2002

Paul's Apparent Reversal of Concern for the Weak Brother in 1 Corinthians 10:29B-30: an Examination of the Text in Light of Greco-Roman Rhetoric

Moses Oladele Taiwo

Anders University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations

Part of the Biblical Studies Commons, and the Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/151

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Research at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.
Thank you for your interest in the Andrews University Digital Library of Dissertations and Theses.

Please honor the copyright of this document by not duplicating or distributing additional copies in any form without the author’s express written permission. Thanks for your cooperation.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

PAUL’S APPARENT REVERSAL OF CONCERN FOR THE WEAK BROTHER IN 1 CORINTHIANS 10:29B-30: AN EXAMINATION OF THE TEXT IN LIGHT OF GRECO-ROMAN RHETORIC

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Moses Oladele Taiwo

September 2002

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
PAUL'S APPARENT REVERSAL OF CONCERN FOR THE WEAK BROTHER IN 1 CORINTHIANS 10:29B-30: AN EXAMINATION OF THE TEXT IN LIGHT OF GRECO-ROMAN RHETORIC

A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

by

Moses Oladele Taiwo

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

W. Larry Richards
Faculty Adviser, Professor of New Testament Exegesis

P. Richard Choi
Associate Professor of New Testament

Jim Moskala
Associate Professor of Old Testament

Ranko Stefanovic
Assistant Professor of New Testament

Nancy J. Vyhmeister
Professor of Mission, Emerita

Andrews University

Director, Ph.D./Th.D. Program
Randall W. Yourker

Dean, SDA Theological Seminary
John K. McVay

Date approved: January 9, 2003

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
ABSTRACT

PAUL'S APPARENT REVERSAL OF CONCERN FOR THE WEAK BROTHER IN 1 CORINTHIANS 10:29B-30: AN EXAMINATION OF THE TEXT IN LIGHT OF GRECO-ROMAN RHETORIC

by

Moses Oladele Taiwo

Adviser: W. Larry Richards
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: PAUL’S APPARENT REVERSAL OF CONCERN FOR THE WEAK BROTHER IN 1 CORINTHIANS 10:29B-30: AN EXAMINATION OF THE TEXT IN LIGHT OF GRECO-ROMAN RHETORIC

Name of researcher: Moses Oladele Taiwo

Name and degree of faculty adviser: W. Larry Richards, Ph.D.

Date completed: September 2002

Problem

In 1 Cor 8:1-10:29a, Paul has been consistently on the side of the brother in 8:11 whose conscience is weak to eat food offered to idols. But, in 10:29b-30, he seems to reverse himself, here suggesting that one should be able to eat anything regardless of its provenance or the effect such eating may have on others. Or, what should be made of the two questions asked in the text that appear neither fitted to the context nor directly answered by what precedes and follows in the discussion of εἰδολόθυτα in 8:1-11:1?

Approach

Scholars have employed various methodological interpretations in search for the contextual meaning of the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 without a solution.
However, no one has treated the two questions asked in the passage as an argumentative device intended to resolve the problem of eating idol food discussed throughout 8:1-11:1. In order to understand the function of 10:29b-30 in Paul’s argumentation, my research agenda is laid out in the following manner.

First, following the introductory chapter, the four broader issues where no consensus exists are discussed in chapter 2 because they in no small measure impact the understanding of the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30. For example, the view that Paul intervened in two different ways has led to the partitioning of chaps. 8 and 10 into 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 where it is argued Paul allows the eating of idol food, and 10:1-22 where the same food is denounced, is informed by the content of 10:29b-30. Because Paul defends a position of not eating on account of the weak brother, the view is found inadequate upon examination of 10:29b-30 in its contexts.

Second, the examination of 1 Cor 10:29b-30 in the larger context of 8:1-10:22 (chapter 3) and the narrower context of 10:23-11:1 (chapter 4) suggests a unified deliberative rhetorical argumentation that characterizes 1 Corinthians. Paul’s deliberative rhetoric, as those in the classical handbooks of Greco-Roman rhetoric, reveals that the two rhetorical questions in 10:29b-30 function in two ways. First, they are asked to dissuade the “strong” from setting a bad example for the “weak” by participating in idol feasts. Second, they help to persuade the strong to adopt Paul’s own behavioral patterns following their wrong use of knowledge (chap. 8), exercised in the name of authority or “rights” (chap. 9), and freedom (chap. 10). Thus, the two questions asked in the passage belong to one of the three proofs (πίστευς) Paul used to persuade the strong to consider the weak brother (vss. 29b-33) before his final appeal in 11:1.
Conclusion

My investigation of the function of the two rhetorical questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 reveals some of the problems in the interpretation of 1 Corinthians in general, and 8:1-11:1, in particular. However, Paul’s use of the deliberative rhetorical device provides insights to resolve the problems of understanding the passage against other rhetorical species and methods. The device helps to account for 10:29b-30 as Paul’s means of disarming the strong in their wrong use of freedom, and his reason for choosing not to eat idol food because of his concerns for the weak brother.
DEDICATION

To my dear wife, Chioma, whose love and prayers kept me over the years. You are to me a living proof that the things unseen matter and shape us most.

To Ayo whose understanding is beyond measure as he gave his father the poise to press on to accomplish this task.

To Titi whose concern gave added sunshine and courage to her father in the family council.

To 'Seun whose smiling face and the call of 'Daddy' bring additional memory to the joy of completing my Ph.D. Program at AU.

Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν ἐν πάντι λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .............................................................. vi

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. xii

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1

  Background of the Problem .................................................. 1
  Statement of the Problem ..................................................... 5
  Purpose of the Research ...................................................... 6
  Justification of the Research ................................................ 7
  Delimitations ....................................................................... 8
  Overview of the Dissertation ............................................ 10

II. FOUR BROADER ISSUES OF 1 COR 8 AND 10 IN SCHOLARSHIP .... 15

  Four Broader Issues of 1 Cor 8 and 10 ................................. 15
    Issue 1: The Hypothetical Backgrounds of 1 Cor 8 and 10 ...... 18
      The Jewish/Gentile Situation ........................................... 18
      The Influence of Gnosticism .......................................... 25
      The Questions of the Corinthians ................................. 33
    Issue 2: The Relationship Between 1 Cor 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22 .................................................... 37
      The Integrity of 1 Cor 8-11:1 ........................................ 37
      The Coherence of Paul’s Argument ............................... 44
    Issue 3: The Identity of the “Weak” and the “Strong” .......... 47
      Who Are the “Weak” and the “Strong”? ......................... 48
    Issue 4: Who Asked the Two Questions in 1 Cor 10:29b-30: The “Strong” or Paul? ........................................ 54

III. RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF 1 COR 10:29B-30 IN THE LARGER CONTEXT OF CHAPS. 8-10 ......................................................... 65
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Anchor Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABD</td>
<td>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACNT</td>
<td>Augsburg Commentaries on the New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AER</td>
<td>American Ecclesiastical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGJU</td>
<td>Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBA</td>
<td>Abundant Life Bible Amplifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AnBib</td>
<td>Analecta biblica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANRW</td>
<td>Aufstieg und Nieergang der römischen Welt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANT</td>
<td>The Amplified New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTC</td>
<td>Abingdon New Testament Commentaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATR</td>
<td>Anglican Theological Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSDDS</td>
<td>Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSS</td>
<td>Andrews University Seminary Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>The Biblical Archaeologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>Broadman Bible Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDB</td>
<td>Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BET</td>
<td>Biblical Exegesis and Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETL</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEVT</td>
<td>Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bib</td>
<td>Biblica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIS</td>
<td>Biblical Interpretation Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BibR</td>
<td>Bible Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSac</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Sacra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSTS</td>
<td>Bible Study Textbook Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT</td>
<td>The Bible Translator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTB</td>
<td>Biblical Theology Bulletin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BV</td>
<td>Biblical Viewpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>Cambridge Bible Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBET</td>
<td>Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Concordia Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGTSC</td>
<td>Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIVAC</td>
<td>New International Version Application Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJB</td>
<td>New Jerusalem Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLT</td>
<td>New Living Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NovT</td>
<td>Novum Testamentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRSV</td>
<td>New Revised Standard Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTG</td>
<td>New Testament Guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTM</td>
<td>New Testament Message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTS</td>
<td>New Testament Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Philosophy and Rhetoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTMS</td>
<td>Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB</td>
<td>Revue biblique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RExp</td>
<td>The Review and Expositor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REB</td>
<td>The Revised English Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ</td>
<td>Restoration Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSR</td>
<td>Religious Studies Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSV</td>
<td>Revised Standard Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSCH</td>
<td>Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBL</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBLDS</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBT</td>
<td>Studies in Biblical Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCJ</td>
<td>Studies in Christianity and Judaism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJT</td>
<td>Scottish Journal of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNT</td>
<td>Studien zum Neuen Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNTSMS</td>
<td>Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNTW</td>
<td>Studies of the New Testament and Its Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Sacra Pagina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRHEC</td>
<td>Studies in the Religion and History of Early Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STh</td>
<td>Studia Theologica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWJT</td>
<td>Southwestern Journal of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TB</td>
<td>Tyndale Bulletin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDNT</td>
<td>G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds.), <em>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEV</td>
<td>Today’s English Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Them</td>
<td>Themelios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH</td>
<td>Theologie historique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TJ</td>
<td>Trinity Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TZT</td>
<td>Tübingen Zeitschrift für Theologie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBS</td>
<td>United Bible Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USQR</td>
<td>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPC</td>
<td>Westminster Pelican Commentaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNT</td>
<td>Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZNW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZTK</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cicero (106-43 B.C.) is correct when he wrote in defense of his friend and benefactor, Gnaeus Plancius that “gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but it is the mother of all the rest. . . . There is no quality I would sooner have, and be thought to have, than gratitude” (Cicero Pro Plancio 33:80). This gratitude is what I am deeply obligated to many people for the task of researching and writing this dissertation on 1 Corinthians. First, to the chair of my dissertation committee, Professor W. Larry Richards, my Doktorvater, who provided me with the initial idea for this study. He inspired, guided, and taught me to ask the right questions on many critical issues Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians, including the more personal 2 Corinthians. For example, the issue of idol food discussed in 1 Cor 8-10 led to my searching for the contextual meaning of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30. Again, his keen mind, attention to detail, kindness in criticism, and genuine personal concern for me and my family have indelible marks on us far beyond directing a dissertation.

Second, to my associate advisers, Doctors R. Richard Choi and Jiri Moskala for their skillful suggestions and constructive criticisms that further enriched the dissertation and brought it to its present shape. Each has constantly encouraged me from their individualized field of expertise. Also, I remain grateful to my fourth reader, Dr Ranko Stefanovic for his remarks, and to my external examiner, Professor Nancy J. Vyhmeister,
who made suggestions that shine out in the dissertation.

Third, to my benefactors, because this doctoral study could never have been completed without financial and other forms of support received from them. Thus, I am grateful to the members of the Ph.D./Th.D. committee, especially, to Professor Randy Younker, the program director, and to Mama Mabel Bowen, the program scribe, for their timely courtesies and interventions eased my budgetary constraints. A special word of thanks is due to the Adeleke’s family in Nigeria because their financial assistantship has enabled many families, including my own family, to have the unique opportunity of coming to the United States of America to experience the joy of doctoral studies. Hence, I can never forget in my life the way God used Dr ’Deji Adeleke, and his family, to see me succeed in this venture, and in telling my own story.

Fourth, the following individuals and communities also deserve recognition for a successful completion of my Ph.D. program at Andrews University: Prof. Merlene Ogden, Dean of Affiliations/IDP; Drs. Jerry Moon, William Richardson, and James North, Jr.; Pastor Luka Daniel, the president of my division (WAD); Prof. C. N. Ikonne, the education director of WAD; Dr. Joseph Ola, the president of my union (NUC); the past and current Board members, staffs and students of Babcock University (formerly, ASWA) where I had served as an assistant professor of New Testament studies from 1987 to 1997; Prof. Joel D. Awoniyi; Drs. David Babalola; Janeric A. Gustavsson; Pastors Bukky Ajide and ’Tunde Dare; Bonnie Proctor, the dissertation secretary; Mareli Nunes, New Testament Dept secretary; the James White Library personnel; Dr. Najeeb Nakhle and Pr. Michael Harris of the International Student Services; Carole Colburn at the
General Conference office; Dr. Festus Oke, Chaplain of the Hope Rescue Mission; members of the Pioneer Memorial Church, RMES, and AA; fellow workers at the Adventist Information Ministry; the Pan-African Club; the WAD Students’ Club; the Nigerian Family Fellowship; the Nigerian Association of Michiana; and the Spiritual Services Department of the Howard Community Hospital in Kokomo, Indiana, USA.

Fifth, I am deeply indebted to my wife, Chioma (nee Uchendu), and our three children: Ayo, Titi, and 'Seun. The unflinching support of my wife sustained me in my difficult and pressing moments. She prays and sacrifices for many things over the years so as to make this accomplishment a reality. Such a woman is not only rare but is hard to find! (Pro 31:10-31). Her support, through thick and thin, is also greatly appreciated by our children whom I apparently denied many hours of play together because of “Daddy’s Ph.D.” Thanks also to my late father, Pa Hezekiah A. Taiwo; my grandmother, Comfort Adedoyin; my mother, Charlotte Moninuola; my stepmother, Grace Mofolayomi (iya-alaso); my senior brother, Snr Evan. Amos Taiwo; my father-in-law, Pa Gilbert C. Uchendu, and his late wife, Grace Akoma, and many others whose prayers kept us going.

Finally, I remain grateful to my God who is alive forevermore. I’m grateful to this God in who I have my being, in who I glory for this achievement in my lifetime, in who daily I praise in disappointments and appointments, in joy and sorrow, in who I pause for who and what God is. The God whose ways are inscrutable, inaccessible to human intelligence (Isa 55:8-9). The God who gives me a testimony, and makes me a testimonial for many in this life, concerning His goodness—to this God be glory, honor, and power. Thank God, Victory at Last!
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul repeatedly defends the "weak" person. This is particularly evident in 1 Cor 8 and 10 where he states that his actions have been guided by the conscience of the "weak" (1 Cor 8:7-13; 9:22; 10:28c). For Paul, the passionate concerns of the other person's well-being are the *raison d'etre* in whether or not he is free to eat certain food. However, Paul's two questions asked in 10:29b-30 appear to be a non sequitur because he seems to reverse his position. In these verses, he appears to be saying that the brother's concerns should not determine his actions.

The Greek text reads:

\[\text{ἐγὼ χάριτι μετέχω, τί βλασφημοῦμαι ὑπὲρ σοῦ ἐγώ εὐχαριστῶ;\]  

1The NIV reads: "For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?" Both the NIV and RSV seem to render *ίνατι* ... *κρίνεται* as a subjunctive translation in 1 Cor 10:29b probably because of vss. 28-29a. However, the translation may not hold because none of the two questions asked in vss. 29b-30 receives a direct answer, "certainly not to the second question, which seems difficult to understand in any other way than as rhetorical and apologetic" (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987], 487). Fee adds that whenever the interrogative conjunction *ίνατι* occurs with the present tense, for instance, in Matt 9:4; Luke 13:7; Acts 7:26, it means "why is this going on?" (Ibid., n. 56). Because Paul seems not to reverse his concern for
Numerous scholarly efforts have been made to account for the difficult passage. For example, Johannes Weiss, in his partitive or compositional theory of 1 Corinthians, went so far as to suggest that 1 Cor 10:29b-30 was either the effort of an interpolator (as some regard 11:2-16; 14:34b-36; 15:33b-35) who was reacting to Paul’s restrictive position of 10:28c or the rhetorical questions already asked by the “strong” Corinthians that Paul quoted. Although Wolfgang Schrage also concurs that “V 29b ist wieder sehr schwierig,” nonetheless, he refuses to accept Weiss’s hypothesis that the questions in the passage are a secondary interpolation. And, even if one tries to avoid the subtleties of the other

the weak brother of 1 Cor 8:11 in 10:29b, I prefer to translate the interrogative conjunction as “for, for what purpose or reason” but never “for why” or “for what right.” Together with vs. 29a, the passage would read as follow: I mean not your own conscience but of the other person, for, for what reason or purpose is my freedom criticized by another person’s conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I being reviled for that for which I give thanks? Further justification for my translation is noted on p. 167, n. 2 of this dissertation.

Johannes Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, EKKNT 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 265-266. His view, which set the stage for much of later scholarly contributions, continues to underscore the fact that there were two groups in the Corinthian church, viz., the “strong” and the “weak.” The “strong” are believed to have been in opposition to Paul. In addition, Weiss thinks Paul intervened in two different ways. First, in 1 Cor 10:1-22 the Apostle warned against idolatry, as referred to in 1 Cor 5:9-13. Second, that in 8:1-13 and 10:23-11:1 Paul considered the eating of idol food itself as non-essential (διάφορον), that is, as a category of things which are neither good nor bad (Konrad Weiss, "διάφερω, τα διαφέροντα, διάφορος, διάφορον," TDNT, 9:62-64; cf. Gal 2:6; 1 Cor 4:3). Elsewhere, J. Weiss’s argues, somewhat persuasively, that “it is very hard to conceive of them [in this case, 1 Cor 8 and 10:24-11:1] from the literary point of view as occurring in a single letter” (Johannes Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Frederick C. Grant [New York: Wilson-Erickson Press, 1937], 1:329). Other possible reasons for an interpolation are advanced by Robert Jewett, “The Redaction of 1 Corinthians and the Trajectory of the Pauline School,” JAAR, suppl. 46, no. 4 (1978): 417-418. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor seems to favor the same view because he, as others, takes the textual statement as a transcription of the way later church leaders attempted to apply Scripture to their own context (Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “Interpolations in 1 Corinthians,” CBQ 48 [1986]: 81-94).

Wolfgang Schrage, Der erste Brief an die Korinther (I Kor 6,12-11,16), EKKNT 7.2 (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1995), 471.
explanations, there is still a problem in that vss. 29b-30 seem not to make sense with what precedes and follows. In fact, the passage rather seems to make incoherent Paul’s logic in argumentation that starts off in 8:1.¹

On 1 Cor 10:29b-30, E. B. Allo states that Paul’s explanation looks clear from vs. 29a “but what is less clear is the sense and the objective of the following two interrogative statements, ἵνα τί γάρ κτλ., et εἰ ἐγώ κτλ. It is difficult to fix well the sense, and put them in the context.”² Likewise, Carl Holladay aptly notes: “The remarks in verses 29b, 30 are extraordinarily difficult to fit into any coherent interpretation of the passage because, if read as they are, they directly controvert Paul’s advice in verses 28, 29a. . . . Moreover, verse 30 is equally difficult to fit into this scheme.”³

The efforts to account for Paul’s words in this passage have thus caused considerable debate with a wide range of interpretations.⁴ For some, the two questions

¹Charles K. Barrett says 1 Cor 10:29b is “notoriously difficult” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, HNTC [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987], 242). Fee notes that its difficulty “has created a notorious crux for interpreters” (486). Perhaps, it is one reason Rick Hordern writes, though not on the issue of 1 Cor 10:29b-30, that: “The apostle Paul has always been a problem for the church, for theology, and for preaching. If someone says that Paul is not a problem, then we can probably guess that they have not understood all of Paul” (“Paul as a Theological Authority,” USQR 33 [1978]: 133; cf. 2 Pet 3:15-16).


