Chapter Eight

In Chapter Eight Paul moves on to a second topic that was brought up by the Corinthians in a prior correspondence (1 Cor. 8:1 cf. 7:1). This topic was a question regarding meat sacrificed to idols. Paul answers the question through the instruments of knowledge and love (1 Cor. 8:1-3). In terms of knowledge, since no other gods exist, meat sacrificed to idols is not a concern to those who exist from & are reconciled to God the Father through the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 8:4-6). In terms of love, some believers don’t have such a perspective, and their weak conscience can be ruined (1 Cor. 8:7-12). The Law of Love motivates a believer to waive any liberty he has for the sake of not being a stumbling block (1 Cor. 8:13).

Knowledge and Love

1. Concerning “things sacrificed to idols” (1 Cor. 8:1).
   a. εἰδωλόθυτος #1494: from εἴδωλον #1497 (image, likeness) & ἔν #2380 (to sacrifice, slay, kill) (Acts 15:29; 21:25; 1 Cor. 8:1,4,7,10; 10:19; Rev. 2:14,20).
   b. The more common term is ἱερόθυτος, which is also indexed by Strongs as #1494 (1 Cor. 10:28).
   c. Only the monotheistic perspective of worshiping YHWH makes sacrifices to “other” gods idolatrous (Rev. 2:14 cf. Num. 25:2).

2. We are knowing (οἴδαμεν) that we all have factual knowledge (οἴδαµεν ὅτι πάντες γνῶσιν ἔχουµεν).
   a. The formula οἴδαµεν ὅτι is freq. used to introduce a well-known fact that is generally accepted (Mt. 22:16; Lk. 20:21; Jn. 3:2; 9:31; Rom. 2:2; 3:19; 7:14; 8:22,28; 2nd Cor. 5:1; 1st Tim. 1:8; 1st Jn. 3:2; 5:18ff.) (BDAG 3rd Ed.).
   b. Knowledge makes arrogant (ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῖ). Gnosis puffs up.
      1) Pres.act.ind. φυσιοῖν #5448: to inflate, blow up, puff up (1 Cor. 4:6,18,19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4; Col. 2:18).
      2) Noun φυσίωσις #5450: inflated, bloated, swell-headedness (2 Cor. 12:20).
   c. Love edifies (ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδοµῶ). Agape builds up.
      2) Noun οἰκοδοµή #3619: edifying, edification (Used 18x: Matt. 24:1; Mk. 13:1,2; Rom. 14:19; 15:2; 1st Cor. 3:9; 14:3,5,12,26; 2nd Cor. 5:1; 10:8; 12:19; 13:10; Eph. 2:21; 4:12,16,29).

3. The only thing we need to know is that we don’t yet know in the way that we ought to know (καθὼς δεῖ) (1 Cor. 8:2).
   a. Assuming that anyone thinks he has come to know anything, not yet has he come to know in a manner in which it is a necessity in the nature of the case to know (Wuest).
   b. If anyone thinks he knows anything, he does not yet know it as he ought to know it (HCSB).
   c. Two quotes from William Somerset Maugham (English playwright & novelist):
      1) The little I know, I owe to my ignorance.
      2) The only thing I know for sure is that I don’t know anything for sure.
   d. Two quotes from E.C. McKenzie (American Church of Christ Minister):
      1) The person who knows everything has a lot to learn.
      2) It isn’t the things we know that gets us into trouble. It’s the things we know for sure that do.

4. The key is not “what we know” but “Who we love” (1 Cor. 8:3).
   a. If anyone loves God (εἰ δέ τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν).
   b. He is known by Him (οὗτος ἐγνώσται ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ). Perf.pass.ind. ἤδυζ #1097.
**Knowledge**

In terms of knowledge, since no other gods exist, meat sacrificed to idols is not a concern to those who exist from, for, and through Jesus Christ (1st Cor. 8:4-6).

1. The big picture is “things sacrificed to idols.” \( τῆς \) εἰδωλοθύτων. This picture is “eating things sacrificed to idols.” \( τῇ \) ἐπίδρασιν. (1st Cor. 8:4 cf. v.1).

2. A well-known fact is that false gods are simply imposters (1st Cor. 8:4-5).

3. There is no such thing as an idol in the world (cf. 1st Cor. 8:4).

   a. \( τὸ \) εἰδωλόν: idol. There is no idol/image in the world. Just as with the idea of \( θεὸς \) above, this view is only possible from a monotheistic perspective. Kittel has a great article on this.

   b. \( θεοὶ \) (216): God. There is no god except for One.

   c. The non-existant idols are in the world (χάος).

4. Even if there are (εἰς θεοὺς ὑπάρχουσιν) (1st Cor. 8:5). “If indeed,” “For although,” “For even if” (Rom. 3:30; 8:9,17).

   a. So called gods (ζεύγη ἑλεστικῶν).

      1) Non-Christian deities are referred as \( θεοὶ \) only in polemical contexts (Acts 7:40; 19:37; 2nd Thess. 2:4), with the exception of the reference to the “unknown God” (Acts 17:23). Terms such as \( θεοί \) (1 Cor 8:5) and \( ἀγέλαστα ὑπὸ θεῶν) (Gal 4:8) are to be understood against the background of Hellenistic philosophy of religion.

      2) These “gods” are actually “no gods” (2nd Chr. 13:8-9).

