

“and perished by the destroyer” (LITV), would be far better to make the proper distinction between the verb *apollumi* (ἀπόλλυμι) and the noun *olothreutēs* (ὀλοθρευτής).²⁷

11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. 13 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.

10:11 It is not uncommon in various parts of today’s Messianic movement, to see 1 Corinthians 10:11 referred to, in connection with encouraging Believers to study the weekly Torah portions as important instruction. However, readers of the letter of 1 Corinthians encounter Paul’s assertion here given within a wider context of the Corinthians not repeating the mistakes of the Ancient Israelites of the Exodus, the majority of whom did not make it into the Promised Land. As the RSV puts it, “Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction.” Here, we encounter the term *tupikōs* (τυπικῶς), “**pert. to serving as an example or model, as an example/ warning**” (BDAG).²⁸ The rendering “example” is perfectly legitimate, but readers need not overlook how there is indeed a “warning” for those who read the Torah, the Exodus, and the rebellious attitudes of Ancient Israel. Garland is correct in his statement, “If the wilderness generation met such a horrifying end by spurning a concealed Christ who nurtured them throughout their journey, how much more the Corinthians will be condemned if they spurn the revealed Christ.”²⁹

Perspective issues involving eschatology are definitely present by how readers approach Paul’s claim that the accounts of Ancient Israel involve *eis hōs ta telē tōn aiōnōn katēntēken* (εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντηκεν), “to whom the ends of the ages have come” (Brown and Comfort),³⁰ “on whom the culmination of the ages has come” (TNIV), or as the CJB has, “to us who are living in the *acharit-hayamim*.” That the Apostle Paul recognized that the Believers in Israel’s Messiah were living in a new time period, is easily deduced from his writings (Romans 16:25; Galatians 4:4). Yet, the broader claim of the Apostolic Writings is indeed that Believers in Israel’s Messiah are living in the last days (Hebrews 1:2; 1 Peter 1:20), a time which started with the Messiah’s First Coming, His ascension into Heaven, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:16-21). That future realities of the coming Messianic Age have already broken into the present is also clear enough from the Apostolic Writings—although more is surely to come in history. David Prior summarizes,

²⁷ For a further evaluation of 1 Corinthians 10:9-10, in regard to discussions of eternal punishment, consult the author’s publication *Why Hell Must Be Eternal*.

²⁸ BDAG, 1019.

²⁹ Garland, 465.

³⁰ Brown and Comfort, 601.

“Paul’s own contemporaries were living in a uniquely privileged generation, one *upon whom the ages has come* (11). These ‘ages’ could be a combination of ‘this present age or world-order’ and ‘the age to come’ (heralded by the first coming and to be consummated by the second coming of Christ). On this explanation, every person in Christ is living in crucial days ‘between the ages’ (what theologians often call ‘living in the overlap’), with each extra day a bonus.”³¹

Fee interjects an important thought, which certainly needs to be considered by many Messianic people who regularly study the Torah and Tanach:

“[U]ltimately the whole OT has been pointing toward its eschatological fulfillment...And that is why the OT is [Believers’] book in particular—because it has Christ as its prime actor and final goal...for Christians stand at the end of history, at the time when God is bringing all of the divine purposes into focus and fulfillment in Christ.”³²

Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner further comment,

“Since God has begun the process of wrapping up history, it is of utmost urgency to learn from Israel’s example in order to assure that the devastating judgment that fell on the nation does not end up being repeated in our own experience.”³³

Today’s Messianic movement has its external and internal challenges, for certain, because we are all human beings who have to live and deal with an imperfect world. However, if we indeed believe we are living in a time when the people of God are being fully restored, and that the Messianic community has an important role to play in the future with the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6)—then the Torah and Tanach indeed have lessons for us, which are for a very important and critical purpose. With the second decade of the Twenty-First Century now half-way over, the season to serve the Lord in a relatively open and free Western society is going to steadily close in on us. How we learn to properly integrate the lessons of the Torah and the Tanach, and also make do with less time and resources than those who preceded us (i.e., evangelical Christianity of the 1980s and 1990s), should make us be more effective and useful for the Kingdom of God—precisely because we know we are much closer to the culmination of the end-times than the First Century Corinthians!