⁴Robert Jewett noted three alternative approaches by which scholars search for the meaning of what Paul is trying to accomplish with the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30, namely, that: “(1) It is an objection of the ‘strong’ Christian to a renunciation of his freedom which was inserted either by a later editor or by Paul himself as a sort of rhetorical questions. (2) It is a warning to the ‘weak’ not to take advantage of the strong man’s renunciation of his freedom by attempting to enslave him or denounce his freedom. (3) Or it is Paul’s explanation of his advice not to eat in 1 Cor. 10:28; one should set aside his freedom for the moment lest it come
asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 are cited by Paul as the objections made by the “strong” Christians which he anticipates to the restrictions of their freedom. Others conclude that Paul directs his two questions in the passage to the “weak” Christians, warning them not to take advantage of the strong’s forbearance or renunciation of freedom. Still, there are those who argue that the two questions asked in vss. 29b-30 are not directed to a particular group known as the “strong” or “weak.” Rather, the two questions are a part of the Corinthians’ assertions to Paul that they were not asking him for advice over the issue of eating idol food. And, if there is any disagreement at all concerning idol food, it must be between Paul and the Corinthians.


Statement of the Problem

Do Paul's two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 suggest a reversal of concern for the "weak" brother since it is claimed that the content of the passage makes this obvious? The problem is, if Paul, in vss. 29b-30, does reverse himself by asking the two questions, then

we reach the somewhat strange conclusion that Paul appears to have permitted the Corinthians to continue their current practices concerning idol meat virtually unchanged, that he had himself eaten such meat when he was in Corinth, and thus that he accepted to some extent the principles concerning Christian freedom which they express in their letter. Yet instead of immediately stating his large measure of agreement with the Corinthians, adding only a word or two of warning as to possible dangers in this matter, Paul devoted the major part of his reply to vigorous disagreement with them, and only at the close did he give them permission to behave as in fact they had been behaving.¹

And, if he does not reverse himself, again, the two questions asked in the passage appear

¹Hurd, 148.
incongruous to account for what had been said from 8:1 in general, and at the beginning of 10:23 in particular.¹

Scholars are agreed that apart from 1 Cor 10:29b-30 Paul is defending the “weak” in chaps. 8 and 10, but there is no consensus regarding a solution to the apparent reversal of Paul’s words in this passage. And, as will become evident, none of the interpretations of 10:29b-30 so far suggested is entirely satisfactory. The important questions are: Why is Paul asking (or citing) the two questions of 1 Cor 10:29b-30 without giving an answer? And, what precisely is the purpose or function of this text in the discussion of eating idol food² in 8:1-11:1 in general, and in 10:23-11:1 in particular?

**Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this study is to establish whether or not there is a reversal of concern by Paul for the “weak” in 1 Cor 10:29b-30. If it is determined that he has reversed himself, I want to ask, Why? On the other hand, should Paul’s words in these

1An example of the problem the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 seems to pose is discussed in Roger L. Omanson, “Acknowledging Paul’s Quotations,” *BT* 43 (1992):210-211, and David Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 147-148.

2Harold S. Songer acknowledges that “in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 Paul deals with one of the most serious problems in the Corinthian church. The problem itself—the eating of food sacrificed to idols—no longer exists in American Christianity, but the questions this issue poses are very much alive. What limits are set for the freedom of one Christian by the immaturity of another? Is the Pauline statement that ‘if meat makes my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth’ (KJV) to be taken to mean that a Christian should not do anything that another Christian feels inappropriate? If this be the principle for Christian conduct—’Do nothing that offends’—how are the disagreements of Paul with other Christians to be understood?” (“Problems Arising from the Worship of Idols: 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1,” *RExp* 80 [1983]: 363; see also David Horrell, “Theological Principle or Christological Praxis? Pauline Ethics in 1 Corinthians 8.1-11.1,” *JSNT* 83 [1997]: 83).
verses not be a reversal, I want to explain why that is so.

**Justification for the Research**

The unresolved dilemma in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 calls for further research. Also, the dilemma is complicated in that there is no consensus on the specific identity of the so-called "weak" and "strong" in chaps. 8 and 10. Likewise, how much does the unresolved debate over the Jewish/Gentile situation and other possible backgrounds impact on the two questions asked in 10:29b-30? And, in what sense does the relationship between chaps. 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22 impact the understanding of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30?

In addition to wrestling with the apparent reversal in 1 Cor 10:29b-30, it is important to consider other related issues to the extent they help to understand the major issue of this dissertation. These include (1) the perennial debates on the relationship between Paul’s use of γνῶσις and ἐγκατάστασις in 8:1-13, (2) the issue of Paul’s renunciation of the Jewish/Gentile situation.

1 Attempts at reconstructing the instigators of the communication with Paul in 1 Cor 8 and 10 have been a problem to scholars. The question is: Who are the ‘strong’ and the ‘weak’ in this section of the epistle? For a bibliographical entry on the discussions of the identity of the strong and the weak in 1 Corinthians, see Khiok-Khng Yeo, *Rhetorical Interaction in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10: A Formal Analysis with Preliminary Suggestions for Chinese, Cross-Cultural Hermeneutic* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 142-155.

2 The seeming inconsistency shows up between 1 Cor 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22. In the former, Paul’s responses appear to confirm, in theory, the Corinthians’ claims to both γνῶσις and ἐλευθερία in buying meat sacrificed to idols in the marketplace and in eating such meat in the homes of their pagan friends or at the pagan temple. However, in the latter, his statement indicates that he abhors their claims as a reason to participate in idol foods. Thus, it would seem that Paul is saying two different things in these texts because in 8 and 10:23-11:1, he merely restrains or limits such claims. But, in 10:1-22, and on the basis of the principles of love for the weaker Christian brother, Paul not only prohibits the Corinthians’ grounds of eating idol meat at the pagan temple but also attacks the theoretical basis of the Corinthians’ claims to knowledge and freedom. See also Conzelmann, 137; Fee, “Ἐξωκολοθύτω Αναίνησις,” 172-179.
of ἐξουσία in 9:1-27 as an example of the proper use of freedom for the common good (συμφέρον) and on whether chap. 9 is a digression from the subject of idol food, and (3) whether Paul's interpretation of the OT wilderness events in 10:1-11, and the specific application made for the Corinthian church in vss. 12-22, play any significant role in the formation of his ethical advice. These secondary issues are discussed because they also provide the basis that led to the two questions asked in vss. 29b-30.

Delimitations

This study focuses on the relevant statements in 1 Cor 8-10 that deal with the issues that help to explain the apparent reversal of 10:29b-30. This means that the study does not address all the multifarious problems in 8:1-11:1. The discussion of idol food, such as found in Acts 15, 21, and Rev 2, is studied only as they may contribute to the thesis of my study. Also, the issue concerning Paul's advice to both "weak" and "strong" Christians in Rom 14 and 15 is discussed only to the extent that it helps to clarify 1 Cor 8 and 10, because no matter how one approaches Rom 14 and 15, 1 Cor 8 and 10 do not reflect a debate over Jewish dietary laws as in these chapters of Romans. Likewise, there seems to be no direct evidence of the Corinthian response to Paul's proposed solution of the problem of ἐλεονοία except for what can be "possibly" reconstructed

1Paul discusses the problem of eating food generally in three of his letters: 1 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans. In both 1 Cor 8-10 and Rom 14-15 he deals with the issues of eating meals/foods (meats) between the "strong" and "weak" members but on a different note. For example, it seems to me that, in the latter, he appeals to the "strong" to bear with the "weak" over the distinction of clean and unclean meats (cf. Lev 11), or, between a vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet. Whereas, in the former, his chief concern is to warn the "strong" not to mislead the "weak" by eating meats as a sacred meal of pagans even if the meat served is 'clean.'
through a mirror technique in 2 Corinthians and Rom 14:1-15:13.¹

Neither will the present study examine all the theories and practice of classical rhetoric in my attempt to understand the meaning of the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30. I introduce the Greco-Roman rhetorical practice in discussion² because, as evident in this investigation, the rhetorical function of vss. 29b-30, both in its larger and narrower contexts of 8:1-11:1, appears to be as those found in the handbooks of Paul's


²St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) seems to be the first to analyze the eloquence of the contents of the Scriptures as a Christian teacher. He claims, as other Church Fathers of his time, that the authors of the Scriptures (and Paul, in particular) attain or surpass classical rhetorical standards as they combined their wisdom with eloquence (St. Augustine On Christian Doctrine 4.6.9-10; 4.7.11-14). C. Joachim Classen also writes concerning Philip Melanchthon as one of those that utilized rhetorical theory in their explanations of the Scriptural passages during the Reformation (“Melanchthon’s First Manual on Rhetorical Categories in Criticism of the Bible,” in The Passionate Intellect: Essays on the Transformation of Classical Traditions, RUSCH 7, ed. Lewis Ayres [London: Transaction Publishers, 1995], 298-302). Further contributions to Paul and rhetorical theory come from C. G. Wilke (1843) and C. F. G. Heinrici (1887) based on the 1897 Johannes Weiss report in his “Beiträge zur Paulinischen Rhetorik,” Theologische Studien in Honor of Bernard Weiss, ed. Casper R. Gregory and A. Harnack et al (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897), 166. Unfortunately, however, the interest in rhetorical approach to the study of the Bible did wane for a while.

time. Likewise, the Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks helps to understand how Paul responds to problems such as the eating of “idol food” in the Corinthian church. However, the handbooks is examined only to the extend it can help to understand the meaning of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30.

Overview of the Dissertation

Besides the introductory and concluding chapters, the preponderance of this dissertation is composed of three main parts in succession. In chapter 2, I begin with a review of the general state of scholarship on 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 noting there are four major issues that seem to cause scholars to examine over and over again this section in 1 Corinthians. These broader issues where no consensus exist include (1) the interpretation of 1 Corinthians and, in particular, the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 that mean different things to different scholars when read against various hypothetical backgrounds, (2) the relationship between 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22 that seem to suggest Paul’s apparent inconsistencies over the problem of eating idol food, especially, in view of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 that stand as an apparent reversal of his concerns for the weak brother, (3) the specific identity and features of the “weak” and “strong” Corinthians for whom the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 are directed, and (4) who asked the two questions in 10:29b-30: the strong or Paul? These four broader issues are considered in detail in light of my investigation of 10:29b-30.

Murphy-O’Connor, in an article titled “Food and Spiritual Gifts in 1 Cor 8:8,” insists that “a correct interpretation of every verse is essential if we are to understand
not only his [Paul's] position but that of the Corinthians." Although one study alone cannot adequately address every verse in the dynamics of Paul's discussions in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1, still, Murphy-O'Connor's appeal is invaluable for two reasons. First, his suggestion helps to establish a genuine coherence of not only the three Corinthian chapters in view but the whole letter in contrast to the partition theories. Second, his suggestion also helps to be more focused on the problem of idol food discussed in chaps. 8-10. Too often the passage is examined without due attention to the unique relationship that binds together the three chapters as a whole.

Because the three Corinthian chapters are organically connected as indicated in the literary structure of 1 Cor 8:1-11:1, they are interpreted sequentially in chapter 3 in the larger context of the rhetorical function of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30. That is, the three Corinthian chapters are examined not only to address the issue of a supposed reversal of Paul's concern for the weak brother but that they are also meant to call into question the Corinthians' claims to ἀγαθὸς, ἐξουσία, and ἐλευθερία. Following the rhetorical method of interpretation adopted in this study, the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 are readily understood in light of Paul's comments on ἀγαθὸς in chap. 8, on ἐξουσία in chap. 9, and on ἐλευθερία in chap. 10. Thus, it is amazing how the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30 "appropriately complete the refining pattern and are understandable as restatement (and insistence!) of the maxim

---

1Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Food and Spiritual Gifts in 1 Cor 8:8," *CBQ* 41 (1979): 292.
core that Paul is emphasizing throughout”1 chaps. 8-10.2

Because preliminary study demonstrates that Paul made use of rhetoric, in
chapter 4, I analyze the rhetorical structure of 1 Cor 10:29b-30 in the narrower context of
10:23-11:1, comparing it with Greco-Roman rhetorical patterns. I decided to follow this
approach for at least two reasons. First, a rhetorical criticism of 10:23-11:1 can be
demonstrated amidst the larger context of the issues involved in 8:1-11:1, which probably
consists of either what Paul himself could have misunderstood from the Corinthians’
questions or that which can be reconstructed from his own rejoinders. The procedure is
followed as an example of how to wrestle with the enigmatic verses of 10:29b-30 which
contain a strategic feature of Paul’s textual rhetoric3 on the situation of food problems.
Second, when Paul’s questions in 10:29b-30 are rhetorically analyzed, generally, it is
possible to understand better the deliberative nature of his argument, his use of proofs


---

1Ramsaran, 62. Also, Yeo writes that the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 “are
used to invite dialogue and to transform the worldview and behavior of the audience” addressed in
the larger context of chaps. 8-10 (Yeo, 203; see also Robertson and Plummer, 222-223).

2Conzelmann, however, argues that this is not clear because “while it is certainly possible
to see a comprehensive theme in the topic of freedom, yet this is not enough to explain the state of
the text. For in chapter 9 the freedom that is discussed is not the same as in chapter 8. Its sense
cannot be discovered from the connection with chapter 8 but in the first instance only from
chapter 9 itself” (1 Corinthians, 151).

3Aristotle (ca. 384-322 B.C.) identified three species of rhetoric as judicial, deliberative,
and epideictic. These are the rhetoric of accusation and defense, persuasion and dissuasion, and
praise and blame, respectively (Rhet 1.3.3-4). For details, see George A. Kennedy, The Art of
7-23; Heinrich Lausberg, Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der
Literaturwissenschaft (München: Max Heuber, 1973), 1:51-56; Josef Martin, Antike Rhetorik:
Technik und Methode, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 2.3 (München: Beck, 1974), 15-210,
and passim. However, because of the conflicting results in the application of several rhetorical
studies on Pauline letters, it is increasingly difficult to posit exactly the rhetorical genre(s) used or
developed by Paul in a given letter or passage. And, for a good summary of this issue, see Mack,
66-73.
against the Corinthians’ slogans or retorts throughout the Corinthian correspondence.¹

Thus, a rhetorical analysis of 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 shows that the passage falls into five parts of a classical deliberative² discourse, corresponding roughly to the προοίμιον // exordium, proem or introduction in vs. 10:23; πρόθεσις // propositio, thesis or the speaker’s wish in vs. 24; and διήγησις // narratio, narration or statement of facts in vss. 25-29a that have two parts. Next, in vss. 29b-33 are three πίστεις // probatio, proofs which give credence to the two different situations, namely, when ‘one can eat’ and when ‘one must not eat’ as mentioned by Paul in the above διήγησις. And, in 11:1 Paul makes his last statement which serves as the ἐπιλογος // peroratio, epilogue or conclusion, to the entire argument that generates his feelings of goodwill toward the Corinthian congregation.³


²This study follows Aristotle’s major divisions of a speech into four parts, namely, i) the introduction, ii) the thesis, iii) the proof section, and iv) the conclusion (Rhet 3.13.2.4; [idem] Rhet ad Her 1.3.4; 2.1.2; 3.9.16). Because Aristotle’s work even did not go unmodified by other theorists it does, however, add a part named ‘statement of facts’ (διήγησις) developed and adapted by Cicero and Quintilian as heirs of Greco-Roman rhetoric. On one hand, Cicero breaks down the structure of a speech into six parts, namely, the introduction, statement of facts, proof section, refutation, and conclusion (Part Ora 1.4; 8.27; Top 26.97-98; De Inv 1.14.19, De Ora 1.31.143; 2.19.80; 2.76.307) and, on the other, Quintilian proposes five parts in the arrangement of a speech, namely, i) the introduction, statement of facts, proof section, refutation, and conclusion (Inst 3.9.1-5; 4.3.15).

³My proposed compositional analysis of 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 is not confirmatory but rather an attempt to further the understanding, especially, of the context of Paul’s two questions asked in 10:29b-30. The reason is not only because the two questions asked appear to contradict Paul’s
My goal is to demonstrate, in the words of Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, that:

"Rhetoric seeks to persuade and to motivate people to act right. Rhetoric seeks to
instigate a change of attitudes and motivations, it strives to persuade, to teach and to
engage the hearer/reader by eliciting reactions, emotions, convictions, and
identifications. The evaluative criterion for rhetoric is not aesthetic, but praxis." Hence,
I will be guided by the grammar of persuasive communication found in the classical
handbooks of Greco-Roman rhetoric so as to come to grips, most especially, with the
interpretation of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30. And, on the basis of my research
findings, I provide a summary and hope to draw conclusions for this study.

lengthy treatment of “food sacrificed to idols,” at the beginning of 8:1, but that it seems to break
the camel’s back for the entire problem Paul wrests with throughout 1 Corinthians and, especially,
in 8:1-11:1. However, this study only seeks to apply the sample of what is often taken as
Aristotle’s rhetorical layout in the quest for the interpretation and understanding of what Paul
seems to be saying in 10:23-11:1. Again, it is important to know that “ancient rhetorical theory”
is an inexact concept as there seems to be no uniform set of dogmata in antiquity as it is even
among the modern scholars using the method. Perhaps, it is the chief reason for the differences
that exist in the arrangement or in the rhetorical layout between a tradition of philosophical
rhetoric that was less concerned with the speaker, and a sophistic tradition that placed greater
emphasis on the speaker himself (George A. Kennedy, Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and
Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times [Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina,
1980], 16-17; R. Dean Anderson, Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul, BET 18 [Kampen: Kok
Pharos, 1996], 252).

1Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1
CHAPTER II

FOUR BROADER ISSUES OF 1 COR 8 AND 10 IN SCHOLARSHIP

Four Broader Issues of 1 Cor 8 and 10

Because scholars offer different explanations on the problem of eating εἰδωλόθυτα “food sacrificed to idols” in 1 Cor 8-10 and, in particular, on the two questions asked in 10:29b-30, it is important to examine some of the issues which seem

1 Besides the various commentaries, William T. Sawyer’s unpublished dissertation in 1968 is the first major contribution to the current scholarly debate over the question of idol food in 1 Cor 8-10. At that time, Sawyer overtly states in his dissertation that, to his knowledge, “no one has offered a comprehensive study of the question of meat offered to idols at Corinth, and at the same time related this problem to the total context of Paul’s ministry” (“The Problem of Meat Sacrificed to Idols in the Corinthian Church” [Th.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968], 4; see also Willis, Idol Meat in Corinth, 2). But, at present, the reverse is the case due to the result of flowering contributions of such scholars as John C. Hurd, Gordon D. Fee, Richard Horsley, and J. Murphy-O’Connor, to mention a few, especially, in view of the other related issues discussed in 1 Corinthians. Likewise, a bibliographical list that suggests other interpretive methods or approaches of addressing the problems of idol food in 1 Cor 8-10 are in Yeo, 5-14; Derek Newton, Deity and Diet: The Dilemma of Sacrificial Food at Corinth, JSNT Sup. 169 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 25-35; Cheung, 17, n. 4; Duane F. Watson and Alan J. Hauser, Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography with Notes on History and Method, BIS (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 190-192.

2 Tomson identifies and evaluates four possible explanations offered by scholars to the difficulty of understanding the questions over the eating of εἰδωλόθυτα in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1. First, it is held that Paul himself creates the difficulty because at the one point in the passage Paul prohibits idol food but allows the same in the other, hence the contradiction is fundamental. Second, because it is claimed that Paul expresses himself unclearly on the matter; there can be no satisfactory solution to the issues addressed in the passage. Third, it is argued that Paul is addressing two different situations or circumstances because 8:1-10:22 concerns with idol food during actual participation in cult meals (cf. 8:10, 10:21), whereas 10:25-28 deals with the participation in the non-cultic meals. Fourth, it is further claimed that as 1 Cor 10:25-29 stands Paul, therefore, “defines what is idol food in doubtful cases” (cf. Deut 22:1-4) as reflected in Rabbinic halakha (206-208). Fee also writes that the different interpretations cannot be avoided
to underlie the trend. This is necessary because, in most cases, a scholar’s interpretation of the two questions asked in vss. 29b-30 is often informed by the conclusion drawn on (1) the hypothetical backgrounds of chaps. 8 and 10, (2) the relationship between 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22, (3) the identity of the “weak” and “strong,” and (4) who asked the two questions in 10:29b-30? While these four issues are discussed in this chapter, the significance of the discussion is developed in chapters 3 and 4.

