

~IDOLS, MEATS OFFERED TO (206)

- In the pagan world of the **First Century C.E.**, it was a common practice to offer meats to idols ceremonially. On such occasions parts of the sacrificial animal victim were placed on the idol altar, a portion went to the priests, and a portion went to the worshipers, who would use it for a meal or feast, either in the temple or in a private house. However, some of the flesh that had been offered to the idols was often turned over to the *ma'kel-lon*, or meat market, to be sold.
- Many persons before becoming Christians had been accustomed to eating meats offered to idols with a feeling of reverence for the idol.
- Nevertheless, there is not this knowledge in all persons, but some, being accustomed until now to the **idol**, eat food as something sacrificed to an **idol**, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. (**1 Corinthians 8:7**)
- In so doing, these former pagans had been sharers with the demon god represented by the **idol**.
- No, but I say that the things which the nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God, and **I do not want you to become sharers with the demons.** (**1 Corinthians 10:20**)
- Quite fittingly, therefore, by formal letter from Jerusalem, the older men of the early Christian congregation, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, forbade such formal, religious eating of meats offered to **idols**, thus safeguarding Christians from idolatry in this regard.
- Hence my decision is not to trouble those from the nations who are turning to God. (**Acts of Apostles 15:19**)
- But to write them to abstain from things polluted by **idols** and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. (**Acts of Apostles 15:20**)
- For from ancient times Moses has had in city after city those who preach him, because he is read aloud in the synagogues on every Sabbath. (**Acts of Apostles 15:21**)
- Then the apostles and the older men together with the whole

congregation favored sending chosen men from among them to Antioch along with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was called Barsabbas and Silas, leading men among the brothers. (Acts of Apostles 15:22)

- And by their hand they wrote. The apostles and the older men, brothers, to those brothers in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the nations. Greetings! (Acts of Apostles 15:23)
- For the Holy Spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things. (Acts of Apostles 15:28)
- To keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you! (Acts of Apostles 15:29)
- Christians, like those living in pagan Corinth, were faced with a number of questions in this matter. Could they conscientiously go into an idol temple and eat meat if they did so with no thought of honoring the idol?
- And, would there be any objection to buying from the *ma'kel-lon* meats that had been ceremonially offered to idols? Finally, how should a Christian handle this matter when eating as a guest in someone else's home?
- Under inspiration Paul provided the Corinthian Christians with timely information to aid them in making the correct decisions. Although an **idol is nothing**, it would not be advisable for a Christian to go to an idol temple to eat **meat**, even though his eating was not part of a religious ceremony, because he could thereby be giving spiritually weak observers the wrong impression.
- Such observers might conclude that the Christian was worshiping the **idol**, and they could be stumbled by this. It could lead such weaker ones to the point of actually eating **meats** sacrificed to **idols** in religious ceremony, in direct violation of the decree of the older men. There was also the danger that the Christian eater would violate his own conscience and yield to **idol** worship.
- Now concerning foods offered to **idols**. We know we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. (1

Corinthians 8:1)

- If anyone thinks he has acquired knowledge of something, he does not yet know it just as he ought to know it. (**1 Corinthians 8:2**)
- But if anyone loves God, this one is known by him. (**1 Corinthians 8:3**)
- Now concerning the eating of foods offered to **idols**, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but one. (**1 Corinthians 8:4**)
- For even though there are those who are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many gods and many lords. (**1 Corinthians 8:5**)
- There is actually to us one God the Father, out of whom all things are, and we for him. There is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and we through him. (**1 Corinthians 8:6**)
- Nevertheless, there is not this knowledge in all persons, but some, being accustomed until now to the **idol**, eat food as something sacrificed to an **idol**, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. (**1 Corinthians 8:7**)
- But food will not commend us to God. If we do not eat, we do not fall short, and, if we eat, we have no credit to ourselves. (**1 Corinthians 8:8**)
- But keep watching that this authority of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to those who are weak. (**1 Corinthians 8:9**)
- For if anyone should see you, the one having knowledge, reclining at a meal in an **idol** temple, will not the conscience of that one who is weak be built up to the point of eating foods offered to **idols**? (**1 Corinthians 8:10**)
- Really, by your knowledge, the man that is weak is being ruined, your brother for whose sake Christ died. (**1 Corinthians 8:11**)
- But when you people thus sin against your brothers and wound their conscience that is weak, you are sinning against Christ. (**1**

Corinthians 8:12)

- Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat flesh at all, that I may not make my brother stumble. (**1 Corinthians 8:13**)
- Since the ceremonial offering of meats to idols produced no change in the **meat**, the Christian could, however, with a good conscience buy meat from a market that received some of its **meat** from religious temples.
- This **meat** had lost its sacred significance. It was just as good as any other **meat**, and the Christian was therefore not under obligation to make inquiry respecting its origin.
- Everything that is sold in a **meat** market keep eating, making no inquiry on account of your conscience. (**1 Corinthians 10:25**)
- For, to Yehowah belong the earth and that which fills it. (**1 Corinthians 10:26**)
- Furthermore, the Christian, upon being invited to a meal, did not have to make inquiry concerning the source of the meat, but could eat it with a good conscience.
- If, however, an individual present at the meal were to remark that the meat had been, offered in sacrifice, then the Christian would refrain from eating it to avoid stumbling others.
- If anyone of the unbelievers invites you and you wish to go, proceed to eat everything that is set before you, making no inquiry on account of your conscience. (**1 Corinthians 10:27**)
- But if anyone should say to you; This is something offered in sacrifice. Do not eat on account of the one that disclosed it, and on account of conscience. (**1 Corinthians 10:28**)
- Conscience, I say, not your own, but that of the other person. For why should it be that my freedom is judged by another person's conscience? (**1 Corinthians 10:29**)
- The words of the glorified Jesus Christ to John respecting the Christian congregations at Pergamum and Thyatira indicate that

certain ones had failed to heed the apostolic decree in not keeping themselves clean from things sacrificed to idols.

- **And to the angel of the congregation in Pergamum write. These are the things that he says who has the sharp, long two-edged sword. (Revelation 2:12)**
- **Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, that you have there those holding fast the teaching of Balaam, who went teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to **idols** and to commit fornication. (Revelation 2:14)**
- **And to the angel of the congregation in Thyatira write. These are the things that the Son of God says, he who has his eyes like a fiery flame, and his feet are like fine copper. (Revelation 2:18)**
- **Nevertheless, I do hold this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and misleads my slaves to commit fornication and **to eat things sacrificed to idols**. (Revelation 2:20)**