10:12 Paul issues the word, perhaps more to those in Corinth who presumed themselves to be “knowledgable”—but obviously with important applications to any encountering his remarks—“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (NIV). If the Israelites of old, who witnessed the parting of the Red Sea, the Mount Sinai theophany, and the miraculous provision of God in the wilderness fell—then various Corinthians are just as in danger of falling. The thought of Isaiah 33:5-6 astutely would direct,

“The LORD is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. And He will be the stability of your times, a wealth of salvation, wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is his treasure.”

³¹ Prior, 169.

³² Fee, 459.

³³ Ciampa and Rosner, pp 465-466.

10:13 Paul's statement in v. 13 tends to be approached by Bible readers as more of an abstract remark on God being faithful to His people (1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:24) experiencing trial or temptation, although it was delivered within a specific context of various Corinthians having to resist idolatry, eating meat sacrificed to idols, and sexual immorality. Paul exhorts, "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" (Good News Bible). The Bible certainly has significant examples of God's testing (Genesis 22:1; Job 1:12), yet as the famed Lord's Prayer also directs, "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). The example and lessons of the Exodus are still in view, to emphasize to the Corinthians that there is a way out of temptation.

With v. 13 more often than not taken in the abstract, it can be further concluded how difficulty, testing, or temptation either makes or breaks people. Sampley concludes how "The 'yous' in the text are both plural, meaning that the experience of the testing and the efforts at handling it are never presumed by Paul to be borne by an individual alone. Paul's assumption is that any testing you experience is never in isolation. A death of a spouse, for example, is also a death experienced by others."³⁴ Those in the Body of Messiah are to certainly help one another out through the tough times, be those caused by death, dissolution of relationships, health challenges, financial challenges, or some other difficulty.

V. 13 does, however, appear in a concrete discussion Paul is having with the Corinthians, as he tries to seriously warn them away from participating in immoral and God-less behavior. There were real temptations which existed in First Century Corinth, trying to draw in Corinthian Messiah followers to idolatrous functions, social meals at idolatrous temples, and certainly the overarching problem of sexual immorality, be it heterosexual or homosexual. Because of significant connections to family members or old friends, and the definite backlash which could come in rejecting invitations to different functions, the Believers not just could, but would, be impacted both socially and economically for their Messiah faith. Yet, Paul is clear that the temptations that they were facing were "common to mankind" (2011 NIV), and that the God of Israel was surely going to be faithful to them to offer them a way out. Garland stresses how important it would have been for the First Century Corinthians to indeed rely on God:

"Avoiding all overt associations with idolatry would invite hostility, especially when one was a guest at the home of a religiously minded host who offered food that had been sanctified by an idol. If the host was a patron, one's refusal to eat idol food could be taken as a grave insult to the god and the host, and such an affront could lead to financial retribution. If the host was a family member or a neighbor, the refusal could result in being cast into the outer darkness of social banishment....Withdrawing from all idolatrous functions would scuttle any ambitions for social advancement, impair patron/client relations, fuel ostracism, and damage economic partnerships....The pressure to compromise and to join in the hail-fellow—well-met concivality was intense. Paul assures them,

³⁴ Sampley, in *NIB*, 10:916.

however, that any testing that comes upon Christians will be met with God's faithfulness. God will not allow them to be tempted beyond what they can withstand, and God will provide a means of escape so that they can endure it. In the Corinthian situation, a refusal to participate in idol feasts will not result in any trauma that God's power cannot help them endure."³⁵

Indeed, as we review this in 2015—especially with homosexual marriage now legal in the United States of America—how much are God's people today going to have to increasingly rely upon Him, as Western Believers will be facing more and more of the same sorts of circumstances?

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say. 16 Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Messiah? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Messiah? 17 Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.

10:14-33 In 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 preceding, the Apostle Paul issued an important reminder to the Corinthians, specifically how what occurred to the Ancient Israelites in the past, took place as examples for Messiah followers to consider, with the expressed reason “so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved” (v. 6).³⁶ Paul is clear to direct his audience, “Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (v. 11). Given the fact that much of what the Torah says is to be understood as a “warning” (RSV), so that previous mistakes committed by God's people, like fornication and idolatry, are not subsequently repeated (vs. 7-9)—Paul by no means should be considered as someone opposing the Law of Moses here. A major focus of his admonishment to the Corinthians is precisely so they can resist lawlessness, and in particular the idolatry present in their local community (v. 13).