The first issue concerns the various hypothetical backgrounds advanced in scholarship that allegedly inform the interpretation of 1 Cor 8 and 10. A scholar’s assessment of the situation at Corinth is critical to the nature of the conclusion reached in the discussion of food sacrificed to idols in 8:1-11:1. For instance, a ‘mirror reading’ of the situation at Corinth has led scholars for years to treat the meanings of έδωλοθύτα in 8:10 and έδωλολατρίας in 10:14 as mutually exclusive. It is as if in 10:1-22 Paul

because “not everyone is agreed on the exact nature of the problem and of Paul’s response” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 358-360; idem, “Έδωλολότυτα Once Again,” 172-179).

1The four broader issues also account for the different interpretations of other problems Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians. However, while some interpreters of 1 Cor 8-10 examine the passage without a satisfactory explanation to Paul’s arguments, others do not consider the broader issues before a detailed exegesis arguing that the case is too complex to enumerate or unnecessary in the discussion of the passage. For me, neither approach is adequate in the study of 1 Corinthians and, especially, in view of the hypothesis advanced by scholars that continue to add to the difficulty of understanding the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30.

2‘Mirror reading’ is taking a written statement to account for the position of the other person on an issue. Such is the case with the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 as discussed in this dissertation. For example, scholars ‘mirror read’ the two questions asked in the passage to mean that Paul warns the “weak” as he sides with “strong” on the right/freedom to eat idol food. But, there are difficulties with such reading. See, for example, the pitfalls of a ‘mirror reading’ on Paul’s responses to the ‘charges’ from his opponents in Galatians (George Lyons, Pauline Autobiography on Paul’s Life: Toward a New Understanding, SBLDS 73 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985], 96-97).
rigorously condemns idolatry but refuses to do so in the adjacent paragraphs that connect
with the questions over the eating of idol food in the letter. But, the preliminary
investigation indicates that most of the background reconstructions on 1 Corinthians in
general lack the necessary evidence to sustain the kind of conclusions reached on 10:29b-
30.¹

The second issue is that scholars are divided on the relationship between 8:1-13 +
10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22 that gives rise to the partition theories. The latter passage is
usually considered to be earlier because it is stricter and, therefore, belongs to the
“previous letter” (5:9). The former two passages are taken altogether as a unit and part
of another letter that actually answer the question of meat or food sacrificed to idols from
Corinth. Thus, scholars have been led to conclude that because the two questions asked
in 10:29b-30 are in the immediate context of 10:23-11:1, the pericope belongs to chap. 8
where the eating of idol food is a matter of indifference to Paul.

The third issue concerns the specific identity and features of the “weak” and
“strong.” For instance, who or what is the “weak” brother refers to in 1 Cor 8:11? And,
who or what precisely is the “strong” (cf. Rom 15:1) in the discussion of food offered to
idols that led to the two questions asked in 10:29b-30? Finally, in the fourth issue,
scholars are divided over whether the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 are Paul’s own
sentiments, or those of the “strong.” These broader issues do overlap at different points
but in this dissertation, as much as possible, they will be handled under four headings.

¹Hurd, 124-131; John C. Brunt, “Paul’s Attitude Toward and Treatment of Problems
Involving Dietary Practice: A Case Study in Pauline Ethics” (Ph.D. diss., Emory University,
Issue 1: The Hypothetical Backgrounds of 1 Cor 8 and 10

The Jewish/Gentile Situation

Since the time of Ferdinand C. Baur of the Tübingen school in 1831, scholars have tended to define the "parties" mentioned in 1 Cor 1:12 in the setting of a Jewish/Gentile (Peter/Christ vs. Paul/Apollos) conflicts in the church. Thus, Baur's reconstruction of the Jewish/Gentile situation, for example, opens the door for most scholars to make a deliberate attempt in treating εἰδωλολατρία (10:14) separate from εἰδωλόθυτα (8:10) with less attention paid to the contextual framework in which Paul argues. The basic claim is that the former displays Paul's Jewish hostility to idolatry in 10:1-22 (even though Paul is still very un-Jewish for some) and the latter explains Paul's ethical perspective of Christian freedom, especially, the freedom mentioned in the context of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30.3

---


2For example, Sawyer argues that "Cepha's [Peter's] group are described in 1 Corinthians 8-10 as being weaker brothers. The other three parties cannot be distinguished with clarity" (Sawyer, 141). This argument is, however, informed by Baur's conclusion on the Jewish/Gentile situation in the early church.

3For example, Walter Schmithals argues that in 1 Cor 10:1-22 Paul deals with the issue of εἰδωλολατρία (the actual worship of idols) that belongs to Letter A, whereas 8:1-9, 23 + 10:23-11:1 deal with εἰδωλόθυτα (the meat sold in the marketplace) and belong to letter B where the Corinthians are merely "asking Paul for information on this point" (Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians, trans. John E. Steed [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1971], 227). Thus, it is possible for Brunt to argue that Paul's attitude to the issue of idol food is different from his treatment of it because his "treatment of the issue also reveals something of the kinds of concerns he had for believers. While he does not worry about what they eat, there
For instance, in 1910 Johannes Weiss, whose insight continues to provoke and shape much of the subsequent debates in 1 Corinthians, argues that Paul intervenes in two different ways on the questions over the eating of idol foods in Corinth because of his dual background experiences. In fact, Weiss's claim also informs the arguments developed further in the discussion of the second issue of this chapter. First, that his Jewish background made him to attack idolatry in 10:1-22 which originally was part of the "previous letter" (5:9). Second, that 8 and 10:23-11:1 reflect Paul's latter ethical perspective on the motif of freedom derived from his Hellenistic background or environment—where the eating of idol meals is morally indifferent (adiaphoron).¹ C. K. Barrett also concurs in that he views the main problem in Corinth between the Jewish Christians who abstained from idol meat and the Gentile converts who ate on the basis of knowledge (γνώσεως) of the non-existence of idols.² Unfortunately, however, 1 Corinthians presents no evidence to justify either claim.

Moreover, in the quest to account for the origin of Paul's discussion of idol food are dangers that face the believers which do concern him . . . to actually participate in the pagan cult and share with the demons is incompatible with the faith in Christ. Thus a sharp distinction must be drawn between idol meat [εἰδωλοθυτα] and idolatry [εἰδωλολατρία]" (118-119). Again, Fee's argument is that Paul combats with the "knowing" Corinthians in 1 Cor 8:1-13-10:22 against the eating of idol food but "this is scarcely so with 10,23-11:1. Although set in the context of edification and loving concern for 'the other person,' here Paul simply gives advice. There is no attack, and very little of the urgency one feels throughout 8,1-10,22" ("Εἰδωλολατρία Once Again," 176-177). Likewise, Joop F. M. Smit describes Paul's approach to this problem in two ways by suggesting that "in 8:1-3 and 8:7-9:27 Paul argues at a social level . . . in 8:4-6 and 10:1-22 he argues at the theological level" ("Do Not Be Idolaters: Paul's Rhetoric in First Corinthians 10:1-22," NovT 39 [1997]: 42).

¹Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, xl-xlIII, 264; idem, The History of Primitive Christianity, 1:326-327.

in 1 Cor 8-10, Hurd contends that the problem is the third of the “three prohibitions as the contents of the Previous Letter”\(^1\) that the Corinthians objected. Following his review of scholarly claims (which Hurd grades as *negative* and *positive* theories)\(^2\) of omission of the Apostolic Council decision (Acts 15) in Paul’s discussion on idol meat in chaps. 8-10, Hurd’s concludes that there are two reasons for the omission. First, he states that it is because the Apostolic decision was not part of Paul’s original preaching in Corinth. Second, that after the promulgation of the Apostolic Decree that “later Paul adopted them and sent them to the Corinthians, not because they represented a logical development in his ethical principles, but, on the contrary, because they represented a compromise into which he had entered with a position quite different from his own.”\(^3\)

Hurd’s claim is that Paul’s stand is an uncomfortable compromise with the Jerusalem leadership into which he entered only for the purpose of the legitimization of his mission to the Gentiles. Thus, his suggestion makes the question of idol food prohibition as a new development and a latter part of the dietary laws Paul rejects in his mission work among the Gentiles. This ideological explanation of Paul’s position on idol food probably led Paul D. Gardner to suggest that the term Εἰδωλόθυτα “was

\(^1\)Hurd, 226.

\(^2\)Ibid., 254-259.

\(^3\)Ibid., 261; Sawyer, 35-37. Again, Pierce writes that Paul “recognizes that it is useless to appeal to any pronouncement of authority. He had probably laid down the Jerusalem regulations at the outset of his Corinthian ministry: the present trouble would then have arisen partly from the Corinthians’ defiance of them in the name of gnosis.” (76; Lawrence W. Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem* [Cambridge: University Press, 1925], 234, 236; Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 213; Barrett, “Things Sacrificed to Idols,” 50-54; Thomas W. Manson, *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles*, ed. Matthew Black [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962], 187-200).
actually coined around the time of the Jerusalem Council and was of Christian origin." However, Hurd’s conclusion is difficult to establish either in Acts or 1 Corinthians.

Although the problem of the Decree in Acts is much debated, still, there is no indication that the versions of the Apostolic Decree (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25) suggest that idol food prohibition is a new development that started with the early Church. What both Acts and 1 Corinthians seem to indicate is that idolatry and idol food are inseparable because the meat problem was specifically one of pollution with idols that poses a great danger and challenge to the early Church. Thus, it would be difficult to substantiate the claim that Paul singularly vitiates the problem of idol food as Hurd imagines. Perhaps, this seems to inform Witherington’s assessment of the difficulties scholars face in the interpretation of 1 Cor 8-10 and the Apostolic Decree in Acts 15 on idol food. According to Witherington:


2There is neither a serious textual problems with ἅλιγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων in Acts 15:20 nor with what seems to be an interpretation by the substitution of ἅλιγημάτα for εἰδωλοθύτα in vs. 29. See, for example, Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 429-434.

3This is evident in the archaeology of Roman Corinth that reveals the religious practices of the Greco-Roman world. For example, see Peter D. Gooch, *Dangerous Food: 1 Corinthians 8-10 in Its Context*, SCJ 5 (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1993), viii-xvi, 1-46.

4Moreover, there is the possibility that even the audience in 1 Corinthians may know nothing of the so-called Apostolic Decree since there is no evidence that they accept from Paul any of its regulatory verdicts. W. D. Davies gives three reasons for all this (*Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* [London: S. P. C. K., 1970], 119). Also, see Hans-Joseph Klauck, *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ersten Korintherbrief*, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, neue Folge 15, ed. J. von Gnvlka (Münster: Aschendorff, 1982), 279-280.
εἰδωλόθυτα in all its 1st century AD occurrences means an animal sacrificed in the presence of an idol and eaten in the temple precincts. It does not refer to a sacrifice which has come from the temple and is eaten elsewhere, for which the Christian sources rather use the term ἱερόθυτον. In fact in all the first century AD references the association of εἰδωλόθυτον specifically with the temples and eating seems very likely and is made clear by the context of these references in one way or another.\(^1\)

However, following a thorough examination of the primary sources, Cheung's conclusion is that it is extremely unlikely that there was a competing interpretation between Paul and the orthodox Christians of the first century Christianity on idol food prohibition, or that Paul represents the sole voice that disagreed with the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem.\(^2\) What is clear is that the problem of idol food is not different from the danger idolatry poses because "our sources reveal that a distinction was generally made between Jewish dietary laws and the idol food prohibition. This gives us reason to believe that Paul indeed treated the two issues differently and substantiates our contention that Paul’s rejection of Jewish food laws does not imply that he condoned eating idol food."\(^3\) That is, Paul's rejection of the kosher laws (cf. Gal 2) is not to be taken to mean his compromise on the idol food prohibition of the Apostolic Decision (Acts 15). To be sure, Paul's position on idol food is completely different from the problems involving dietary practices that tend to disrupt the unity in the fellowship of Jews and Gentiles. And, failure to note this distinction contributes to the ideological interpretation of Paul's position on idol food in 1 Cor 8 and 10, especially, in light of the

---


\(^{2}\)Cheung, 165-295.

\(^{3}\)Ibid., 279.
two questions asked in 10:29b-30.¹

Next, Sawyer's conclusion on the problem of meat sacrificed to idols in 1 Cor 8-10 is also viewed against the background that "this seemingly unimportant controversy at Corinth was understood by Paul to be related to a larger issue, the growing rift between the Jewish and Gentile wings of the Church."² And, following Barrett's claim that the problem of εἰδωλοθυτα was introduced by the 'Peter group' into the church,³ Sawyer looks into some details of Jewish dietary regulations and customs believed to be derived from the OT and rabbinic literature. He argues that a Jew is forbidden to eat meat for a number of reasons that include improper slaughtering, or because an animal is 'unclean' by itself and, especially, if that animal is "slaughtered by an idolater or used for

¹See, for example, Hans von Soden, "Sakrament und Ethik bei Paulus: Zur Frage der literarischen und theologischen Einheitlichkeit von 1 Kor. 8-10," in Urchrististentum und Gesammelte Aufsätze und Vorträge, ed. Hans von Campenhausen (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1956), 1:239-275. Also, Murphy-O'Connor opens his article on "Freedom or the Ghetto" stating that "the problem of the legitimacy of eating meat which had formed part of pagan sacrifices is, in itself, of very limited interest. Yet, Paul's treatment is of perennial value because he saw that fundamental principles were involved. The way in which the issue was raised forced him to deal with such basic questions as the nature of Christian freedom, the place of the believer in a non-Christian society, and the education of conscience" ("Freedom or the Ghetto [1 Cor., viii, 1-13; x, 2 3-xi,1]," 543; see also Brunt, 311-316; idem, "Rejected, Ignored, or Misunderstood? The Fate of Paul’s Approach to the Problem of Food Offered to Idols in Early Christianity," NTS 31 [1985]: 113-124).

²Sawyer, 260. However, Willis's detailed examination into the Hellenistic meals in his study of 1 Cor 8-10 may seem to balance the neglect it suffers in Sawyer's research even though Willis himself also pays less attention into the Jewish background material on the issue (Willis, 7-64).

³In fact, Barrett states that "the problem of εἰδωλοθυτα would seldom arise, and possibly would never have arisen in a Gentile Church like that of Corinth if Jewish Christians (the Cephas group, perhaps) had not raised it . . . . in matter of εἰδωλοθυτα (to mention no others) Paul was not a practising Jew . . . . In Corinth, and not here only, Paul had to walk the tightrope between the legalism of Jewish Christianity and the false liberalism of gnostic rationalism. That he was able to do this is one of the clearest marks of his greatness" (Barrett, "Things Sacrificed to Idols," 49-50, 56).
idolatrous purposes." Thus, for the Jews, εἰδωλοθυτε refers to all meat that is sacrificed to idols regardless of where such meat is eaten (cf. 10:25 and 27).

Sawyer holds that Paul dealt with the problem of meat sacrificed to idols by mediating between the concern for idolatry by the 'weak' (Jewish Christians) and the freedom of the 'strong' (Gentile Christians) to eat all meat. This is because "the identification of eating meat sacrificed to idols with idolatry itself was made in latter centuries, but not by Paul himself," therefore, this "explains why the question is not whether one should eat or refrain, but for Paul it is a matter of where one ate and drank, and under what conditions." Sawyer claims that it is not surprising that Paul as an apostle to the Gentiles is on the side of the strong as "most of 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1 constitutes a reply to the questions of the Corinthians which represented basically the position of the 'strong.'" However, Sawyer's thesis raises some problems.

First, Sawyer's emphasis on the Jewish background at the neglect of the Hellenistic background material cannot satisfactorily account for the problem of γνώσις in 1 Cor 8:7 that Paul states is not in everyone. If the 'weak' are the Jewish Christians, what 'knowledge' of God does a 'strong' Gentile Christian have that the weak Jewish brother does not have? Second, there is no indication in chaps. 8-10 that Paul confronts the Jewish dietary regulations in the discussion of εἰδωλοθυτε which Sawyer looks for throughout his dissertation in the hope to justify his claim that Paul sides with the

1Sawyer, 13, n. 15.

2Ibid., 165-166, emphasis his; Fee, "Εἰδωλοθυτε Once Again," 182; Robertson and Plummer, 171.

‘strong’ in 10:29b-30. Therefore, Sawyer’s Jewish background reconstruction of the problem of meat sacrificed to idols in chaps. 8 and 10 is also inadequate to account for the problem Paul confronts in the passage.

The Influence of Gnosticism

There were scholars who later became dissatisfied with Baur’s thesis that Paul developed his position in complete opposition to that of the primitive Church. Frédéric Godet, for example, observes that because the Corinthian situation indicates the influence of some elements of gnosticism among Paul’s opponents, therefore, it is difficult to ascertain precisely the common element that held together the so-called Peter/Christ party in opposition to a party of Paul/Apollos. And, even though Godet sees the Peter party as Judaizers, still, he contends that “nothing authorizes us to ascribe to Peter a conception of the Gospel opposed to that of Paul.” For him, the Peter party concedes the liberty of believers as Paul unlike the Christ party that denies such liberty. There is even the likelihood that “the name of Christ, in the title which these persons took, those of Christ, would be formulated, not only in opposition to the name of the apostles, but even to that of Jesus.”

Thus, Wilhelm D. Lütgert finds Paul’s opponents at Corinth as the Christ party

\[1\text{Ibid., 190.}\]

\[2\text{Frédéric Godet, Commentary on St Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians, trans. A. Cusin (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1890), 72. Of course, Godet himself allows for the existence of four separate groups in 1 Cor 1:12, otherwise, he thinks Paul could not have spent so much time and space discussing the subject in 1 Cor 1-4 (ibid., 68, 33-79).}\]

\[3\text{Ibid., 77, emphasis his.}\]
with the antinomian gnostic, hyper-pneumatic tendencies. He criticizes Baur who earlier claimed that the Christ party is of the nomistic Jewish stock that opposed Paul. For Lütgert, the Christ party is a hyper-Paulinist and Gnostic group that stood in opposition to all Paul taught in Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 1-4).¹ He connects the pneumatic group as the party that distorted the original gospel of freedom that Paul preached but which had been radically affected by their gnostic teachings (cf. 2 Cor 11:4). Hence, Paul’s letters to the Corinthians give no indication of Judaizing problems as Baur alleges. Rather, Lütgert argues by pointing to 2 Cor 10:7 that the Corinthians were against Paul because he failed to demonstrate power and the spirit of a gnostic.²

However, the weakness to Lütgert’s hypothesis is that his elaborate explanation of the Christ party as a hyper-Paulinist and Gnostic group is difficult to accept for one group only mentioned in a verse. Besides, he fails to relate his argument to the problems of idol food in chaps. 8-10. This seems to be the reason he became so preoccupied with 2 Cor 10-13 to establish a case for the group even though his reference to 2 Cor 10:7 is still a conjecture. Although the issue of gnosticism before the second century has been raised, Barrett’s attempt to identify some characteristics of the \( \gamma ν\delta\sigmaις \) in the first century Corinth only suggests its incipient development. That \( \gamma ν\delta\sigmaις \) (1) was

¹Wilhelm D. Lütgert, *Freiheitspredigt und Schwarmgeister in Korinth: Ein Beitrag zur Charakteristik der Christus partei* (Güttersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1908), 89-95.