      3) Antichrist will even exalt himself above these “so called gods” (2nd Thess. 2:4).

   b. Either/or in the heavens, on the earth (τοῖς θεοῖς); οὐδένις (οἴς). The \( ζεύγη \) \( θεοὺς \) are monopresent—confined to either heaven or earth (Job 1:6-7), and required to travel between the two (Gen. 28:12). [Note: the only apparent bipresent angels are the guardian angels (Mt. 18:10)].

5. As indeed there are (Εἷς θεός ἃν) (Deut. 10:17).

   a. Many gods (ζεύγη ἑλεστικῶν). Jn. 10:34-36; Ps. 82:1,6; also 85:5; 97:7,9; 138:1; Ex. 18:11; 22:19; Jer. 10:1-16

   b. Many lords (ζεύγη ἑλεστικῶν). The \( ἀγέλαστα \) in Acts 10:4 is an \( ἀγέλαστα \) angel in v.3. The term \( ἀγέλαστα \) is in Jude 8; 2nd Pet. 2:10; Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16 refers to angelic beings. The “elder” of Rev. 7:13 is addressed as Lord in v.14, but as a general address this is not unusual (cf. Acts 16:30).

   c. Idolatry is demon-worship (Deut. 32:17; 1st Cor. 10:20).

6. Yet for us (Εἷς θεός) (1st Cor. 8:6).


      1) From Whom are all things (ἐξ οὗ ἐξῆλθεν). Agent of creation, agent of salvation.

      2) and we for Him (ἐν οἷς ἔπεσεν). (ἐν οἷς: into, in, toward, to. Destiny, goal, name. “For” may be consistent with 1st Cor. 6:13, but the syntax is entirely different between the two passages. Ex & εἰς appear together in such contrasting passages as Mt. 15:11; 27:53; Mk. 7:15,31; 9:25; Lk. 2:4; 10:7; 17:24; Jn. 3:13; 4:47,54; 5:24; 11:55; Acts 7:3,4; 18:1; 28:17; Rom. 1:17; 11:24,36; 1st Cor. 8:6; 2nd Cor. 2:16; Gal. 6:8; Col. 1:13; 1st Pet. 2:9; 1st Jn. 3:14; Rev. 8:5; 9:1,3; 11:12; 13:13; 16:1; 17:8.

   b. One Lord (ἐν οἷς ἐν Τῷ Χριστῷ). Jesus Christ (ἐν Τῷ Χριστῷ).

      1) Through Whom are all things (ἐν οἷς ἐπηλθεν). Agent of creation, agent of salvation.

      2) and we through Him (ἐν οἷς ἐπηλθεν). Agent of reconciliation, agent of glorification.

   From, through, and to Him are all things (Rom. 11:36). By, through, and for Him (Col. 1:16). “Into” Himself (Col. 1:20).

7. This is what we know (ἐν οἷς (1st Cor. 8:4) but not everyone has this knowledge (ἐν οἷς θεός (1st Cor. 8:7).
Love

1. A believer does not achieve victory in their testing by their own doctrinal understanding and maturity alone. Sometimes the doctrinal understanding of other believers is a more vital consideration (1st Cor. 8:7).

   a. We all have knowledge (v.1), but not all have “this” knowledge (v.7). Or in other words, “this knowledge is not in all.”

      1) We all have knowledge. Πάντες γνῶσιν ἔχον 

      2) This knowledge is not in all. Οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γνῶσις.

   b. Some believers were “accustomed” to their culture’s idolatry. Συνήθεια: custom, practice (Jn. 18:39; 1st Cor. 8:7; 11:16).

   c. The things believers are accustomed to may leave the consciences of those believers weak. Συνείδησις: conscience (Rom. 2:15; 1st Cor. 8:7,10,12; 10:25,27,28,29,2; 1st Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:15; Heb. 9:14; 10:22).

2. Matters of temporal life liberty are irrelevant for progress in spiritual life (1st Cor. 8:8).

   a. Matters of temporal life liberty are not matters presented to God at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Ὑστερέω: to miss out, fail to reach, be in need (Matt. 19:20; Lk. 15:14; Jn. 2:3; Rom. 3:23; 1st Cor. 1:7; 8:8; 12:24; 2nd Cor. 11:5,9; 12:11).

   b. Neither worse. Περισσεύω: to be in abundance, abound, be better (Matt. 5:20; Lk. 15:17; 1st Cor. 8:8; 14:12; 15:58; 2nd Cor. 1:5; 3:9; 4:15; 8:2,7; 9:8,12; 1st Thess. 4:1,10).

3. Matters of temporal life liberty may become a stumbling block to other believers, in which case these matters become critically relevant to spiritual life (1st Cor. 8:9-12).

   a. Take care. Βλέπετε: to see.


   c. Stumbling block. Πρόκοπος: act of stumbling; obstacle (Rom. 9:32).

      1) Compare with σκάνδαλον: stumbling block (Rom. 14:13).

      2) The stone of stumbling (Πέτρα σκανδάλου) and rock of offense (Πέτρα σκανδάλου) is significant to the Christology of Peter (Πέτρος) (1st Pet. 2:8; cf. Matt. 16:18,23).

      3) Great article in BibSac on Πρόκοπος ὑπό σκάνδαλον. 

   d. Weak conscience wrongly edified (1st Cor. 8:10).

   e. A fellow believer may become ruined (1st Cor. 8:11).

4. The Law of Love is a supreme veto over the Law of Liberty (1st Cor. 8:13). Can we lay aside our privileges for the sake of other believers? (Phil. 2:5).