Having just appealed directly to the Tanach or Old Testament, specifically in the example of Ancient Israel's worship of the golden calf (v. 7; Exodus 32:4), and the Numbers 25 scene of sexual immorality (v. 8), Paul moves forward in 1 Corinthians 10:14-33, in addressing something similar to what he had previously addressed in 1 Corinthians 8. In this passage, while the issue of eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols is discussed, the venue has changed to the private home of a non-Believer, not a public temple or shrine. Paul intends to appeal to the Corinthians' good sense (v. 15), as he addresses a hypothetical situation about what to do when a Corinthian Believer might be invited to dine at the home of a non-Believer (v. 27), which would presumably be an opportunity to develop a relationship and share of the good news of Israel's Messiah. What, specifically, was to be done, when potentially served meat that had been sacrificed to idols?

³⁵ Garland, 468.

³⁶ This section has been adapted from the 1 Corinthians 10:14-33 entry appearing in the *Messianic Kosher Helper* (2014) by Messianic Apologetics.

Due to the repeated presence of the Corinthian slogan *panta exestin* (πάντα ἔξεστιν) or “Everything is permissible” (10:23, NIV [2x]) in this passage, it cannot go overlooked how there are some notable parallels between 1 Corinthians 10:14-33 and 6:18-20 preceding:³⁷

| 1 CORINTHIANS 10:14-33 | 1 CORINTHIANS 6:18-20 |
|--|---|
| Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry (10:14). | Flee immorality... (6:18). |
| Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Messiah? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Messiah? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread (10:16-17). | Do you not know that your bodies are members of Messiah? Shall I then take away the members of Messiah and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body <i>with her</i> ?...But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit <i>with Him</i> (6:15-17). |
| “All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up (10:23, RSV). | “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything (6:12, RSV). |
| Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (10:31). | For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body (6:20). |

Previously, Paul was greatly concerned with presumed Corinthian “Believers” consorting with prostitutes. Here, Paul is concerned with the abuses present among those who think that “I am allowed to do anything” (NLT), which would clearly be problematic in light of the imperative of edifying other Believers, and/or those outside of the faith community.

While opposing any participation and fellowship in idolatry (vs. 14-23), what does it mean to edify one’s neighbor (v. 24)? It could mean accepting the invitation to the home of a non-Believer for a meal (vs. 25-27a), and in the process having to eat whatever is served to oneself (v. 27b). When it is discovered that the meat served had been sacrificed to idols, the meat is to then be refused (vs. 28-29a). All of the activities conducted by the redeemed in Yeshua are to be to the glory of God, and the concern of others who may be offended (vs. 31-33).

³⁷ Cf. Garland, 474.

1 Corinthians 10:14-33, and its relationship to both eating and the kosher dietary laws, is without doubt a passage which tends to create a great deal of tension when it is brought up in a Messianic venue. Such tension not only concerns the First Century Corinthian setting of Paul's writing, but its application for more modern times, particularly in settings of missionary evangelism and/or hospitality from others. 1 Corinthians 10:14-33 is a place where a number of Christian theologians think that the Apostle Paul has definitely "gone rogue" in terms of the Apostolic decree (Acts 15:20, 29), or has at least pushed the limits of prohibitions of the Apostolic decree, as far to the Left as they could go. Obviously, a reasonable examination of 1 Corinthians 10:14-33 should be in order, and with it an understanding of Paul's overriding concern: "I try to accommodate everybody in everything, not looking for my own advantage, but for the advantage of everybody else, so that they may be saved" (v. 33, New Jerusalem Bible).

10:14-17 Paul issues the imperative to the Corinthians, "Therefore, my dearly loved ones, flee from idolatry" (v. 14, TLV). With the scene of Exodus 32:1-6³⁸ in view, of Ancient Israel's worship of the golden calf (v. 7), the Phillips New Testament paraphrase of v. 14 is highly useful: "The lesson we must learn, my brothers, is at all costs to avoid worshipping a false god."