²Ibid., 51-69, 162. Adolf Schlatter, having built on Lütgert’s hypothesis, however, argues for the gnostic teaching of a Palestinian Judaism that is made up of a Christ party who newly arrived in Corinth from Peter in Jerusalem. Schlatter also indicated that the group derives its own theology by the appeal to Christ that is neither of a Pauline or Peterine but rather of a Jewish “wisdom” ideas dressed in Hellenistic syncreticism (*The Church in the New Testament Period*, tr. Paul P. Levertoff [London: S. P. C. K., 1955], 173-190).
essentially practical [1 Cor 6:13; 8:1-13], (2) held a rationalistic claim of monotheism [8:4-6; 10:19], (3) was strictly dualistic not only with food, but also with immorality [5:1-13; 6:13; 15:32], and (4) as a rational dualism led to moral indifference (10:29).¹

Again, the interpretation of 1 Corinthians has been greatly conditioned by the supposed hellenistic/gnostic hypothesis in the quest for the background thought of Paul. For instance, Richard Reitzenstein, a member of the religions-geschichtliche Schule, claims that the influence of gnosticism is already at work in Paul with his opponents in Corinth who are the enthusiasts as himself. In the attempt to remove Paul from his Jewish background, Reitzenstein argues that the words πνευματικός, γνώσις, and πνεύμα that feature in Paul's individual passages are derived from the mysteries of the hellenistic

religions. He claims that based on 1 Cor 2:14 that Paul as a πνευματικός had a “mystical connection with Christ,” and this is what ἐαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι means in 2 Cor 10:7. That is, to be Christ’s is not to belong to a ‘Christ party’ which, as Reitzenstein argues, is “added under the demand of rhetoric.” Thus, for Reitzenstein, the key difference between Paul’s γνῶσις and that of the Corinthians’ is that because of the Cross a spiritual or mature man (πνευματικός) balances his own knowledge with love (8:1).

Therefore, Reitzenstein’s gnostic hypothesis is another attempt to provide a hellenistic background material of the Corinthian situation. For instance, it is possible to view the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 in the gnostic spirit of the time, that is, as an objection to Paul’s appeal on behalf of the weak (8:11). Schmithals also holds that Gnosticism provides the context for 1 Corinthians although he denies it arose from Palestinian Judaism as Bultmann holds. He argues that what Paul addresses in 8:1 following is “against the unbiblical γνῶσις, which is lacking in ἐγάπη, since it does not seek to awaken and order the will of man, but through knowledge excuses man from all

---


2Reitzenstein, 427.

3Ibid., 381, 494-496. Again, Reitzenstein’s Hellenism/Gnosticism hypothesis made him regard 1 Cor 10:3-4 as “an obvious transfer of Old Testament ideas into the perspective of the mysteries” (416).

4Bultmann maintains that Gnosticism arose in Hellenism; he believes it “penetrated into the Christian congregations mostly through the medium of a Hellenistic Judaism that was itself in the grip of syncreticism” (1:171).
Nonetheless, Reitzenstein's gnostic reconstruction as a background factor in the interpretation of chaps. 8 and 10 raises other problems. For example, he claims that "in the use of the technical term Paul is in full agreement with Hellenistic mysticism" in the way he connects the irony of Paul's use of γνῶσις in 8:1 as "the idea of the graduated vision in the mysteries." Similar imposition of a technical mystery-religious idea is also forced on 10:3-4 which Reitzenstein regards as an "an obvious transfer of Old Testament ideas into the perspective of the mysteries." The implication of this is that the magical sacred meals (theophagy) in the hellenistic mystery cults are often sought for as a necessary background for scholars who adopt a "sacramental" view in the interpretation of chaps. 8 and 10. And, it is against this background most interpreters claim Paul warns the Corinthian Gnostics against sacramentalism: "therefore, let anyone who thinks he

1Schmithals, 146. However, Schmithals criticizes Reitzenstein for finding his concept of "Gnosis" only in the mystery cults because, for Schmithals, γνῶσις is a terminus technicus of all religious language in Paul's time that found its root not in mysticism but in the myth of Corpus Hermeticum. Hence, "to possess Gnosis means nothing other than to know just this myth in its existential import" (ibid., 147).

2Reitzenstein, 381.

stands take heed lest he fall (10:12).”

With the above, it seems in 1 Cor 10:1-22 Paul builds his argument from the sacramentalism of the hellenistic mysteries which forces him to be more “rigorist” in his approach over the question of eating idol food, whereas in 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 he denies sacramentalism from an “ethical” viewpoint. An example of this is evident in the interpretation of chaps. 8 and 10 by Hans von Soden, whose primary concern was the resolution of “sacrament and ethics” in Paul.² He finds a background of the passage in a tension between the “strong” and the “weak.” He suggests that the “strong” as the “unrestrained enthusiasts” think sacramentally because they believe that their participation in Christ’s body (= Christ in their body) brings no harm on them, and the weak who probably have no sacramental view are “the terrified of every defilement” and “legalistic anxiety.” According to von Soden, because Paul’s own “sacramentalist” view involves an ethics of proper intention, therefore, he moves beyond the attitudes of both groups. His conclusion is that Paul’s main concern is to reform the wrong view of the sacrament of both the weak and the strong because participation in the sacred meals of

²It is claimed that Paul only attacks the over-confident Corinthians who felt free to partake in the temple sacred meals because they think the sacraments shield them against everything that threatens their relationship to God and salvation. Barrett writes that “some at least of the Corinthians, possibly gnostics of a sort, fancy themselves secure; they are God’s elect, and they too are equipped with sacraments. But they are no more secure than Paul himself (ix.27)” (Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 228). For a summary of the impacts of the mystery religions in New Testament interpretation, see Werner G. Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems* [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1970], 245-280; Stephen Neil and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament: 1861-1986* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988], 172-204).

the Lord’s Supper still remains the basis of the believer’s mystical union with Christ.\(^1\).

However, Willis’s approach to the interpretation of the hellenistic meals as social meals opposes any attempt that describes the meals as sacred. He declares that the alleged conflict in the discussion on idol food between the “sacramentalist” view in 1 Cor 10:1-22 and the “ethical” arguments of 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 “misunderstands both the character of pagan cult meals and Paul’s arguments in 1 Cor 8 and 10.”\(^2\) He describes three traditional explanations scholars have followed to account for the meaning of cultic meals in hellenistic religions, namely, (1) the *Sacramental*, (2) the *Communal*, and (3) the *Social*.\(^3\)

The sacramental view emphasizes the situation where the worshipers eat the deity, whether real or symbolic (theophagy), in the cult meal. The communal view is concerned with the ‘sharing of the meal’ with the deity who is assumed to be present at the worship occasion. The social view is that although the meals were eaten before the deity because “due regard was given the deity and a portion allotted to him,” still, “the focus is on the social relationship among the worshipers. The deity is more an observer than a participant.”\(^4\)

---

\(^1\)von Soden,” 259-261. Unfortunately, however, von Soden’s primary concern to free Paul from a charge of legalism had led him to ignore the apostle’s restrictive argument against idolatry, especially, in 1 Cor 10:14-22.

\(^2\)Willis, 11.

\(^3\)Ibid., 17-21.

\(^4\)Ibid., 20. Willis holds that the difference between “the prominent communal interpretation” and the social is that while the communal meal concerns “an occasion of conscious worship,” that makes the experience appears “sacramental,” in the social the main concern is to emphasize the social relationship that binds the participants together. Even though “Greek *thuriai* were doubtless accompanied by religious sentiment and sanction, but that they involved a sense of
Following Willis’s examination of papyri and other inscriptions relating to four important mystery cults to support a sacramental view—Eleusis, Dionysus, Mithraism, and Serapis-Isis—Willis’s conclusion is that there is “no evidence at all” to suggest that such meals had sacramental significance. He argues that the sources describing the meals and those ridiculing them rather stress the aspect of their social conviviality than a religious one. Furthermore, he declares that the meals were not “religiously significant” even when such meals are eaten at the pagan temple precinct. Thus, for Willis, the problem Paul encountered with the Corinthians eating sacrificial food at social occasions is that sometimes the meals are served and eaten “in a temple” (1 Cor 8:10). That is, the motive of the Corinthian Christians for eating the meals is “social” but the concrete situation which evokes Paul’s concern is the impacts such eating have when it is eaten in a pagan temple.1

Willis’s thesis is significant in two ways. First, his findings in the sources of the hellenistic meals as “social” rather than sacred or religious help to explain why the alleged “sacramentalist” view may be inadequate as a background factor in the interpretation of 1 Cor 8 and 10: It seems likely that even in the Hellenistic mystery-religions sacred meals are not considered sacramental occasions since the communal understanding is more prominent in the cases Willis cited. Besides, even the lines personal relationship with the deity is doubtful” (20-21, n. 62).

1Willis concludes that “the cult meals as occasions of good company, good food, and good fun makes it obvious why the Corinthian Christians would not have wanted to miss out” (ibid., 63, n. 235; see also Bruce N. Fisk, “Eating Meat Offered to Idols: Corinthian Behavior and Pauline Response in 1 Corinthians 8-10,” TJ, n.s. 10 [1989]: 62-70).
between the religious and social ceremonies are many at times difficult to discern.¹

Second, Willis’s explanation of the meals as meals eaten at ‘social occasions’ may suggest that Paul himself must have participated in such meals with the Corinthians even though there is no evidence to justify this claim as Hurd and Fee allege.² As a matter of fact, if the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 are those of the Corinthians,’ Willis’s thesis may further provide additional reasons they have been asked in the first place.

However, one weakness to Willis’s hypothesis is that not all the evidence he provides can always be read the way he suggests because his sources are still open to different interpretations. For example, in a banquet invitation such as the ‘banquet of the Lord Serapis,’ it is difficult to accept a proposition that the focus at such occasional meals is merely ‘social’ and not religious among the participants. Another weakness, in my judgment, is that Willis’s thesis seems to undermine Paul’s restrictive argument against idolatry. He seems to understand Paul’s position as suggesting that abstention from idol food is needed only when there is the danger of causing harm to the weak brother. Nevertheless, Willis’s observation makes it certainly possible to understand the background that caused the questions of the Corinthians on idol food.

The Questions of the Corinthians

Our canonical 1 Corinthians is informed by what Paul either knew about the


²Hurd holds that Paul defends himself in 1 Cor 9 on the charge of his own behavior and apostolic credentials because the Corinthians question his authority to stop them in partaking idol food (126-127; Fee, “Εἰδολολογία Once Again,” 179-181).
Corinthian situation (cf. 1 Cor 1:11) or received as a report from the Corinthians’ letter (7:25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12; 16:16-18). However, because the letter itself accounts for his own side of the several issues discussed (though he occasionally cites Corinthian statements in argumentation), scholars have attempted to offer a restoration of the nature of the questions that led to the kind of responses recorded in 1 Cor 8 and 10. For example, Sawyer reconstructs the main elements of the questions of the Corinthians on food sacrificed to idols this way:

Another matter of concern to us is the question of food, and especially meat sacrificed to idols. When you were with us there was never any question about what you ate or drank. We all know that 'food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food.' We also believe that 'food will not commend us to God.' We are no worse off if we eat, and no better off if we do not eat certain foods. We know that for those in Christ 'all things are lawful.' And since there is no god but one and an idol has no real existence there seems to be no harm in eating meat sacrificed to idols.

This subject has become a perplexing and divisive issue among us. Therefore, we would ask your advice about these matters. How are we able to know what meats at the market are associated with idolatry? Are we required to ask about the history of all the food we buy? And what if we are invited to attend private meals? Should we make an issue over everything that is served?

However, some doubt if there is enough evidence in the passage to establish the kind of reconstruction Sawyer made for the Corinthians. For instance, Hurd and Fee hold

---

1Paul’s association with the Church in Corinth was an ongoing experience as a leader and founder of the community (1 Cor 3:6, 10; 4:15; 9:2; 2 Cor 10:14-16). And, 1 and 2 Corinthians show that he wrote, at least, four letters (cf. Letter 1 as the “Previous Letter,” Letter 2 as our canonical 1 Corinthians, Letter 3 as the “Severe Letter [2 Cor 10-13],” and Letter 4 in 2 Cor 1-9). But, precisely, as to when and where he did so depend largely on the view each scholar holds on Acts 18:1-17 and other references in Pauline epistles (see, for example, W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* [London: SCM Press, 1975], 271; Hurd, 43-58; idem, *The Earlier Letters of Paul—and Other Studies*, SRHEC 8 [New York: Peter Lang, 1998], 188-192).

2Sawyer, 111; Hurd, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 115-116, n. 3, for earlier reconstructions.
that because Paul himself ate idol food\textsuperscript{1} it is impossible for the Corinthians to be asking for his advice as Sawyer and others have indicated. Hence, “the Corinthians’ question is not ‘may we?’ or ‘should we?’ but ‘why can’t we?’”\textsuperscript{2} Fee holds that because the Corinthians take pride in their claims to \textit{γνώσις} and protection in the sacraments, that it would be demeaning for the “knowing” Corinthians to seek any advice that could restrict the freedom to partake in idol food.

Thus, Fee suggests that it is obvious that the Corinthians were asserting their rights to freedom rather than asking for Paul’s answers on idol food.\textsuperscript{3} And, the conclusion of Hurd is that since it is improbable to hold to a theory of two groups seeking for Paul’s advice over a disagreement on idol food in Corinth, therefore, the conflict in the passage must rather be between Paul and all the members of the church. For him, the scholars who claim the Corinthians asked Paul for answers on idol food must “have hypothesized a more complicated theory than necessary.”\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1}Hurd, 126; Fee, “Εἰδωλοθυτεῖ πάλιν,” 180-181.

\textsuperscript{2}Hurd, \textit{The Origin of 1 Corinthians}, 126, 146. In addition, Fee claims that the Corinthians asserted their rights saying: “Why can’t we then continue to join our friends at their feasts, even at the temples? Besides, Paul, you seem to be unable to use your authority as an apostle. Indeed, are you really an apostle? You have repeatedly refused our offer of financial support, and you also have been known to eat idol meat in Gentile homes, but refuse it when Jews were present. If you cannot settle on your own authority, why should you restrict ours to act in Christian freedom?” (“Εἰδωλοθυτεῖ πάλιν,” 181).

\textsuperscript{3}Fee, “Εἰδωλοθυτεῖ πάλιν,” 180-181.

\textsuperscript{4}Hurd, \textit{The Origin of 1 Corinthians}, 125. But, if there were no questions asked by the Corinthians that demand the kind of explanations Paul offered in 1 Cor 8-10 and, especially, in 10:29b-30, then, how do we account for the report of the delegation sent by the Corinthian church to Paul in 16:17-18 and the party spirit in 1:12-16? My guess is that it is possible for the Corinthians to have asked the kind of questions Sawyer advances even though not all the members of the congregation would accept Paul’s advice or await his answers to their questions over the problems of eating idol food. There are two reasons for my hunch. First, because 1 Corinthians
But, if the motive of Paul's combative approach on εἰδωλοθυτα in 1 Cor 8-10 is not traceable to the Jewish/Gentile situation, or the examination of both Gnosticism and mystery-religions of Hellenism, or the questions of the Corinthians, then, what background should inform the understanding of the two questions asked in the context of chaps. 8 and 10? Or, are we to borrow a lead from Davies's insight that "it has become clear . . . that Paul was influenced not only by the religion of his fathers, but also by the religious movements of the Hellenistic world of his day, that both Hellenism and Judaism were his tutors unto Christ"?

So far, all of the hypothetical reconstructions advanced on Paul's thought, attitudes, and position on εἰδωλοθυτα in 1 Cor 8-10 are yet to be resolved because the majority of the hypotheses lack the necessary evidence either from the Corinthian correspondence or the other parts of the NT. As with the quests for other background questions in Pauline matters, Gardner suggests that the problem lies in how much it is possible to distinguish between the background that was Paul's, and that he drew upon, and the background that was the Corinthians'.

It is all too easy to forget that, while Paul himself may have had Jewish ideas reflects the situation of a Church with radical freedom in the egalitarian expression of the spirit of the time (zeitgeist) as in 6:12 and 10:23: "I am free to do anything" (Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, 1 Corinthians, NTM 10 [Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1979], ix; Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 19; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 108). Second, the debating spirit in the Church in the claim to knowledge and rhetoric can also lead to the questions advanced for the Corinthians in view of the two asked in 10:29b-30 (Kirsopp Lake, The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul: Their Motive and Origin [London: Rivingtons, 1911], 199-200, 201; R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians [Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1946], 253-254).

1Davies, l. Barrett remarks: "It is sad that we do not know more of the historical circumstances that lay behind the writing of 1 Corinthians, but we must probably be content to reconcile ourselves to ignorance, and we may perhaps allow ourselves to render Paul's own advice in 1 Cor. 4.6 as: It is better not to read too much between the lines" (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 10-11).
in mind when he spoke of γνώσις and σοφία, he may have been deliberately re-defining Greek pagan concepts in a manner obvious to the Corinthians, but not so obvious to those studying the text 2000 years later.1

**Issue 2: The Relationship Between 1 Cor 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22**

The second broader issue on 1 Cor 8 and 10 is that scholars find it difficult to understand precisely what Paul is trying to accomplish between 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22. That is, how do the first 22 verses of chap. 10 relate to chap. 8 and the last half of chap. 10? The relationship seems to suggest that in the former Paul allows for the eating of idol food unless such eating brings harm to the weak brother whereas in the latter such permission is off limit. Thus, it is important to understand the relationship between them since the answer that is given sheds light on the content of 10:29b-30. As a matter of fact, this issue has led to two additional concerns discussed below. One is the concern for the literary integrity of 8:1-11:1, and the other is the coherence of Paul’s argument in light of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30.

**The Integrity of 1 Cor 8-11:1**

The problem of the integrity of 1 Cor 8-11:1 is important in the discussion of the relationship between 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22. As Conzelmann observes:

Despite the unified topic announced by Paul, considerable breaks and tensions are found within this section which provoke operations of literary criticism. . . . In chaps. 8 and 10:23-11:1 he adopts in principle the standpoint

---

1Gardner, 8 (italics his).

2The present division of 8-11:1 is only for the purpose of this study. This is because words such as γνώσις, ἀγάπη, ἔξουσια, and ἔλεοςθερος are among the examples of the key terms and ideas that suggest chaps. 8 through 14 are a unit (1 Cor 8:1, 7, 9-11; 9:1, 12; 10:29b; 11:10; 12:8, 13; 13:1, 2-4, 8, 13, and 14:1, 6).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
of the "strong": sacrificial meat is not dangerous and can accordingly be eaten. The restriction of freedom is imposed not by the meat, but by the conscience, by the bond with the "weak" brother. The strong are admonished. In 10:1-22, on the other hand, Paul appears to vote in favor of the weak. Eating is dangerous. All are warned. In the former passages Paul argues with the idea of freedom, which has its place in the community and is thereby binding in the community; in the second passage he operates with the idea of the sacrament, which institutes a fellowship that is exclusive. In the latter case, raising the question of conscience is not necessary at all.¹

As indicated earlier, the problem of integrity of 8:1-11:1 is further complicated in that Weiss’s hypothesis advances a thesis that there were originally two or more letters within 1 Corinthians.² Weiss’s claim, which opens the door for all the modern partition theories,³ holds that 10:1-22 (23) was earlier because it is stricter and, therefore, belongs

¹Conzelmann, *I Corinthians*, 137. See also Hurd, *The Origin of I Corinthians*, 115. Likewise, Joop F. M. Smit claims that chaps. 8-10 which deal with the issue of idol food “form the cornerstone of all partition theories. Particularly the contrast between the liberal position Paul takes in 8,1-13 with regard to eating of idol food and the rigoristic view he displays in 10,1-22 is considered by many as convincing evidence against the unity of the letter (“1 Cor 8,1-6: A Rhetorical Partitio,” *The Corinthian Correspondence*, BETL, ed. R. Bieringer [Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1996], 577, italics mine).

