



TEACH ME
THE BIBLE PODCAST

STUDY GUIDE

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CHAPTER

10

1 CORINTHIANS

Divisions in the Church



1 Corinthians: Chapter 10

If you are new to the Story of the Bible or would like to review the Story:
Listen to the following TMTB Podcasts:

The Story: Understanding the “Big Story” (30 min)

Old Testament: Walk Through the Broad Story (27 min)

Timeline: New Testament Beginnings (35 min)

Letters: Paul’s Writing to the Churches–Part 1 (30 min)

REVIEW

Remember that in chapters 7 through 9 Paul has been under the examination of the Corinthians and has been having to explain his actions and his motivation, which is Christ. Paul begins chapter 10 by giving a warning to the Corinthians and making a comparison between them and the Israelites who came out of Egypt. Despite God’s provision, they brought judgment on themselves because they were disobedient and rejected God. Paul tells the Corinthians that they must not worship idols and that they should flee sexual immorality. He goes on to say that everything is permissible but not everything is beneficial. So whatever we eat or drink or whatever we do, we should do it for the glory of God. If what we do causes one of our brothers to stumble, then we should not seek our own good but the good of others and what builds up the body of Christ.



1 Corinthians: Chapter 10

MONDAY

Listen to the Chapter 10 podcast.

TUESDAY

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 Paul states, *“For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.”*

While these verses have been the source of some debate concerning baptism and Paul’s seeming allegorical use of “rock,” if you have been following along with us, these verses should be fairly easy to understand. Paul’s point in this section is quite simple: They were following Moses but they were being fed by Christ. This point has extreme importance given the fact that the core of the divisions in the Corinthian church was caused by the people following different leaders without remembering that the leaders were spiritually fed by Christ. Divisions in the church caused by some following one “leader” and others following another “leader.” Does that sound familiar? Welcome to the Protest Church (better known as Protestants). Paul’s point is simple and has been repeated throughout his letter: we are all members of one body, the body of Christ.

Now that you are pretty far along in 1 Corinthians, take another look at the list of verses in which Paul mentions “baptism” (1:13, 14, 15, 16 (2x), 17; 10:2; 12:13; 15:29 (2x)). Is the issue in Corinth (divisions, apparently even concerning baptism) as well as Paul’s response that those divisions beginning to make more sense?

WEDNESDAY

While some have accused Paul of playing “fast and loose” with his use of the Old Testament in reference to this “rock” in 1 Corinthians 10:4, nothing could be farther from the truth. Paul knows his Bible! The Old Testament story builds the anticipation of Christ, in part, through symbolism. The “rock” or “stone” is a perfect example. Beginning with Jacob’s ladder (“stone” in Genesis 28 and 29) and continuing throughout the Old Testament story (“rock” that was struck and brought forth water in Exodus 17) the “stone” or “rock” symbolized Christ. A perfect example of this is Isaiah 8:13-14, *“It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread. Then He will become a sanctuary. But to both houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over...”* It is this same rock, Christ, that the wise man builds his house upon and when the storm comes, his house will stand. Christ is our ROCK (see Matthew 7:24). Be wise! Build your house, your life, your hope, all that you are and have on the ROCK, on Christ.

The word that is translated “stone” in the Old Testament is “eben” (you may know Ebenezer, which means “stone of help”). The word is used 278 times in the Old Testament. While key uses of this word are found



1 Corinthians: Chapter 10

throughout the Old Testament, read Genesis 28:11, 18, 22; 29:2, 3, 8, 10; 31:45, 46; 35:14; 49:24; Exodus 17:12; Isaiah 8:14; and Isaiah 28:16.

Next, the word that is translated “rock” in the Old Testament is “tsur.” The word is used 146 times in the Old Testament (often transliterated in names, e.g., Elizur, Zurishaddai, Pedahzur, etc.). However, in passages like Deuteronomy 32 (vv. 4, 13, 15, 18, 30, 31 (2x), and 37) the word carries quite significant relevance to Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 10. Read Deuteronomy 32.

Also, read Psalm 18; 19; 27; 28; 78; and 89. Now ask yourself, is Paul playing “fast and loose” with the Old Testament?

THURSDAY

Ready for an obvious statement? Ok, here goes...chapter 11 follows chapter 10. In other words, what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 10 is going to lead to a point in chapter 11. In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul makes a key point: God judged Israel when they craved evil things, committed idolatry, acted in immorality, tried the Lord, and grumbled. Moreover, as Paul reminds his Corinthian readers, these things are examples for us. Additionally, Paul explains that these temptations are nothing new. Thus, if God hasn’t changed (still judges His people) and these temptations have not changed (craving evil, idolatry, immorality, and grumbling), then what should the believer expect God’s response to these things might be?

Go back and read the passages in 1 Corinthians concerning “evil” (5:8; 10:6; 13:5; 14:20; 15:33), “idolatry” (5:10, 11; 10:7, 14) and “immorality” (chapters 5 and 6). Now go back and read Exodus 32; Numbers 11; 16; 17; 21; and 25. They are doing the same things as Israel did. Now read chapter 11 (They are under the judgment of the Lord. Can you guess why?). Finally, does 1 Corinthians 10:13-14 (“*No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry*”) make sense?

FRIDAY

The last words of 1 Corinthians 10:33 are powerful indeed: “*...not seeking my own profit but that of the many, so that they may be saved.*” Read those words again. Paul’s letter goes to great lengths to explain his sacrifice in order to build up the body of Christ. Now, ask yourself if that can be said of you. This is such a simple, but convicting verse.

Take another look at 1 Corinthians 6:12; 7:35; 10:23; 10:33; 12:7. All of these verses use the same Greek word (sumphero) which is translated “profit,” “benefit,” “advantage.” While all of these usages may not be translated with the same word, Paul certainly meant for them to be. Paul’s point isn’t just to explain his sacrifice, but to instruct the Corinthians to “be imitators” of him! Read the very next verse, 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”