As Paul proceeds to explain the great problem of fellowship with idolatry (vs. 16-22), he notes that "I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say" (v. 15, NIV). The term *phronimos* (φρόνιμος) is taken to be "in one's right mind, in one's senses," and "wise, sensible, prudent" (LS).³⁹ Elsewhere in his correspondence with the Corinthians (4:10; 2 Corinthians 11:19), *phronimos* is used a bit ironically or even mockingly—but that is not at all how we see it used in v. 15. Craig Blomberg interjects the appropriate thought, "Notwithstanding their divisions, [Paul] trusts that common sense will win out in this instance."⁴⁰

The Apostle Paul is very concerned about what various Corinthians have been participating in, referencing how at the Lord's Supper multiple people partake of the wine and bread. Paul directs them, "The cup of blessing that we bless—isn't it a sharing of Messiah's blood? The bread which we break—isn't it a sharing of Messiah's body" (v. 16, TLV). A connection with the Last Supper meal between Yeshua and His Disciples (Matthew 26:27-28; Mark 14:23-24; Luke 22:20), and what it represents for those who have received Yeshua into their lives and are in communion with one another as fellow brothers and sisters, is significantly highlighted.

³⁸ "Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, 'Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' Aaron said to them, 'Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me.' Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought *them* to Aaron. He took *this* from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.' Now when Aaron saw *this*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow *shall be* a feast to the LORD.' So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play" (Exodus 32:1-6).

³⁹ LS, 872.

⁴⁰ Blomberg, 193.

It has been, correctly, acknowledged by various examiners that some connection is present in v. 16 with the traditional Jewish blessing over the cup. In his commentary, Witherington describes how Paul “refers to the ‘cup of blessing,’ a technical term for the cup of wine drunk at the end of a Jewish meal and over which the thanksgiving or grace is said [b.*Sotah* 38b]...In the Passover meal this was the third cup of the four to be drunk. This was probably the cup Jesus identified as the cup of the new covenant in his blood at the Last Supper. The point is that this new covenant was enacted by Christ’s death.”⁴¹ The traditional blessing over the cup, as recorded in the Mishnah, is “Blessed are you, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe...Creator of the fruit of the vine” (m.*Berachot* 6:1).⁴² Today’s Messianic people are certainly familiar with the customary refrain, *Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha’olam, borei p’ri ha’gafen* (בְּרִיךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן).

There is no uniform agreement in the contemporary Messianic movement about the issue of “the Lord’s Supper,” and whether it is to be observed in association with the annual Passover *seder*, or is it to be something that takes place more regularly.⁴³ Christian debates are present as to whether or not there is even a Passover context to what is in view.⁴⁴ Whether observed annually, monthly, weekly, bi-weekly, or even daily—as is witnessed across diverse Christian traditions, to be sure—Paul’s major point concerns what the participation of Believers in memorializing the bread and wine of the Last Supper meal signifies.

Those who participate in the Lord’s Supper or bread and wine, participate in remembering His sacrificial death and atonement, and subsequently also His attendant resurrection.⁴⁵ The term *koinōnia* (κοινωνία) is critical, as it involves “*communion, association, partnership, fellowship*” (*LS*),⁴⁶ reflected in a variety of English versions as “sharing” (NASU, NRSV), “participation” (RSV/ESV, NIV), “fellowship” (YLT), or even “communion” (American Standard Version). The gravity of participation of Believers, in the body and blood of Yeshua, is expressed in Paul’s word of Philippians 3:10: “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” The intention of Paul’s statement is quite apparent: if Believers participate and fellowship one to another in covenant relationship with Yeshua the Messiah, then they have no business doing the same with idols (v. 21). As Prior directs,

“The central ceremony of Christian, Jewish and pagan worship is more than mere words and actions. Those who take part in these ceremonies become actual ‘partners’...The partnership acts in two ways: with one another as fellow-worshippers and with the god/gods/God whom they worship. The worshippers share together in the spiritual reality behind all that happens.”⁴⁷

⁴¹ Witherington, 224.

⁴² Tzvee Zahavy and Alan J. Avery-Peck, trans., in Neusner, *Mishnah*, 9.

⁴³ Cf. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 471.

⁴⁴ Cf. Thiselton, pp 758-759; also Ciampa and Rosner, pp 474-475.

⁴⁵ Consult the article “The Last Seder and Yeshua’s Passover Chronology” by J.K. McKee, appearing in the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* by Messianic Apologetics.

⁴⁶ *LS*, pp 440-441.

⁴⁷ Prior, pp 172-173.