²Weiss, *The History of Primitive Christianity*, 323. Prior to 1876 when H. Hagge first raised the issue of the integrity of 1 Corinthians, the unity of the letter was generally assumed since there is no MSS or patristic evidence to the contrary. And, by 1889, Godet describes Paul’s plan of writing 1 Corinthians in this way: “Ten subjects, more or less extended and very heterogenous, were present to the apostle’s mind, when he set himself to compose this letter; and the question which arises is this: Will he confine himself to passing from the one to the other by way of juxtaposition, or will he find the means of binding them to one another by a logical or moral gradation, so as to leave an impression of order and unity on the mind of the reader. In other words, will the First Epistle to the Corinthians be a heap or a building? In this very letter St. Paul compares himself to an architect who has wisely laid the foundation of the Church. We shall immediately see that . . . he has shown himself such also in the composition of the letter which he has addressed to it” (1:27).

³For a tabular presentation of the principal source analyses of 1 Corinthians from Weiss to 1991, see Hurd, *The Earlier Letters of Paul*, 190-191; idem, *The Origin of I Corinthians*, 43-47, 131-142; Sawyer, 162. And, for a follow-up discussion, see Thiselton, 36-41; Yeo, 78-83.
to Letter A referred to in 5:9. Weiss assigns the other two passages, 8:1-13 and 10:23 (24)-11:1, as a fragment within Letter B that is more balanced in answer to questions from Corinth.2

Following Weiss, scholars further defend theories on the partition or redaction of 1 Corinthians in an attempt to separate 1 Cor 10:1-22 (23) from its immediate context. For example, von Soden in his article “Sacrament und Ethik bei Paulus,” argues that the problem of the integrity of 8:1-11:1 is that 10:1-22 (3) is different from 8:1-9:27 + 10:23 (4)-11:1. Thus, he assigns 8:1-9:27 to Letter “A”; 10:1-22 to Letter “B”; and 10:23-33 to Letter “C.”3 According to von Soden, the differences between “AC” and “B” is that (1) in “AC” Paul holds the arguments of the “strong” in their own terms, but in “B” he accepts that of the “weak”; (2) in “AC” to eat or not to eat is a matter of indifference

---

1Because of the unlikelihood that the “Previous Letter” contains only six verses, Weiss’s first letter does include 6:12-20; 10:24-11:1; 11:2-34 [together with 2 Cor 6:14-7:1] that seems to demonstrate similar approach. Weiss did so in contrast to his second letter (Letter B), viz: 1:1-6:11; 7 and 8; 9:1-23 [together with chap. 13]; 12; 14-16 (Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, xl-xlvi, 156-157; idem, The History of Primitive Christianity, 1:324-334).

2But, in 1917 Weiss revised his hypothesis and finds the third letter in 1 Cor 1-4 together with 5:1-6:11 which became B2 or C (The History of Primitive Christianity, 1:323-341). However, there is disagreement to the position and purpose of chap. 9 regarded as an “excursus” to some scholars in the discussion over the question of idol food in chaps. 8-10. M. Goguel, who built on Weiss’s hypothesis in 1926 assigns 1 Cor 9 to the unit of 8:1-11:1 even though he argues that it was written later as Letter C (Introduction au Nouveau Testament 4.2 [Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1926], 5:86, 73-86). However, Jean Herring rejects the claims of Weiss and Goguel because, for him, Letter A includes 1 Cor 1-8; 10:23-11:1, and 16:1-4; 10-14, and Letter B is the remainder that includes chap. 15 (The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, trans. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock [London: Epworth Press, 1962], xii-xv.

3von Soden, 254. Yeo also argues that Paul is responding to different issues out of two exigencies in 1 Cor 8 and 10. He holds that in 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 Paul uses the rhetoric of knowledge and love so that the “strong” and the “weak” can interact over the question of eating idol food, whereas, in 10:1-22 he employs midrashic rhetoric to warn the Corinthians to flee from idolatry (Yeo, 82-83, 160-211). Hurd, however, provides an extensive analysis of the question of integrity in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 as he responds, for instance, to von Soden’s arguments (The Origin of 1 Corinthians, 131-137).
(8:8; 10:26) whereas in "B" to eat and drink at the table of demons is prohibited for a Christian because it is tantamount to idolatry, and (3) in "AC" the argument involves an ethic of proper intention in terms of σωφρόνει (σωφρόνεις) (8:7; 10:28-29a), whereas in "B" it centers on a correct understanding of the magical, sacrament view of the Lord's Supper.¹

In more recent times, Schmithals argues that "it is rather unlikely that in Corinth people preserved or published only a portion of the apostle's letters: The arrangement of the letters itself forces us to recognize that Paul cannot possibly have written them thus."² And, having drawn on the theories of Weiss and others, Schmithals proposes nine letters in the canonical 1 and 2 Corinthians.³ For example, he makes the following divisions in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 as follows: Letter A (10:1-22); Letter B (8:1-9:23; 10:23-11:1 [9:24-27?]) with further subdivisions on chap. 9 into two fragments, viz: 9:24-27 being a part of A, and 9:1-23 as a fragment of B. Thus, for him, "now if one removes 9:24-10:22 from the context of 1 Cor., then the original order of the Epistle B is restored; for the principle of 10:23 can sensibly be joined only with 9:19-23, where it moreover fits well, while in connection with 10:14-22 it is simply impossible."⁴

Jewett revises Schmithal's partition theory into a redaction theory that seeks to understand the process and motivation of partitioning and editing. He distinguishes six letters following the process of his editing the partition theories. But, on 1 Cor 8:1-11:1,

¹von Soden," 254-255.
²Schmithals, 87.
³Walther Schmithals, "Die Korintherbriefe als Briefsammlung," ZNW 64 [1973]: 263-288)
⁴Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth, 93, 87-96.
he holds that 8:1-13, 9:19-23, and 10:23-11:1 belong to Letter C; and Letter B consists of
2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 1 Cor 6:12-20, and 9:24-10:22. G. Sellin, following Jewett's hypothesis
also assigns 9:24-10:22 to *Vorbrief* A and 7:1-9:23; 10:23-11:1 to *Antwortbrief* B.²

However, there are significant problems with the partition theories that seek to
account for the relationship between 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22 as in the following
observations. First, there is no textual evidence within the history of transmission that
our canonical 1 Corinthians ever circulated in an arrangement other than the present
form. Besides, there is no explanation as to why certain elements of the letter were not
preserved. Second, Schmithals and others who continue to partition 1 Corinthians are yet
to demonstrate, for example, that the relationship between 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-
22 are so different that Paul could not have written both sections in a single letter. Third,
even scholars are not in agreement on how 1 Corinthians should be divided and, in
particular 8:1-11:1, which often leads to the individual different premises regarding idol-
demon food, different conclusions on what Paul supposedly allows or disallows, and the
different world views.³ Fourth, the claim of an apparent difference between the

---


³Hurd's counter-arguments against the partitioning theories make very strong cases (*The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 132-142; see also Thiselton, 36-38). However, there are some agreements on how 2 Corinthians should be divided.

For instance, von Soden argues that in 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 Paul sides with the “strong” whereas in 10:1-22 he accepts the arguments of the “weak.” However, in view of the argumentative nature of the problem of idol food addressed in 8:1-11:1, von Soden’s observation is only a possibility and not necessarily what the passage intends. This is because the hypothesis that Paul supports the strong on one hand and the weak on the other, as Weiss also imagines, makes Paul inconsistent in the discussion over the question of idol food. It would mean to suggest that he condemns idolatry at one point (10:1-22), and does not do so elsewhere (8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1), especially, in light of the difficulty the content of 10:29b-30 seems to pose. But the problem is “whether Paul can argue both ways in the same breath.”

Even some scholars who defend the unity of 1 Corinthians and, especially, on 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 still argue on the territorial ground of the partition theories which they seek to refute. Hence, they subvert the unity theory in an attempt to account for the relationship between 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22. For example, Fee explains the apparent lack of coherence in the relationship between the two sections by distinguishing the main issue from the side issue. For him, the main issue is the eating of the cultic

---

1Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 137; see also Sawyer, 165. In fact, Yeo went so far as to suggest that “Paul’s rhetorical and pastoral techniques” are diametrically opposite because 1 Cor 8 and 10 address different rhetorical situations (Yeo, 76; Brunt, “Paul’s Attitude,” 118). Although the apparent tensions between 1 Cor 8:1-13 + 10:23-1:1 and 10:1-22 cannot be ignored, but, the evidence is not “strong enough to support the burden of proof which this kind of theory must always bear” (Hurd, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 47; see also Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 14-16).
meals at the pagan temples discussed by Paul in 10:1-22 in view of 8:10: “if someone sees you reclining in a pagan temple . . .” which also provides him the meaning of chap. 8. Fee claims that the whole of 8:1-10:22 is directed against the Corinthian position that they have the ‘right’ to continue this practice of sharing pagan worship. Hence, he holds that Paul’s response forbids their practice on theological (10:14-22) and ethical (8:1-13) grounds. Thus, a side issue is the problem of eating idol food or meat sold in the marketplace and eaten in private homes. According to Fee’s theory, Paul does not forbid this, unless somebody refers explicitly to its idolatrous origin. And, because this last point of view is only about a side issue, it does not affect the coherence of the main flow of Paul’s thought.

However, there are problems with Fee’s explanation of the two divisions. First, Jöel Delobel remarks that “by distinguishing between a main issue and a side issue, Fee also introduces a distinction within these chapters, ‘qualifying’ the different passages in a way which does not necessarily correspond to Paul’s intention.” Second, Fee’s

1Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 359-360, nn. 12-13; see also Willis, 8-64.

2Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 360; idem, “EliduLoidata Once Again,” 194-195. Although Fee objects to the traditional linkage of 1 Cor 8 with 10:23-11:1 because of a shift in emphasis, still, his hypothesis has received a sharp criticism from Bruce N. Fisk in two ways. First, Fee argues that the word εἰδωλοθυτα “meat offered to idols” is to be understood in the context and circumstance in which it was eaten and should not be limited to the eating in the pagan temple as Fee holds because it difficult “to explain Paul’s toleration in chap. 8 of an activity declared idolatrous in chap. 10.” Second, Fisk adds that attendance at pagan temple feasts has a number of purposes that range from “harmless fun and social convention” to “raw idolatry” because Paul’s concern is not the meat per se or where one eats the meat, but rather the character of the meal that is eaten. For Fisk, “when temple feasts had a distinctly religious focus, when participants were consciously acknowledging pagan gods, the Christian could not participate (10:14) without risk of provoking God to jealousy (10:22)” (59, 64).

hypothesis also makes Paul to address two different situations like those practitioners of the partition theory. For instance, in what he describes as his main issue in 1 Cor 8:1-10:22, Paul appears to deal with idol food during actual participation of the cultic meals at the pagan temples (cf. 8:10; 10:21), whereas, in his side issue in 10:23-11:1 he deals with idol food as being separate from an actual cultic ceremony (cf. 10:25-28). The implication of his explanation is that it tends to underestimate “the weight of the idolatry prohibition not only in ancient Judaism but also in Christianity.”

The Coherence of Paul’s Argument

Thus far, the arguments given in partition theories to account for the relationship between 1 Cor 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 (“AC”) and 10:1-22 (“B”) are not convincing. However, a close examination of the rhetorical unity of 8:1-11:1 provides a better explanation and offers further support for the textual unity of the letter. As I briefly suggested that “Paul tried (perhaps unsuccessfully) to hold two balls in the air by allowing the eating of idol meats (unless in a particular situation it hurts the fellow Christian) but condemning idolatry. This is because Paul’s overriding concern here is not idol meats in themselves, but the impact of conflicts over idol meats on the concord of the church community” (238). This, however, makes Paul appear as an inconsistent individual and a compromiser, who seeks to please the “strong” and the “weak” at the expense of the gospel, all in the name of reconciliation.

1Tomson, 207. Tomson’s suggestion is that “Paul defines what is idol in doubtful cases. While 1 Cor 8 introduces the problem and 10:1-22 reiterates the general prohibition of food known to be consecrated to idols, 10:25-29 deals with food of unspecified nature in a pagan setting.” His suggestion offers five advantages even though possible evidence for their analogies or parallels are only available in the ancient non-halakhic text (ibid., 208). Tomson’s conclusion is, however, based on the common feature in Rabbinic halakha which holds that Paul “does not teach a partial permission to eat idol food. He teaches (instead) a rational, halakhic definition of what should be considered an idol offering in uncertain cases and what should not” (ibid., 217). One weakness to Tomson’s suggestion is that there is no contemporary documentary evidence that supports a claim of Paul’s influence on the Tannaitic halakha within the dynamic variety of expressions of first-century Judaism. For earlier and recent voices, see Colin G. Kruse, Paul, the Law, and Justification (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 28-53 and 130-136; A. C. Thiselton, “Realized Eschatology at Corinth,” NTS 24 (1978): 510-526. Nonetheless, Tomson’s approach still makes sense when modified in light of Paul’s deliberative rhetoric in argumentation.
mentioned in chapter 1, arguments about the nature of the text of 1 Corinthians have 
taken on a new dimension in which the letter is studied in the context of Greco-Roman 
rhetoric of Paul’s time.¹ In light of this, the rhetorical approach of Paul’s argument 
therefore provides a reasonable reconstruction and a strong unifying element to the 
content of 8:1-11:1, as discussed in detail in the next two chapters of this dissertation.

The apparent differences in the relationship between the two sections appear to 
have been exaggerated by scholars because “AC” never indicates that Paul sides with the 
strong, for instance, in the context of the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30. 
Rather, “AC” explains further the reasons why he appeals to the strong not to eat idol 
food even as he introduces the two rhetorical questions following the deliberative 
arguments in “B.”² That is, as in “B,” there is no indication to suggest that Paul differs 

¹An excellent application of the rhetorical approach on the 1 Corinthians scholarship is 
presented by Mitchell who argues for the rhetorical unity of the letter as a whole. She 
demonstrates beyond reasonable doubt that Paul, in writing 1 Corinthians, closely follows the 
grammar of the Greco-Roman rhetoric as he persuades the Corinthians to adhere to concord. An 
example of this shows up in Paul’s use of the deliberative rhetoric over the question of idol meats 
discussed in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 (126-148 and 237-259; Witherington, Conflict & Community in 
Corinth, 186-230). And, for other representative voices in the general use of the method in NT, 
and on 1 Corinthians in particular, see a bibliographical list in Watson and Hauser, 101-163 and 
188-192; Yeo, 232-243. However, there is no agreement about the definition, method, and the 
’proper’ approach to the use of rhetorical criticism in 1 Corinthians. As a result of this, some 
scholars employ what is termed as the “New Rhetoric,” which seems to be a revision of ancient 
rhetorical handbooks to modern philosophical concerns. See, for example, Chaim Perelman and 
Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969); Wilhelm Wuellner, 
“Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation,” in Early Christian Literature and the Classical 
(Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 177-188. The fact is, while some are drawn to the use of the so-called 
“New Rhetoric,” other scholars have found it to be anachronistic to a study of biblical texts as 
they prefer to employ the ancient Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks to the peculiarities of the 
NT rhetoric. The latter approach as utilized by Kennedy, Mitchell, Duane, Yeo, and Witherington 
is, however, adapted in this study.

²But, Fisk thinks that “to see the objective idolatry in chapter 8 is to miss Paul’s point” in 
the discussion over the question of eating idol food in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 (Fisk, 61). My qualm to
in his appeals by compromising idolatry in “AC.” In fact, he seems to be warning against the danger of compromise in “AC,” which suggests that Paul is not discussing two different situations or matters as alleged in the partition theories. And, if the relationship between “AC” and “B” are explained in the rhetorical situation of chaps. 8-10, the argument that Paul appears incoherent between the sections becomes difficult to sustain.

Thus, it is obvious that the apparent tensions in the relationship between the so-called “AC” and “B” in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 are more artificial than real. As observed at the beginning of this chapter, these tensions appear to be due to the effort to make a distinction between what is idol food (εἰδωλόθυτα) from that which is idolatry (εἰδωλολατρία). And, because the division between idol food and idolatry is difficult to establish as suggested in the partition theories it, therefore, makes Paul’s response on idol food difficult to follow. In short, the division creates more problems than it solves.

Fisk is that he is yet to account for Paul’s major questions and concern in 1 Cor 8:10 vis à vis 10:29b-30 on the danger of idolatry. Watson’s analysis of the rhetorical questions in classical rhetoric is, however, helpful. It discusses, at least, five rhetorical functions that seem to clarify Paul’s major concerns on the principle of stumbling as, for example, in the two rhetorical questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30. These are: recapitulation, anticipation, argumentation, figures of thought, and ornament. The use of the rhetorical questions as an ‘anticipated objection’ of the strong against Paul’s restrictive argument and as ‘figures of thought’ are the two most plausible of all. This is because the two questions, first, provide “an explanation of their connection to the preceding exhortation and their context” and, second, they “are not asked to gain information, but to emphasize Paul’s point that Christian freedom must be exercised with the conscience of others in mind,” that is, the major concern others have against the dangers of idolatry (Watson, 313, 315, 311-318; Joop M. Smit, “The Function of First Corinthians 10,23-30: A Rhetorical Anticipation,” Bib 78 [1997]: 377-388; Gregory W. Dawes, “The Danger of Idolatry: First Corinthians 8:7-13,” CBQ 58 [1996]: 82-98).

1 Also, E. P. Sanders argues that Paul’s discussion in 1 Cor 8-10 is a self-evident demonstration of his ability to engage in complex and coherent thought (Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977], 549; note also Lake who finds Paul’s argument “not wholly” logical and excuses Paul’s inconsistency as a human trait [201]).
That there is no indication in 1 Cor 8-10 that suggests Paul allowed the eating of idol food in one section and, then, turns around and banned it in another section corroborates the coherence of Paul's argument against idolatry in 1 Corinthians. The linear relationship between the so-called "AC" and "B" becomes clearer, for example, when the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30 in both the larger and narrower contexts of the rhetorical unit of 8:1-11:1 are considered. In this way, Murphy-O'Connor, as does Fee, agrees that "all the so-called contradictions in 1 Corinthians can be resolved by a more exacting exegesis."¹

Issue 3: The Identity of the 'Weak' and the 'Strong'

The third broader issue deals with the specific identities of the "weak" and the "strong" in 1 Cor 8-10. For instance, it is not clear who is asking the two questions in 10:29b-30 or to whom they are directed in the discussion of idol foods in 8:1-11:1. As Brunt remarks, "the chief difficulty comes in the identification of the 'weak'"² brother Paul refers to in 8:11. The many references (cf. 1 Cor 1:25-29; 4:10; 9:22; 10:22b; 11:30; 12:22; 15:43; cf. 2 Cor 12:10b) do not reveal any consistent usage either in the Corinthian correspondence in general, or in chaps. 8-10 in particular.³ And, since Paul


²Brunt, "Paul’s Attitude,“ 8.

³David Alan Black, *Paul the Apostle of Weakness: Astheneia and Its Cognates in the Pauline Literature* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1984), 93-172. Also, Bong-Mo Song seeks "to analyze the function of the αἰθετε- word group from a rhetorical point of view. This is crucial because, as I shall make clear, Paul uses the αἰθετε- word group as an element of the rhetorical strategy by which he tries to persuade his audience. A rhetorical analysis of the passages where the αἰθετε- word group occurs will show how this word group is adapted to Paul’s rhetorical purpose, namely to make an appeal for the unity of the community” (“The
did not use the word “strong” in chaps. 8-10,¹ what does the term imply in the passage?² Hence, it is important to examine, first, the identities of the “weak” and the “strong” in the discussion of chaps. 8 and 10 and, second, the author of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 vis à vis to whom they are directed.

Who Are the “Weak” and the “Strong”?  

The traditional argument for the group or social profiling in 1 Cor 8 and 10 has been over the question as to whether the so-called “weak” were Jewish or Gentile Christians. For example, Sawyer, who pays less attention to Hellenistic background

---

Pauline Concept of ‘Weakness’ in 1 Corinthians and Its Usage Within the Context of Paul’s Resolution of the Opposition Between the Strong and the Weak in 1 Cor 8:7-13” [Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1997], 4).

