *Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?* Or do you *despise* the church of God and *shame those who have nothing?* What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you" (1 Cor. 11:18-22).

So, before celebrating the Passover, the Corinthians would gather to eat and share their food. However, the problem was that the wealthier members had kept the best food for themselves, and the poor were left with almost nothing to eat. Groups formed among the more affluent, leaving the poorest marginalized. Hence, the terms "divisions" and "factions," which mean separating into exclusive groups, was not the proper way to celebrate the meal before Passover.

If the wealthy wanted to eat more, they should do so in their own homes and not put to shame the poor by their selfish actions. Paul explains to them they must carefully examine their attitudes, for they were not showing the brotherly love that this solemn ceremony should represent. They could be bringing condemnation upon themselves and punishment due to their inconsiderate attitudes.

Then, he reminds them about the date of Passover, which he says should be observed "on the night [Jesus] was betrayed." This means celebrating it *at the beginning* of Passover date, which corresponds to the initial night, for during the day portion of the Passover, Jesus was to be crucified. This is how our Church celebrates Passover today.

Paul warns them they must *examine their attitudes* to ensure they do not have "a root of bitterness" when taking the Passover bread and wine and not harbor resentment toward another member. He says: "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason, many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For *if we would judge ourselves*, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, *we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world*. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. But, if anyone is hungry, *let him eat at home*, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come" (1 Cor. 11:31-34). Thus, Paul shows, some 20 years after Christ's death, how the Passover ceremony should be kept according to the proper manner, date and time.