In a way, in directing the Corinthians to consider *koinōnia*, Paul has co-opted some ancient pagan concepts. Garland makes note of the words of Aelius Aristides, a Second Century C.E. Greek orator, who said of the god Serapis, “Men share in a special way the truest communion in the sacrifices to this god alone, as they invite [him] to the altar and appoint him as guest and host.” In his estimation, “Paul is leading his readers to see that they can never eat idol food as neutral participants, just as they cannot partake of the Lord’s Supper as detached observers. Partaking of anything offered to a deity makes them accessories to the sacrificial act and creates solidarity with the honored deity.”⁴⁸ Approaching the Lord’s Supper improperly, was something witnessed by many of the Corinthians: “For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep” (11:30).

10:17 The participation and interconnectivity of Believers to one another, and with the Lord, is emphasized by Paul in his detailing of the bread: “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for all of us share that one bread” (HCSB). Certainly to be considered would be Yeshua as the Bread of Life (John 6:33-58), and Paul will discuss further in his letter what he intends by the redeemed composing the Body of Messiah (12:14-27). The analogy of Believers, composing the Body of Messiah, has the dual advantage of Paul’s audience considering what Yeshua endured on their behalf in being sacrificed for human sin, as well as what they are to be doing as beneficiaries of His salvation. Fee indicates, “By common ‘participation’ in the single loaf, the ‘body of Christ,’ they affirm that they together make up the ‘body of Christ,’ which in turn implies that they may not likewise become partners in similar associations that honor demons.”⁴⁹

It is also to be remembered how the thrust of Exodus 12:43-48 is that commemoration of the Passover is to be a community affair. And, whether the Lord’s Supper is remembered annually at the *seder*, or more frequently, it too is a community affair—as brothers and sisters in the Messiah are all “in it together,” so speak. The interconnectivity, though, of Believers to one another *and* Believers with the Messiah, is something that can swing the other way if people are disloyal to the Lord. Ciampa and Rosner explain, “If all those who eat the bread together in the [assembly] are thereby made into one body, presumably all those who share food or drink which is associated with a pagan idol become one together through their joint sharing of that food.”⁵⁰

18 Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?

10:18 Before describing the dangers of sharing in the table of an idol (vs. 19-22), Paul makes a comparison, with the Tabernacle and Temple system, seen in the history of Ancient Israel, saying, “Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?” (NKJV). As sacrifices were offered at the Tabernacle or Temple, a portion of the meat was available to be eaten by the Levitical priests mainly, but also others who would be

⁴⁸ Garland, 477.

⁴⁹ Fee, 470.

⁵⁰ Ciampa and Rosner, 476.

in attendance as well (Leviticus 7:15; 8:31; Deuteronomy 12:17-18; 14:23-26). Whether the priests specifically, or other Israelites in attendance, those in the community of Ancient Israel were in fellowship with Israel's God, and were very clearly benefitting from His grace, His goodness, and His blessing of them. Such a perspective of the sacrificial system is reflected in the works of the First Century figures Philo and Josephus:

"[B]ecause it is fitting that the sacrifices should not be stored up for food, but should be openly exposed, so as to afford a meal to all who are in need of it, for the sacrifice when once placed on the altar, is no longer the property of the person who has offered it, but belongs to that Being to whom the victim is sacrificed, who, being a beneficent and bounteous God, makes the whole company of those who offer the sacrifice, partakers at the altar and messmates, only admonishing them not to look upon it as their own feast, for they are but stewards of the feast" (Philo *Special Laws* 1.221).⁵¹

"When we offer sacrifices to him, we do it not in order to surfeit ourselves, or to be drunken; for such excesses are against the will of God, and would be an occasion of injuries and of luxury; but by keeping ourselves sober, orderly, and ready for our other occupations, and being more temperate than others. And for our duty at the sacrifices themselves, we ought, in the first place, to pray for the common welfare of all, and after that for our own; for we are made for fellowship one with another; and he who prefers the common good before what is peculiar to himself, is above all acceptable to God" (Josephus *Against Apion* 2.195-196).⁵²

What would it mean for those who should be loyal to Israel's God, who via their participation in the Lord's Supper can fellowship with Him quantitatively indifferent from the Ancient Israelites at the Tabernacle or Temple—to fellowship with pagan gods and goddesses and their public sacrifices?