¹In 1 Cor 10:22b he uses ἰσχυρότεροι as a comparative adjective, “stronger.”

²Hurd suggests two reasons. First, that it presupposes that “the Corinthians were primarily voicing an objection to the subject [of idol meat] to Paul, and were not asking for guidance from him.” Second, that “the Corinthians’ objections stem from a single point of view at Corinth opposed in some degree to Paul’s. There was no ‘weak’ or ‘scandalized’ second party” (Hurd, The Origin of 1 Corinthians, 147; 117-125). Peter D. Gooch, as Hurd, also maintains that there was no disagreement at Corinth over the issue of εἰδωλοθυτα but that the only conflict was between Paul and the Corinthians. This suggests that even the ‘weak’ mentioned in 1 Cor 8:11 are an entirely hypothetical group and, therefore, it is Paul himself who has a problem with idol food as he seeks to warn the Corinthians of its dangers (Dangerous Food, 61-72). Brian S. Rosner also argues that “Paul’s warning in [1 Cor]10:22b in fact takes in more than one group in Corinth; he asks, ‘are we, ἐσμεν (not ‘are you,’ ἐστε) stronger than he?’ 10:22b is [therefore] addressed to all the Corinthians” (“‘Stronger Than He?’ The Strength of 1 Corinthians 10:22b,” TB 43 [1992]: 172; see also Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 358-359; idem, “Εἰδωλοθυτα Once Again,” 175-176). This is against the position of Tomson who argues that the “strong,” not the “weak,” are a hypothetical group more likely to eat idol food because of their claims to γνώσις! (193). The conclusion of Dale B. Martin is that, “throughout 1 Corinthians Paul attempts to undermine the hierarchical ideology of the body prevalent in Greco-Roman culture. He attempts to make the strong weak and the weak strong” (The Corinthian Body [London: Yale University Press, 1995], 248). Again, what does the word for “might” “able,” “power” that shows up in 1 Corinthians in variant forms of δύνα mean? For example, 1:26 has δύνατον (cf. Rom 15:1); 6:5 δύνησατε; 10:22 ἰσχυρότεροι; 15:56 δύναμις and none is ever used in the opposite sense equivalent to the one in 8:11.
material, concludes that the “weak” of 1 Cor 8 and 10 were Jewish Christians or at least Jews of proselyte background. His four reasons are suggested as follows: (1) that the term εἰδωλοθυτεία is derived from the Jewish source, (2) that the Jews were those who abhorred food sacrificed to idols, (3) that the chiastic structure of 1 Cor 9:19-22 identifies the “weak” as Jews, and (4) that 1:22-23 speaks of the association of Jews with ὀκανθαλόν. Thus, for Sawyer, the “strong” were Christians of Gentile background even though “the term strong is actually a misnomer, for they were not consistently strong. Apparently they saw no harm in keeping up the old associations, even to the point of frequenting the pagan temples. Not all of the community at Corinth had followed the excessive freedom described in I Corinthians, but the majority belonged to the ‘strong.’”

However, there are problems with Sawyer’s position. First, it is difficult to reconcile his notion of the “weak” with 1 Cor 8:7 because the weak appear to be of pagan background “who have been so accustomed to idolatry that they still think of this meat as consecrated to the idol” (REB). Second, his claim that the “weak” are the Jews, in view of Paul’s statement in 8:10, is not convincing. Because of the Jewish


2Sawyer, 130-131.

3Max Rauer, Die “Schwachen” in Korinth und Rom nach den Paulusbriefen (Freiburg: Herder, 1923), 27-29, 36-39. Hence, I find Richard Horsley’s conclusion mistaken in that there is no indication in 1 Cor 8 that the “weak” were Jewish Christians because they subscribe to a less prominent but popular view in the Jewish apocalyptic literature that considers idols as cosmic forces ordained by God to conscript the pagans to serve the demons (“Gnosis in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 8.1-6,” NTS 27 [1981]: 38).
abhorrence to idolatry, it seems logical to take the indefinite pronoun τις in vs. 10a as a
“weak Gentile” who may be encouraged by the action of a “strong Jew” to eat idol food
in the name of γνώσις.¹ Hence, it is difficult to account for Sawyer’s Jewish Christians
as the “weak” with the pagans’ pangs of past conscience (1 Cor 8:7-12; 10:29). Third,
his attempt to look for some details at Jewish dietary regulations to justify his hypothesis
does not also fit the burden of the discussion in chaps. 8-10.²

Perhaps, the above problem may be one reason some scholars do not consider the
issue of identities of the “weak” and “strong” as important in the discussion of 1 Cor 8
and 10. For instance, Conzelmann holds that “the ‘weak’ are neither Jewish Christians
nor any closed group at all. They do not represent a position. They are simply weak.”³
James D. G. Dunn argues that although the Jewish abhorrence to idolatry dominates that
the “weak” are Jewish, nevertheless, “not all the weak were Jewish Christians” and not
“all the strong were Gentile (Paul numbered himself among the strong, 8.8; 10:25-26), so
that the focus on the Jewish/Gentile question and on particular parties is less valuable.”⁴
Therefore, Hurd holds that “the really striking fact is that in 8.10-13 and 10.28, 29 the

¹See Fee, “Εἰδωλολάτρας Once Again,” 182-183; Robertson and Plummer, 171. Mark D.
Nanos, in his study of Romans, also takes the “strong” as the Jewish Christians. He argues that
“to assume that the ‘weak’ were Christian Jews . . . is indeed to fall into Luther’s trap” of
antinomianism (The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul’s Letter [Minneapolis, MN:

²Sawyer, 258-261.

³Conzelmann, I Corinthians, 147.

⁴James D. G. Dunn, I Corinthians, NTG (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 58,
and 57-60. Also see Bultmann, 180-181; Grant, “The Earliest Christian Gnosticism,” 81-98;
Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth, 226; Wilson, “How Gnostic Were the Corinthians?,” 65-74;
"weaker brother" is completely hypothetical and indefinite."¹ Two notable weaknesses of this position are (1) it makes Paul's main concern on idolatry and the weak brother in 8:7-12 and 10:29b-30 as something conjectural than real, and (2) because of the nature of the problems addressed in chaps. 8-10, it is difficult to take Hurd's thesis that "the difference of opinion over the question of idol meat is a disagreement which lies not in Corinth, but between Paul, on the one hand, and the Corinthian Church, on the other."²

Following a survey of Greco-Roman literary sources, Gerd Theissen brought attention to the sociological dimensions on the identity of the "weak" and "strong" in 1 Cor 8-10. His reconstruction of a social stratification between the Corinthian "rich" and "poor" provides an alternative explanation to those of earlier interpreters that identify the "strong" and the "weak" in 1 Cor 8-10 on ethnic terms. According to Theissen's hypothesis, the strong or rich (e.g. Erastus, the "city treasurer"; cf. Rom 16:23) for some social reasons could not have avoided idol-foods and, therefore, would have eaten meat in cultic contexts as a necessity for their daily social and business engagements.³ Hence, Theissen argues that Paul was in basic agreement with the strong because the apostle appeals to knowledge in defense of eating idol-foods. He claimed that the weak or poor rarely eat meat because of its cost and, therefore, would have eaten idol meat only on

¹Hurd, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 125, n. 2.

²Ibid., 126. Fee also suggests that the Corinthians' letter to Paul "comes from the church as a whole, not from one of the factions in the church" (Epistola Paulina: Once Again," 179).

cultic occasions in the worship of pagan gods.\footnote{Theissen, 125-129; Willis, Idol Meat in Corinth, 21-64; Mark Reasoner, “The ‘Strong’ and the ‘Weak’ in Rome and in Paul’s Theology” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1990), 1:124-127.}

Theissen’s sociological approach to the interpretation of 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 have led some interpreters to conclude that Paul’s response is to mediate between the different positions over the question of idol meat between the weak and the strong. As a matter of fact, Paul’s solution is characterized on a note of compromise of a “love-patriarchalism” which “allows social inequalities to continue but transfuses them with a spirit of concern, of respect, and of personal solicitude. . . . This should not be overlooked even if Pauline love-patriarchalism cannot be considered the solution to contemporary social problems.”\footnote{Theissen, 139-140.}

The strength of Theissen’s position on the identity of the “weak” and “strong” is in his attempt of a possible sociological account of a theological quarrel in 1 Cor 8-10 (cf. 8:4-6). He argues that the theological quarrel in the Corinthian church was between the upper social class who eat meat on a regular daily basis and the lower counterpart who rarely eat meat except on religious occasions. Perhaps, it was this diversity of socio-economic positions in the Greco-Roman society that made Paul oppose the rich who showed no concern for the poor at the Lord’s Supper (11:17-34).

Again, Theissen’s explanation holds that the strong are the rich because they would be more affected by not participating in εἴδωλοθυσία and their social and business engagements might be more adversely hampered than those of the poor. However, one weakness of Theissen’s thesis is that his social categorization does not fit the evidence of

---

\'Theissen, 125-129; Willis, Idol Meat in Corinth, 21-64; Mark Reasoner, “The ‘Strong’ and the ‘Weak’ in Rome and in Paul’s Theology” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1990), 1:124-127.

\footnote{Theissen, 139-140.}
what was a complex issue in the Greco-Roman society. Also, his suggestion of the two different types of the weak Corinthians, namely, “a gentile Christian type” who eats idol food and “a Jewish Christian type” who avoids the same food, is confusing as there is no support for his conclusion throughout chaps. 8-10. Another weakness is that εἰδωλόθυτα is understood only as meat—a fact that mistakenly caused him to make “an unjustified contrast in the social uses of food between classes in Greco-Roman society.”

A plausible explanation is that which is offered by scholars who take their lead from 1 Cor 8:7: Ἁλλ' οὐκ ἐν πάσιν ἡ γνώσις: τινὲς δὲ τῇ συνηθείᾳ ἐως ἅρτι τοῖς εἰδωλοῦσιν ἡ γνώσις ἐντὸς τοῦ εἰδωλόθυτου ἐσθίουσιν, καὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενὴς οὐσα μολύνεται.

The suggestion is that the “weak” in Corinth were the Gentile Christians who were in pagan mysteries, and who still lived in the belief and fears of the demonic powers. Because of their former painful associations with the idols, their conscience or conscientiousness had become “oversensitive” when they saw their fellow believers partaking in the pagan temple meals.

For instance, Murphy-O’Connor admits that although certitude is impossible on the actual identity of the “weak” and its antithesis, still, a working hypothesis worthy of respect implies that “the Weak were Gentile Christians whose intellectual conviction that there was only one God had not been fully assimilated emotionally. Having been conditioned from their youth to think of idols as enjoying real existence, it was inevitable that there should be a time-lag between intellectual and emotional acceptance of

---

1Ibid., 124.

2Gooch, Dangerous Food, 150; see also Yeo, 145.
monotheism. There are three notable strengths for this position. First, it addresses the issue of ignorance or fear of the “weak” that concerns Paul in 1 Cor 8:7 and 10. Second, because the “strong” boastfully subscribe to the statement in 8:4bc (cf. Wis 12:23-14:31; 15:2-3; Jdt 8:20) that resembles the Hellenistic Jewish gnostic idea, this helps to identify them as the Jewish Christians gnostics as well as the main reason Paul challenges their claims to γνῶσις, ἔξωσις, and ἐλευθερία throughout chaps. 8-10. Third, the position also helps to account for the reasons Paul did not reverse his concern for the weak brother concerning the two questions asked in 10:29b-30.

Issue 4: Who Asked the Two Questions in 1 Cor 10:29b-30: The “Strong” or Paul?

In view of the fact that the “weak” are likely the Gentile Christians and the “strong” are the Jewish Christian gnostics, it is important to consider here the author of the statements related to these questions. Murphy-O'Connor, “Freedom or the Ghetto,” 554; see also Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 194-195; Rauer, 27-39, esp. 31. Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth, 228-245; Horsley, “Gnosis in Corinth,” 34-40; Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 144-145; Jewett, Anthropological Terms, 39-40; Murphy-O’Connor, “Freedom or the Ghetto,” 350-351; Willis, 98-104. Justin and Irenaeus also indicate that the later Gnostic heretics ate idol food and went to theaters to display their inner freedom (Brunt, “Paul’s Attitude,” 269-270, 274).

The terms “gnostic” and “gnosticism” generally are not used for the first century AD phenomena. Rather proto/incipient gnosticism is used because only the seeds of the heresy existed prior to the second century when it appeared on the scene as a fully-established system of thought. However, because the “strong” or the “knowledgeable” at Corinth have the seeds of the heresy in their obsessions with the Hellenistic-Jewish theology, I prefer to identify or describe them in this study as the Jewish Christian gnostics (cf. 1 Cor 8:4bc, 6-11; 9:3; 10:23). One reason for this is that, despite Yamauchi’s critiques and doubts of pre-Christian Gnosticism as earlier discussed, it can be argued that there have been “Christians” before the disciples of Christ were first called as such in Antioch (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16). Another reason for my naming the “strong” as “Gnostics” is because of their key emphasis on the Greek word for “to know” and “knowledge” that occur 77 times as well as for “wisdom” that occurs 28 times in the Corinthian correspondence. Hence, the strong came close to being what I simply call in this study as Gnostics than using quotation marks each time or words that are either ambiguous or too long, “proto/incipient-gnosticism.”
the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 as the fourth broader issue. Are the two
questions asked by Paul, or by the “strong”? If they are Paul’s questions, are they
directed to the weak or to the strong? Or, if the two questions belong to either Paul or
the strong, why have they been asked here in the first place?

Some scholars claim that Paul warns the “weak” as he asked the two questions in
1 Cor 10:29b-30, warning them not to take advantage of Paul’s appeal for the “strong”
Christian’s forbearance. For example, Héring states that in 10:29b-30 “the Apostle
seeks to define limits for the respect due to the weak. Already 10:29a recalled that the
liberty of conscience of the man who yields through consideration remains free and
independent; the text expressly underlines this fact by forbidding the weak to judge the
strong, or even more strongly to insult them (10:30).” Also, James Moffatt holds that
“he [Paul] will not have the stronger enslaved by the weaker (vii. 23). Even as he pleads
for consideration, he feels bound to deny the right of any over-scrupulous Christians to
fetter or denounce the freedom of others.” Thus, for Moffatt, Paul’s instruction in
10:28 is not obligatory because “the concession is purely voluntary, since any Christian
may eat anything for which he has given thanks to God by saying grace over the meal
(Rom. xiv. 6).” Peter Richardson also concurs that it is because the weak were

---

1Héring, 99. See, also Joseph MacRory, *The Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians with
Introduction and Commentary* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1915), 152-153; Richard B. Hays,
*First Corinthians Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville,

2Moffatt, 1959), 144.

(Paul) supposed that I had to decline for the sake of conscience, I would have submitted to
another’s judgment and surrendered my conscience, ; in principle, I am free to eat anything that I
can eat with thanksgiving (i.e. with a ‘good conscience’; v. 30); but I do not surrender my freedom

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
impatient with the strong that Paul in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 warns these individuals “who have tried to force their scruples on others as checks to the exercise of another’s freedom.”¹

Murphy-O’Connor also holds that Paul raised the two questions in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 because “the harsh questions were intended to shock the Weak into a realization of the unchristian character of their attitude.”² That is, the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 are to caution the excesses of the “weak” who seem to take undue advantage of the consideration of the “strong.” Hence, “v. 29b is intended as justification of Paul’s advice to preserve ignorance in order to avoid problems of conscience. In reality Paul does not provide a reason. His intention was to force the Weak to discover it themselves by asking them ‘what good does it do’ to project onto others the condemnation of their own consciences.”³

Moreover, he claims that Paul’s protest with the two questions in 1 Cor 10:29-30 is meant not only to warn the weak against their unscrupulous attitude, but also to educate them from their ignorance. In fact, it is for this latter reason that he argues that Paul challenges the weak “to reflect along productive lines by pointing out that the suggestion that the Strong were deliberately acting against their own consciences could

---


²Murphy-O’Connor, “Freedom or the Ghetto,” 570.

³Ibid., 571.
not be justified, since the fact that they ‘gave thanks’ to God for what they ate (x, 30) manifested the conviction that they were not doing anything wrong.”¹ Murphy-O’Connor adds that Paul’s “first step is the extremely pragmatic one of telling the Weak that they should not go looking for trouble.”² That is, he thinks Paul in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 takes a drastic approach of warning the weak not to invite trouble upon themselves unnecessarily. Thus, he concludes that Paul asked the two questions so that “their consciences should not bother them unless they were absolutely sure that a particular piece of meat had in fact been offered to idols, and they could avoid being absolutely sure by asking no questions regarding the origin of the meat they buy (v. 25) or which is offered to them in pagan houses (v. 27).”³

However, the arguments that the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 are to warn the “weak” is not wholly convincing for three reasons. First, although Paul often makes abrupt shifts in argument such as the abrupt transitions between 6:12 and 10:23, but, this is not the case with the two questions asked in 10:29b-30. This is because, as Héring and others argue, Paul directs the two questions to warn the weak, otherwise, the passage “makes Paul’s transition so sharp that the readers would hardly be expected to have understood it.”⁴ That is, how can Paul at this stage of his concerns for the “weak” from 8:1 now turn against the same person or group? Second, Jewett also writes that the

¹Ibid.; see also Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 194.
²Murphy-O’Connor, 1 Corinthians, 101.
³Ibid. Jewett also notes that it is because Paul is operating on the principle that “what you don’t know won’t hurt you” that he warns the weak for being over-scrupulous (Paul’s Anthropological Terms, 428).
⁴Brunt, “Paul’s Attitude,” 114.
position "is likewise incapable of clarifying the presence of γὰρ in 29b, and it is revealing that those who propose this interpretation avoid providing a precise translation. As much as one's personal sympathies may rest with this interpretation, it must be set aside."¹ Third, although the passage gives limited information, still, in view of Paul's other remarks in favor of the weak brother in 8:13; 9:19-23, and 10:24, the suggestion is inadequate.²

There are scholars who consider the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 in anticipation of the objection Paul expects from the "strong" against his restrictions on idol foods. For instance, Paul Heinz-Dietrich Wendland and Pierce, following the lead of Weiss,³ interpret the two questions asked in the passage as the objection already raised by the "strong" Christians to the restrictive argument of Paul: "Why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience. If I partake with thanks, why am I blasphemed on behalf of which I am thankful?" In other words, 10:29b-30 contains the words Paul himself thinks the "strong" in Corinth are stating to his attitude toward the "weak." Thus, rightly understood, the text consists of Paul's anticipation of the negative response of the strong to the restrictions of 10:28-29a.⁴ This traditional view is commonplace in modern

¹Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, 429.
²Willis, 246, n. 117; Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 485-487, n. 52; Watson, 310.
³Weiss describes the two verses as a gloss to 1 Cor 10:27 (Der erste Korintherbrief, 265-266; note also G. Zuntz, The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition Upon the Corpus Paulinum [London: Oxford University Press, 1953], 17).
⁴Heinz-Dietrich Wendland, Die Briefe an die Korinther, DNTD 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1936), 83-84; Pierce, 78. According to this position, Paul agrees in principle with the "strong" that the issue of idol food is but an ἄδικον "matter of indifference" (cf. Rom 14:5-9), that he urges abstention from ἐδωκόλοστα "food/meat offered to
scholarship and, as a matter of fact, it is precisely how the NEB (cf. NAB, GNB) translators understand vss. 29b-30: "'What?' you say, 'is my freedom to be called in question by another man's conscience? If I partake with thanksgivings, why am I blamed for eating food over which I have said grace?''

Lietzmann understands the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 as the objections Paul anticipates from the "strong," in the style of the diatribe, to the delicate situations he addresses at Corinth. Thus, he concludes that "the ἐὰν συνείδησις is clearly a reference to the συνείδησις τοῦ ἐτέρου, so that 29b-30 must be understood as the exclamation of the 'strong,' which Paul, according to the diatribe style, abruptly introduces here in the discourse." Although Lietzmann himself admits that Paul fails to give a direct answer to the questions asked by the strong, but because of the rhetorical nature of the two questions asked, an answer is implied. That implied answer is found in a diatribal dialogue: "Why then is my freedom (as you say) judged by the conscience of another? If I eat with thanksgiving, why am I scolded because of that for which I give thanks (to God)?"

idols" (1 Cor 8:7b), only when there is the danger of causing the weak to stumble. Robert G. Bratcher also adds that "verses 29b-30 are an objection made by someone who has a strong conscience, that is, a believer who knows he is not sinning if he eats food sacrificed to idols" (A Translator’s Guide to Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians [London: United Bible Societies, 1982], 101). The RSV, by placing vss. 28-29a within parenthesis, makes the words in vss. 29b-30 Paul's own words. This is probably in support of vs. 27, where a Christian can eat food sacrificed to idols provided no question of conscience is raised. The TEV and other translations take the words in vss. 29b-30 to be those either of someone else or of the person to whom Paul is writing. Hence, it is either someone asks or else "you ask" (ibid.).

1Lietzmann, 52 (my translation).

It is either that (1) Paul quotes to redefine in conformity to his own argumentation the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 or (2) are questions crafted by Paul himself as a strategy in terms which were intelligible and disarming to the strong. Marion L. Soards favors the latter view. According to him: "Verses 29b-30 are objections that Paul imagines might come from those in Corinth who would not fully agree with him. Paul has said, 'Be selfless. Be more concerned with others than with yourselves.' Therefore, for Soards, the "interpretive suggestion, that Paul is engaging in diatribe at this point, seems the best understanding of the passage. Otherwise, Paul's logic explodes on itself, and he contradicts his advice of the following verses with no indication of the reason." 

10-13, 67-68. Cf. 1 Cor 15:29-34. Abraham J. Malherbe also indicates Paul's use of the so-called Stoic-Cynic style of diatribe for the rhetorical arguments or defense on the subject of resurrection in 1 Cor 15—a practice that is commonly found among the rhetoricians and philosophers in Paul's Greco-Roman experiences ("The Beasts at Ephesus," JBL 87 [1968]: 71-80, 72-77; see also George L. Kustas, "Diatribe in Ancient Rhetorical Theory," in Protocol of the Colloquy of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture [Berkeley, CA: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1976], 1-15). However, Stanley K. Stowers offers some modifications on Paul's use of diatribe style because his "model exponent of the diatribe is not the wandering Cynic street preacher. Moreover, the dialogical element of the diatribe is not an expression of polemic or an attack on the enemies and opponents of philosophy. The diatribe is a type of discourse employed in the philosophical school. Its style, however, may be imitated literally. The form of the diatribe and the way it functions presupposes a student-teacher relationship. . . . Paul either adapted the style of the diatribe on a purely 'literary' level as merely a writing style, or he employed the style of indictment and protreptic in his own teaching activity, and Romans resembles that teaching activity. The style is too much his own and too well integrated with his exegetical method for the former to be true" (The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans, SBLDS 57 [Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981], 175, 182). Also, G. Zuntz remarks that "if in the manner of the diatribe, a fictitious interlocutor had been here introduced originally, his [Paul's] refutation was bound to follow; but this refutation is looked for in vain" (77-78).


2Marion L. Soards, I Corinthians, NIBC, ed. W. Ward Gasque (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 217. Watson also states "that Paul in diatribe fashion is
However, some disagree with the claim that by the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30, Paul anticipates an objection on the part of the “strong” in diatribe style. For example, Hans-Joachim Eckstein who, although agreeing with Lietzmann that the two questions are asked by the strong, does not agree to his claim that the passage is an objection of *Diatribenstils*. According to Eckstein, Paul’s question in vs. 29b is not an objection of the strong to the directive he offers in vs. 28; instead, it explains vs. 29a. The reason is that “it is not the strong who opposes μη ἔσητε (v 28), but rather, Paul himself declares why he is not speaking about the strong’s ‘own Syneidesis’ (v 29). This sequence, Zuordnung, is plainly confirmed by the coordinative and successive γὰρ in v 29b, otherwise, one would have expected ὅς or ἀλλᾶ.”¹ Paul’s use of the coordinative and successive γὰρ “for” is important in that it amplifies the reason the apostle is still appealing to the strong in vs. 28 because vs. 29 goes with vs. 28; vs. 29 qualifies vs. 28 in terms of conscience.²

Arthur P. Stanley holds that the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 are not expressed in a diatribe style as Lietzmann proposes, but rather, that which “follows a compressed dialogue. . . . The abrupt introduction of the words of the opponent may be explained by the supposition that he is quoting the words of the Corinthian letter, as in vi. anticipating the objections of the strong to the restrictions of vv. 28-29a” (310; Smit, “The Function of First Corinthians 10,23-30,” 381-388).


²Weiss and Jewett are correct to note that the thrice-repeated phrase διὰ τὴν συνειδησίαν in 1 Cor 10:25-28 is probably a phrase already used by the “weak” (Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 265; Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 426-427).
Two points stand out in Stanley’s remarks on 1 Cor 10:29b-30. First, he describes Paul’s two questions in the text as “a compressed dialogue” which, of course, does not necessarily indicate an expected objection of the strong as Lietzmann claimed. This is because, unlike in a ‘Diatribenstils,’ “St. Paul returns no direct answer, but turns it off abruptly with the general conclusion in verse 31.” Second, because the introduction of the words in 10:29b-30 follows a compressed dialogue as in 6:12; 7:1; 8:1 and 10:23, therefore, Stanley’s observation that Paul’s objection of the strong is not expressed in the so-called Stoic-Cynic diatribe style provides additional explanation for γὰρ in 10:29b as a connective rather than one of contrast.

Some scholars explain the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 as rhetorical questions either to explain or question the restrictive argument on idol food. For example, on the one hand, Paul T. Butler holds that “verses 29b and 30 are rhetorical questions either to explain or question the restrictive argument on idol food.”


2. Stowers, 85-93, 105-110.


4. Ibid. See also Schrage, Der erste Brief, 2:471; Allo, 250.

5. But, the question is: By what criteria or method are we to proceed to differentiate between the Corinthian correspondence and that which can be tagged as the Corinthians’ slogans (apparently also quoted by Paul) from that which are exclusively his? The issue of Paul’s use of the Corinthians quotes is hard to establish in 1 Corinthians. Omanson mentions a number of factors that seem to militate against the attempt to identify such quotes (if any) by Paul. These, according to Omanson, range from the lack of a clear-cut method among the translators and interpreters of how to determine precisely what Paul quotes from others, to that of the disagreements as to when quotation(s) begin and end in a verse(s), its source(s), and the translation of the key words in many of them (201). On 1 Cor 10:29b-30 in particular, see Hurd, The Origin of 1 Corinthians, 126-129; Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 478-480; Willis, 83-87; Watson, 312-313; Tomson, 203-208; Schrage, 463-464; Gooch, Dangerous Food, 92-93.
questions from apostle Paul, in anticipation of the answer in verses 31, 32, and 33." On the other hand, Witherington states that "verses 29b-30 are difficult to explain, but perhaps the least objectionable view is that the rhetorical question, 'Why should my freedom be determined by another's conscience?' is again the objection of the Corinthians, as in v. 23a, and does not represent Paul's own view." Suffice it to say at this juncture that it is either that Paul introduces the two rhetorical questions in vss. 29b-30 in argumentation to state his position in 8:1-11:1, or that he recasts the claim of the "strong" in order to question their reasons to eat the food as a sacred meal of pagans (chap. 10). Two important factors account for this.

First, as mentioned earlier, the two rhetorical questions in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 are never asked in isolation nor are they to be regarded as "a hypothetical objection or retort," as Witherington claims. Rather, these are Paul's questions directed to the "strong" to explain the reasons for his restraints on pagan sacrificial foods. While it is possible that the two questions had been previously authored by the "strong" in a letter sent to Paul, still, the rhetorical intent of these questions in the discussion of chaps. 8 and 10 indicate that they belong to Paul. Thus, Watson suggests that even though Paul's two questions are asked in 10:29b-30 to recapitulate and anticipate the objection of the strong, still, he further introduced them to appeal to the strong.

---


2Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 228.

3Ibid.

4Watson, 311-315; see also Mitchell, 256-257.
Second, because Paul's primary concern is for the "weak," that is, the Gentile Christians as evident in his firm support for them in 1 Cor 8:11-13 and 10:24, the authorship of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 is not to be reconciled with the "strong," that is, the Jewish Christian gnostics whom he instructs on the proper use of freedom. For this reason, Willis, for instance, paraphrases vs. 30: "How can I offer grace over food, knowing that I will be blasphemed for eating that over which I have said a blessing?" In light of this, the rhetorical intent of Paul's two questions asked in 10:29b-30 is consistent with the argument from his own prestige (ethos) used throughout 1 Corinthians and, especially, in chaps. 8-10.

1Willis, 247-250.
What we see depends on where we stand. One’s social [religious] location or rhetorical context is decisive of how one sees the world, constructs reality, or interprets biblical texts. Therefore, competing interpretations of texts are not simply either right or wrong. They constitute different ways of reading and constructing historical meaning.

— Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza

**Rhetorical Method of Interpretation**

The four broader issues, discussed in the preceding chapter, have significantly impacted the interpretations of the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30. The third issue, the issue which deals with the identity of the “weak” and the “strong,” sheds important light on the understanding of the passage in two ways. First, because the most likely identity of the “weak” and the “strong” was the “Gentile Christians” and “Jewish Christian gnostics,” respectively, it is possible to identify Paul as the author of the two questions addressed in the fourth issue. Second, the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 have been rhetorically introduced by Paul in argumentation “related to the larger context beginning at 8:1 as questions used in recapitulation of this rhetorical unit. . . . Regarding

---

the deliberation, these questions are used in argumentation to stress Paul’s point and to emphasize the weakness of the position of the strong.”¹

Rhetorical criticism is one method used to interpret the New Testament texts in general and, in particular, the Pauline epistles. While Betz’s work on *Galatians* in 1979 is an important advance in modern application of rhetorical analysis of New Testament, however, his contribution did not describe a methodology that can help carry out such a task. In 1984, that need was met by George A. Kennedy, in his *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, where his method lays out five parts that are to be viewed as a circular process.² Because the goal of rhetorical criticism is to assist the interpreters to read and hear the passage(s) to be studied as they would have been read and heard by the original audience to whom the writer is responding, Kennedy’s approach has become firmly established.³

In the first part, Kennedy states that in using the rhetorical method of interpretation one ought to determine, prior to analyzing the composition of the argument, the rhetorical unit to be examined which “must have a beginning, a middle [or

¹Watson, 318. The importance of the use of rhetorical approach to understand a passage such as 1 Cor 10:29b-30 cannot be overemphasized, Mitchell, 1-19; 126-149; 237-258. Also, Witherington writes that “if one wishes to understand Paul’s use of rhetoric, and not merely appropriate Paul for some modern cause or agenda, it is critical that his works be evaluated in light of ancient Greco-Roman rhetoric” (*Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 58, 55-61).


a body], and an end."¹ Within the subsection of 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 that contains the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30, Paul also develops other important subjects (topoi) from his discussion on idol food in 8:1-11:1 which make 10:23-11:1 appears as a restatement in the chain of discussion which begins at 8:1. In the second part, Kennedy suggests that the interpreter must determine the rhetorical situation that connects the people, events, and relationships to which the writer is responding.² The 'rhetorical situation' underlying 8:1-11:1, thus, helps to identify the background problems that include, but are not limited to, the Corinthians’ claims against Paul’s use of γυβίς, ἐξουσία, ἐλευθερία, as well as the differences in expectations over the questions of idol food.

Kennedy also suggests that the rhetorical critic must determine the “species” of the rhetorical unit.³ The determination of the “species (or kinds)” is the third of the five steps of rhetorical methodology he laid out. It expects the interpreter to determine whether the rhetorical unit of a passage or letter is (1) the judicial/forensic (as in the courtroom), (2) the deliberative (as in the political assembly), and (3) the epideictic (as

¹Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation, 33.

²Here, Kennedy draws upon the work of Lloyd Bitzer’s definition of a rhetorical situation (“The Rhetorical Situation,” PR 1 [1968]: 1-14).

³One may also need to determine the “stasis” or the ground on which an argument is waged as laid out by Hermagoras in the second century B.C., and which became influential to such renowned rhetoricians as Cicero, Quintilian, and others (Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation, 33, 33-38; idem, The Art of Persuasion in Greece [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963], 60-61; see also David Greenwood, “Rhetoric: Its Functions and Its Scope Rediviva,” in Rhetorical Dimensions in Criticism [Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 1973], 3-23).
The fourth step is to analyze the composition of the argument in terms of invention, arrangement, and style. By invention, Kennedy means to describe the composition of argumentation by *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. While the arrangement concerns the ordering of structural elements, such as the *exordium* (an introduction that gets the attention of the audience), the *propositio* (thesis statement), the *narratio* (setting forth the case briefly), the *probatio* (proving the case), and the *peroratio* (summing up), the style is to consider how various figures of speech are utilized. The challenge for rhetorical critic is how these pieces work together to form a persuasive whole as the interpreter is expected, in the fifth step, to evaluate how a particular argument has met (or not met) the rhetorical exigence.

However, there is no consensus about the “proper” approach or method to be used in the rhetorical analysis of the New Testament. For instance, the “New Rhetoric” introduced by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca redefined genre, and revised many of the classical conceptions of rhetoric into modern category that make all rhetoric appear “deliberative.” The “New Rhetoric,” thus, put all the Greco-Roman ancient works into

---

1Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 36-37; idem, *The Art of Rhetoric*, 7-23. The three categories are further subdivided into seven species, viz. “exhortation, dissuasion, eulogy, vituperation, accusation, defence, and investigation—either by itself or in relation to another species” (Aristotle *Rhet ad Alex* 1.1421a; [2:275]).

2Mitchell, 184-295; Song, 37-66.


modern literary criticism that hardly fit because its ideation almost rejects the usefulness of the classical three "species" of rhetoric. Hence, one may be hesitant to employ the principles developed 2000 years later to interpret a letter written in the first century A.D. Perhaps, it is the main reason other Pauline scholars have found the use of the "New Rhetoric" to be anachronistic to a study of biblical texts, and prefer to use as their primary sources the materials from the classical and Greco-Roman ancient rhetorical handbooks. Mitchell, in particular, is correct to evaluate the "new rhetoric as important philosophical work" which "does not claim to be a handbook of ancient rhetoric, but rather a revision and reappropriation of it to modern philosophical problems, particularly that of epistemology. Its intention is at basic points contrary to that of these New Testament scholars—it aims at expanding the realm of argumentation rather than classifying particular texts according to genre or arrangement."  

For now, there is growing agreement that Paul used rhetorical techniques in his

in 1 Corinthians 1-4" (Ph.D. diss., Graduate Theological Union, 1979).

1Mitchell, 7, n. 19; see also Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 58; Watson, 301-318). Because there is lack of agreement on the meaning, task, and methodology of rhetorical criticism, my approach is to take "the text as we have it, whether the work of a single author or the product of editing, and look at it from the point of view of the author's or editor's intent, the unified results, and how it would be perceived by an audience of near contemporaries" (Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation, 4). Again, Paul may not have followed the formal rules of the Hellenistic rhetoric to the letter but his use of the two rhetorical questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 is an example that distinctively utilizes the deliberative "species" of the Greco-Roman rhetorical style in the immediate context of the rhetorical unit of 10:23-11:1. Moreover, there is evidence that the Rabbinic hermeneutics also followed an application of the Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions (D. Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," HUCA 22 [1949]: 239-264; Timothy A. Lenchak, Choose Life! A Rhetorical-Critical Investigation of Deuteronomy 28, 69-30,30, AB 129 [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1993]; C. Clifton Black II, "Rhetorical Questions: The New Testament, Classical Rhetoric, and Current Interpretation," Dial 29 [1990]: 62-70).
letters, but there is little scholarly consensus about how to apply rhetorical analyses in the interpretation. Given this fact, each scholar elects to use the guidelines found in the classical rhetorical handbooks to understand, for example, the logic of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians. Suffice it to say at this juncture that a knowledge of the rhetorical genre of a letter will help one not only to know the kind of audience being addressed but also the kind of decision or response expected in the literary context of a given passage such as 1 Cor 10:29b-30.

The importance of Paul's use of a deliberative rhetoric, as evident throughout 1 Corinthians, cannot be overemphasized as he persuades the Christians at Corinth to adopt a certain course of behavioral prescription. His use of deliberative rhetoric indicates that "when the question is one of changing other people's lives the very content of the gospel demands a 'method' of effecting such changes which is directly opposed to any use of force . . . It is that of speaking to them in ways that do not encroach upon their

---

1The rhetorical genre of 1 Corinthians has been hotly debated by scholars. The different opinions can be divided into four groups. First, scholars such as Kennedy, Mitchell, Fiorenza, and Witherington hold that the letter was written according to the deliberative genre of rhetoric. Second, Mack, Yeo, and Song claim some parts of the letter (e.g., 1 Cor 9) follow judicial rhetoric while others conform to the deliberative. Third, Wuellner and Smit argue that the letter patterns itself according to the convention of the epideictic rhetoric. Fourth, the letter is taken by others as a mixture of two or more rhetorical genres. For a bibliographical list on the application of these rhetorical genres in the Corinthian correspondence, see Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 39-67. On the Pauline epistles in general, see Watson and Hauser, 178-202. However, as helpful as the system of classification of the parts of a speech is, the classification tends to be rigid and artificial (Douglass Ehninger, "On Systems of Rhetoric," in The Rhetoric of Western Thought, ed. James L. Golden, Goodwin F. Berquist, and W. E. Coleman [Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1978], 22-23; Yeo asks: "How does one explain a piece of writing that contains mixed genre?" [77]).

2A deliberative rhetoric occurs when the author seeks to persuade or dissuade the audience to take a future course of action (Aristotle Rhet 1.3.3; Cicero De Inv 1.5.7; Quintilian Inst 3.4.6-7; Mitchell, 23-64; Watson, 302).
independence." While a historical reconstruction or hypothesis may help to understand why 1 Corinthians was written, rhetorical criticism, according to the grammar of ancient Greco-Roman deliberative rhetoric, remains an invaluable service or method to analyze how Paul attempts to resolve the problems in the community.

According to Mitchell, the content and series of arguments which are made against community factionalism in 1 Corinthians are typical of the essential characteristics of a deliberative rhetoric, the genre of the political speech. The genre of 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 is of the same feature for the following five reasons. First, the time for the expected decision is yet in the future concerning Paul's appeal in the entire passage that forbids Christian participation in sacrificial meals. Second, the passage is replete with a set of appeals towards consideration for one another in the advantage (το συμφέρον) of all the varied groups of the Corinthian congregation (cf. John 18:14; 1 Cor 6:12; 7:35; 10:23, 33; 12:7). Third, Paul's use of ethos in numerous ways in 1 Cor 9 (and in 10:23-

\[\text{Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.}\]
11:1) and of the Israelites’ wilderness experience on idolatrous practices in 10:1-22, cited as the examples (παραδείγματα // exemplum), is most suitable for deliberative argumentative speeches. Fourth, the section of 8:1-11:1 and, in particular, the subsection of 10:23-11:1 are intended to advise and dissuade the Christians at Corinth regarding a particular course of action. Finally, Paul’s appeal for unity over against factionalism on εἰδωλοθυτα appropriately fits both the literary and rhetorical conventions of a deliberative rhetoric operative in the first century A.D.