There is certainly a difference of approach, for v. 18, in how to view what Paul labels *ton Israēl kata sarka* (τὸν Ἰσραήλ κατὰ σάρκα), rendered by the NASU as "the nation Israel," but what is more literally something like "Israel according to the flesh" (LITV). Some look at an antithesis of flesh versus spirit intended, as Soards thinks, "Paul is pointing here to the theologically correct practices of Israel in the context of the world (the present evil age) independent of the Christ event."⁵³ Others, approaching "Israel according to the flesh" more from a perspective of replacement theology than not, look to this group being contrasted to the so-called Church as a "spiritual Israel."⁵⁴ Making reference to Romans 8:5 and *kata sarka* (κατὰ σάρκα) or "according to the flesh," Garland thinks that "the context that Paul has in mind [is] wilderness Israel, whose sinful example (10:1-11) serves as a warning to all,"⁵⁵ and actually thinks that idolatrous sacrifices, and the eating and drinking of Exodus 32:5-6, are what is being referenced. Noting some of the controversy, across the evangelical Christian

⁵¹ *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, 555.

⁵² *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, 806.

⁵³ Soards, 212.

⁵⁴ Cf. Ciampa and Rosner, pp 477-478.

⁵⁵ Garland, 478.

spectrum at least, Fee directs readers, “One thing is certain: he intends to refer to the sacrificial meals in ancient Israel.”⁵⁶

The REB probably goes a little too far in paraphrasing *ton Israēl kata sarka* with, “Consider Jewish practice...” Messianic versions like the CJB and TLV have, “physical Israel.” The Kingdom New Testament has “ethnic Israel.” Yet, if any paraphrase should be considered, it should probably just be the relatively neutral, “**ancient Israel.**”

For First Century purposes, *ton Israēl kata sarka* constituted the known physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the Jewish people. 1 Corinthians 10:18 does feature in some contemporary Messianic debates over ecclesiology, to be sure. In his 2009 book *Grafted In*, Lancaster has taken the reference to “Israel according to flesh,” and makes what he calls a distinction between “legal Israel” and “Kingdom Israel”:

“...[W]hen writing to the Corinthians—a community composed of both Jewish and Gentile believers—he says, ‘Consider Israel-according-to-the-flesh. Are not those who eat from the sacrifices part of the fellowship of the altar?’ (1 Corinthians 10:18, my translation).

“In this verse, Paul refers to Israel as a group distinct from the Corinthian assembly. He speaks as if the Corinthians are on the outside of the group. He also adds a qualifier to the term Israel: he calls it ‘Israel-according-to-the-flesh.’

“In 1 Corinthians 10:18, Israel-according-to-the-flesh is composed of those individuals who may eat of the holy sacrifices. In Paul’s day, that group consisted only of those who were halachically (legally) Jewish. Paul was defining Israel-according-to-the-flesh as those who were born Jewish or who had undergone a legal conversion to Judaism: ‘both Jews and converts to Judaism’ [Acts 2:11].

“Why did Paul feel it necessary to add the qualifier ‘according to the flesh’ when describing those who were legally Jewish? Why not just say ‘Israel’?

“The qualifier must have been necessary because the Corinthians also had an identity in the generic term Israel. If there is an ‘Israel-according-to-the-flesh,’ there must be an ‘Israel-not-according-to-the-flesh.’ The not-according-to-the-flesh version would have been the believers, including the Corinthians.”⁵⁷

One does not have to totally agree with all of Lancaster’s reasoning, to recognize the Biblical reality of how ultimately, *ton Israēl kata sarka* or “Israel according to the flesh,” is not as important as those who constitute the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13), Israel of God (Galatians 6:16), who are grafted-in as either wild *or* natural branches to Israel’s olive tree (Romans 11:16-24). Membership in a restored Kingdom of Israel, ruled by Messiah Yeshua, is imperative—and must come ultimately via a transformed heart. Membership in the Messianic Kingdom, while most imperatively intended for the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is *also* very much intended for the nations of the world as well.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Fee, 470 fn#38.

⁵⁷ Lancaster, *Grafted In*, pp 2-3.

⁵⁸ For a further evaluation, consult the publication *Are Non-Jewish Believers Really a Part of Israel?* by J.K. McKee.