Because the two rhetorical questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 belong to the larger context of 1 Corinthians, it is important to consider the rhetorical context of the passage in the overall epistolary and rhetorical forms of the letter. Scholars have profitably applied the conventional epistolary form and theories of arrangement (τάξις /dispositio) found in the classical handbooks to the study of 1 Corinthians. For example, Mitchell, as others, recognizes that the letter constitutes a single rhetorical unit and, therefore, structures 1 Corinthians following the features of the Greek epistolary form, namely, an epistolary opening, a body, and a closing.

**Rhetorical Structure of 1 Corinthians**

Mitchell’s literary framework of 1 Corinthians patterns a classical deliberative speech that includes an introduction (προοίμιον), a thesis (πρόθεσις), the statement of facts (διηγηματικά), the proof section (πίστεις), and the conclusion (ἐπίλογος) as its essential constituents.¹ This is outlined as follows:

¹Mitchell, 225-258.
Margaret M. Mitchell’s Arrangement of 1 Corinthians

1. Epistolary Prescript 1:1-3

2. Epistolary Thanksgiving (Rhetorical προοίμιον/Introduction) 1:4-9

3. Epistolary Body 1:10-15:58
   a) Thesis Statement (πρόθεσις/Thesis Statement) 1:10
      The Call for Unity and an End to Factionalism
   b) Statement of Facts (διήγησις/Statement of Facts) 1:11-17
      Description of the Present Situation and Correction of a Possible Misunderstanding
   c) Proof Sections (πίστεις/Proofs)2  1:18-15:57
      Advice for Seeking and Maintaining Concord in the Church (4 subsections)
      (1) First Section of Proof: Censure of Corinthian Factionalism and the Need for Paul’s Advice 1:18-4:21
      (2) Second Section of Proof: The Integrity of the Corinthian Community Against Outside Defilement. Advice on Divisive Issues within the Group (under subheads)
         a) Πορνεία and Group Solidarity 5:1-7:40
         b) Idol Meats, Freedom and Group Unity 8:1-11:1

---

1Ibid., 184-186, and 186-295. For other possible outlines of the compositional or rhetorical analysis of 1 Corinthians, see Witherington, Conflict & Community in Corinth, 318-321, and 75-324; Song, 35, 175-176.

2Mitchell has four πίστεις (1 Cor 1:18-15:57), but I made a provision for five because of the diplomatic discourse of the group participation in the Jerusalem collection projects and the return of Apollos to Corinth (16:1-12) as another major evidence of Paul’s use of the ‘proof’ in the deliberative argument of 1 Corinthians. Again, Mitchell takes 1 Cor 15:58 as the conclusion of the whole letter by assuming that 16:1-24 is an epistolary closing. But, as Witherington, I consider 16:13-18 as the conclusion because all the issues discussed in the letter cannot be based only on the appeal of 15:34, 58 as Mitchell holds.
My Proposed Arrangement of 1 Corinthians

Epistolary Prescript

I. Introduction (προοίμιον/Exordium)
   Epistolary Thanksgiving

Epistolary Body

II. Thesis (πρόθεσις/Propositio)
   Thesis Statement of the Deliberative Argument

III. Statement of Facts (διήγησις/Narratio)
   Divisions in the Community Leadership and Paul’s Apostleship

IV. Proof Section (πίστεις/Probatio)
   Arguments in Support of the Need to Maintain Church Unity
   First πίστεις
   Corinthian Divisiveness Is Incompatible with the Centrality of the Cross

Second πίστεις
   The Integrity of the Corinthian Community

1One of the subdivisions of the second πίστεις (a series of proofs) of 1 Cor 5:1-11:1 deals with the question over idol food in 8:1-11:1.
Is at Stake by Unholy Associations

Third πίστευς
Disorders in Liturgical Assemblies
Threaten the Corinthian Unity

Fourth πίστευς
Denial of the General Resurrection as a
Potential Source of the Corinthian Disunity

Fifth πίστευς
Group Participation in the Jerusalem Collections and Projections Can Help to Diffuse the Corinthian Disunity

V. Conclusion (ἐπίλογος/Peroratio)

Epistolary Postscript

Rhetorical Unit of 1 Cor 8-11:1

Joop F. Smit’s Arrangement of 1 Cor 8:1-11:1¹

1) Partitio (8:1-3, 4-6)

2) Argumentatio a): refutatio (8:7-12), and confirmatio (8:13-9:27)

3) Argumentatio b): refutatio (10:1-13), and confirmatio (10:14-22)

4) Conclusio (10:23-11:1)

My Proposed Arrangement of 1 Cor 8:1-11:1

Introduction (προοίμιον/Exordium) 8:1-6
Love Not Knowledge on Foods Associated with Idols

Preliminary Remark on 1 Cor 10:29b-30 in Its Contexts

The above literary structures clearly indicate that Paul arranges his subjects (τοποί) in 1 Corinthians according to a deliberative argument that best suits his rhetorical purpose. For instance, the proof sections appeal to advantage (τὸ συμφέρον) throughout the letter in that, in the development of his arguments, Paul gives the reasons for his
actions. This is indicated, in particular, in the two rhetorical questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 that belong to the second proof section of 1 Corinthians. As a matter of fact, the two rhetorical questions, both in the larger context of 8:1-11:1 and the narrower context of 10:23-11:1, indicate Paul's deliberative directives against meats associated with idols. Two reasons can be advanced for this.

First, since Paul is responding to several problems in the Corinthian community, with the aim of persuading its members to adopt his own behavioral actions as specified in 1 Cor 8:13-9:27 and 10:29b-11:1, the aim of the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30 is not to seek answers from the Corinthians. Rather, Paul is rhetorically asking the two questions to provide "proofs" that suggest his reasons for not eating idol food. This is because, for him, it is not idol food per se that is dangerous to eat (cf. vss. 25-27), but the wrong use of ἔσορια and ἐλευθερία to eat the food as a sacred meal of pagans. Hence, Paul's two questions asked in vss. 29b-30 state his reasons for not eating (cf. vss. 28-29a).

Second, because an answer is not expected, Paul's response to the questions of the Corinthians is naturally answered in the γαρ and ἵνα that open the two

---

1Wilhelm Wuellner suggests that Paul's rhetorical strategy in 1 Corinthians is not just to answer the questions of the Corinthians but, more importantly, to question the answers they already have over the questions about participation in the pagan temple meals ("Paul as Pastor: The Function of Rhetorical Questions in First Corinthians," in L'Apostre Paul, Personalité, Style et Conception du Ministère, BETL 73 [Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1986], 55). Perhaps, it is the reason some conclude that Paul is addressing a hypothetical situation in 1 Cor 8:10-13 and 10:28-29 (Hurd, The Origin of 1 Corinthians, 125-131; Ramsaran, 60).
rhetorical questions in 1 Cor 10:29b-30.\(^1\) Robertson and Plummer correctly note that ἵνατι “never means ‘by what right,’ but rather ‘for what object [reason]’? St Paul’s main point in the context is μὴ ἐσθέτε, for which γὰρ introduces a reason.”\(^2\) Again, vs. 30 parallels the preceding verse in that Paul is stating further that one cannot thank God for eating what one knows to be a stumbling block for other person because such attitude amounts to idolatry. Hence, for Paul, the wrong use of γνώσεις, \(^3\) ἔξουσία\(^4\) and ἐλευθερία\(^5\) is destructive not only to the weak brother (chap. 8) but also to the strong themselves.

---

1 Yeo, however, holds that “the two questions are answered in the following verse (31-32) because of the conjunction οὖν” (203).

2 Robertson and Plummer, 222; Hering, 99, n. 52; Willis, 247-250; Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 790. But, when the two questions are interpreted as the objection of the “strong,” ἵνατι is frequently translated as ‘by what right’ and this, of course, misses Paul’s rhetorical intent in both the larger and the narrower contexts of the passage.

3 Rudolf Bultmann, “γνώσεις,” TDNT, 1:689-719. The fact is that Paul does not intend to define the term γνώσεις because the relationship of γνώσεις and εἰδολοθυτέα is not clearly spelled out in 1 Cor 8:11:1. Perhaps, he introduces γνώσεις in argumentation because it arose in response to an inquiry from the “strong” Corinthians who defend their activities to eat food as a sacred meals of pagans on the basis of knowledge. Therefore, Paul points out that such use of knowledge is wrong because it “puffs up,” as he contrasts it with ἀγάπη that “builds up” (1 Cor 8:1b; 13:4-13).

4 Werner Foerster, “ἔξουσία,” TDNT, 2:560-575. In addition to γνώσεις, the Corinthians also stress their “rights” (ἔξουσία), or “freedom” (ἐλευθερία) in defending their eating activities at the pagan temples. Again, Paul critiques such use of rights/freedom on the basis of love as he reminds them of the necessity of considering the other person. Thus, in 1 Cor 9:1 Paul uses the term ἐλευθερία to continue the discussion of ἔξουσία which he introduces in argumentation in 8:9.

5 Heinrich Schlier, “ἐλευθερία,” TDNT, 2:487-502. Even though ἐλευθερία is not used by Paul in 1 Cor 8, the term is to be understood as virtually synonymous with ἔξουσία in chap. 9. It is not that Paul is against freedom as God’s blessing in his use of the term more than any other NT authors. In 8:1-11:1 Paul corrects the Corinthian wrong use of freedom because the popular philosophy understood “freedom” merely in knowledge. Hence, the Corinthian use of freedom differs from Paul because, as Schlier rightly notes, “it is not in isolation, but in life with others that the Christian attains freedom” (Ibid., 500).
The above explanation on the content of 1 Cor 10:29b-30 is used in the interpretation of the larger context of 8:1-10:22 in this chapter, and the narrower context of 10:23-11:1 discussed in the next. Paul's two rhetorical questions in 10:29b-30 are never asked in isolation. Rather, the rhetorical nature of the two questions is Paul's own response to his critics that begins in 8:1 who were pointing to his actions on behalf of the weak as another evidence that he was not free. Because Paul knows that he is free he first identifies with the strong (who are knowledgeable). But, all the same, the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30 indicate his reasons for choosing not to eat idol food because of his concern for the weak (who are not knowledgeable) as the logic and structure of Paul's rhetorical argumentation indicate throughout 8:1-11:1. Thus, the rhetoric of 10:29b-30 as the core of Paul's argument in 8:1-11:1 with the strong may help to understand why he uses γνῶσις as a critical key term in 8:1-13, redefines ἔξουσία in 9:1-27, reflects on the abuse of ἔξουσία (or ἐλευθερία) in his reference to the OT examples from the wilderness generation, and as he makes specific application to the Corinthian situation in 10:1-22.

**Paul's Use of γνῶσις as a Critical Key Term in 1 Cor 8:1-13**

The two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b and 30 are more readily understood in

---

1Because truth comes to us dialectically, that is, in dialogue, Aristotle makes the point that "the orator [or rhetorician] ought to be able to prove opposites ... so that the real state of the case may not escape us" (*Rhet* 1.1.12; cf. Quintilian *Inst* 9.2.7). Although the language used in the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 is that of the strong on freedom, still, Paul's rhetorical intent, in argumentation, is to state or prove the opposites, that is, to question the wrong use of freedom.
light of Paul's comments on γνῶσις and ἐξουσία (or ἐλευθερία) because these terms aptly clarify Paul's position, namely, that even in these two explosive-sounding questions, Paul is not reversing his concern for the weak brother. For example, in Paul's deliberative discourse of 8:1-13, the use of γνῶσις forms the basis of his agreement with those "in the know" (vss. 4-6) as well as his disagreement with them (vs. 7; cf. 10:29b-30). Even though the word does not occur in chap. 10, its use is implied in vss. 29b-30. In fact, the word provides the suggestion by the advocates for partition theory that 8:1-13 belongs to 10:23-11:1 to form Epistle B as indicated in the preceding chapter.

For instance, Schmithals argues that the gnostic belief forms the background of 1 Corinthians that Paul agrees with the γνῶσις of the strong Corinthians that "to participate in pagan cultic meals from a deliberately 'Christian' stance" would demonstrate that the "demons have indeed been conquered." However, Schmithals's conclusion raises some problems. First, although Paul shares the γνῶσις of the Jewish Christian gnostics in 1 Cor 8:4-6 that there are no gods behind the idols, the development of his argument does not make participation in pagan cultic meals demonstrate from a Christian viewpoint that the demons have been conquered. Rather, as he argues in chap. 10, participation in pagan cultic meals destroys the participants in the same way the wrong use of knowledge destroys the weak brother as he argues in chap. 8. Second, there is hardly an indication that what Paul writes in 8:1-13 belongs to 10:23-11:1 to form an Epistle B which encourages participation in pagan cultic meals as evidence that the

1Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth, 226.
demonstrated. Because Paul's qualification of \( \gamma \nu \omega \sigma \iota \varsigma \) is different from the strong (8:7-11), therefore, Schmithals' claim is difficult to establish from 8:1-11:1 in light of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30.

In order to understand what led to the two rhetorical questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30, it is important to examine the chain of Paul's logical argumentation that begins in 8:1. With the phrase "\( \pi \epsilon \rho \iota \ \delta \varepsilon \)" in 1 Cor 8:1a (cf. 7:1, 25; 8:1 [8:4]; 12:1; 16:1, 12), Paul introduces the subject of \( \epsilon \iota \delta \omega \lambda \delta \theta \upsilon \tau \varepsilon \) into the discussion with the "strong" who recognize that there is no such thing as an idol. The weak appear to have a troubled \( \sigma \nu \nu \epsilon \iota \delta \eta \theta \iota \varsigma \varsigma \) for eating idol food but the strong do not find such eating wrong because of their claims to \( \gamma \nu \omega \sigma \iota \varsigma \). Hence, it appears that Paul agrees with the strong Corinthians' claim to \( \gamma \nu \omega \sigma \iota \varsigma \), in \textit{theory}, that an idol is no God (cf. 8:4),\(^2\) but never in \textit{practice} because of the dangerous situation in which it places the weak brother (8:7-13; cf. 10:18-22).\(^3\)

---

\(^{1}\) This is the third occurrence of \( \pi \epsilon \rho \iota \ \delta \varepsilon \) in 1 Corinthians. Mitchell notes that "the formula \( \pi \epsilon \rho \iota \ \delta \varepsilon \), as found in a great variety of ancient Greek texts . . . is simply a topic marker, a shorthand way of introducing the next subject" ("Concerning \( \Pi \varepsilon \Pi \ \Delta \varepsilon \) in 1 Corinthians," \textit{Nov T} 31 [1989]: 229-256, esp. 233-234; idem, \textit{Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation}, 3, n. 7, 191, n. 27). Hence, the introductory formula is not necessarily an indicator of a reference to an issue brought up by a correspondent as it is often alleged in the cycle of the partition theory of 1 Corinthians.

\(^{2}\) Yeo holds that "by partially quoting the Corinthians' slogan in the first five verses, Paul has gained a strong foothold for his persuasion. It is a way of gaining attention from the audience also, letting them know their argument has some validity" (185; see also Barrett, "Things Sacrificed to Idols," 46).

\(^{3}\) 1 Cor 1:5; 12:8; 14:6; 2 Cor 2:14; 4:6; 6:6; 8:7; 10:5; 11:6; Phil 3:8; Rom 2:20; 11:33; 15:14; cf. Col 2:3. For instance, the use of \( \gamma \nu \omega \sigma \iota \varsigma \) in 1 Cor 1-4 seems to be a \textit{sine qua non} for Paul's "contextualizing or theologizing" of the message of the cross of Christ to the Corinthians' situation. In fact, he himself appears to acquire the theory of \( \gamma \nu \omega \sigma \iota \varsigma \) in light of the several issues he addresses in the letter towards the right view of \( \gamma \nu \omega \sigma \iota \varsigma \) (8:1, 7).
Mitchell notes that while Paul discusses with the Corinthians the theory of
knowledge, he points out to them that their claims to \( \gamma\nu\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma \) only lead to community
division. She states that “in 8:1 Paul introduces his positive counterpart to both
knowledge and freedom which some Corinthians (wrongly) regard as the guiding
principles of action. That counterpart is \( \dot{\eta}\gamma\acute{\alpha}\tau\rho\iota\varsigma, \) love.”1 Thus, Paul’s use of \( \omega\iota\delta\omega\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu \)
\( \delta\tau\) in 1 Cor 8:1 is a deliberate effort to disarm the Corinthians’ slogans by stating
that he has what they have (vs. 4). This is indicated, for example, in the way he
immediately qualifies the statement in vs. 1b to suggest that his qualification of \( \gamma\nu\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma \)
was far different from that of the strong Corinthians.2 But, since \( \gamma\nu\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma \) is fundamental
to the understanding of Paul’s position in chap. 8, which he himself never elaborates, the
meaning of the term mean for him and the Corinthians must be clarified.

concern for the ‘weak’ in conscience constrains him to remind those with a greater proportion of
\( \gamma\nu\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma \) that \( \dot{\eta}\gamma\acute{\alpha}\tau\rho\iota\varsigma, \) after all, is a greater standard of conduct in the Christian community than
\( \gamma\nu\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma. \) And if anyone does not know this, he is really ignorant of a necessary item in the
Christian faith” (43).

2Of course, the debate as to whether a particular quote is either a Corinthian statement or
Paul’s is not easy to decide. For instance, in reference to 1 Cor 8:8, while Hurd documents a list
of ten authors who maintain that the slogans are of the Corinthian origin (Hurd, *The Origin of 1
Corinthians*, 68; see also Walter Lock, “1 Corinthians VIII.1-9: A Suggestion,” *Exp* 6 [1897]:
67), Barrett, as others, either modifies the same hypothesis saying that only the opening clause “is
clearly consistent with the position of the strong Christians in Corinth, who see no objection to
eating sacrificed food, and Paul agrees with it” (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 195; Fee,
*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 383), or completely rejects the assumption in favor of Paul’s
own statements (Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I, II*, 38; Allo, 204; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*,
148). In short, in all the variety of solutions advanced, none is totally satisfactory. One problem
has to do with choice of the variant readings that best represents the authentic text. Another
problem stems from the fact that, to a large extent, one’s interpretation is often predetermined by
whatever viewpoint one already cherishes. But, it is also possible, as Hering writes, that “the
apostle takes up their catch-phrase in order to let them understand first of all that they are not the
only ones to ‘have knowledge.’ ‘We also have it’” (67; see also Barrett, *The First Epistle to the
The Meaning of $\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\varsigma$

Scholars have long debated the origin and meaning of the word $\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\varsigma$ in 1 Corinthians. For example, Dupont takes it as a charismatic knowledge that grows out of Judaism.\(^1\) For Pearson, $\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\varsigma$ is a “Christian insight into the realities of Christian existence here and now and its practical consequences.”\(^2\) While Horsley takes the Corinthian $\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\varsigma$ as the knowledge of the one true God,\(^3\) for Gardner, it is “one of several gifts of God for his church, designed to benefit the community.”\(^4\) The lack of a uniform meaning of the term, however, makes Conzelmann to remark that “the specific understanding of the nature of the liberating $\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\varsigma$ is so far still an open question.”\(^5\)

The word $\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\varsigma$ occurs more frequently in 1 Corinthians than any other part of the NT. In this letter alone, it is found ten times as a noun (1 Cor 1:5; 8:1 [2x], 7; 10, 11; 12:8; 13:2, 8, and 14:6), besides its sixteen occurrences in the verbal forms.\(^6\) This

---

\(^1\)Dupont, 532-534. The interconnections of $\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\varsigma$ and $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\rho\iota\alpha\varsigma$ coupled with other religious viewpoint of the “strong” Corinthians are clearly contained in the Hellenistic Jewish theology. It is stated that: “Knowledge is freedom (Gos Phil 84:10-11). Also, Philo is reported as saying that: “He who has the knowledge of the truth is a free man” (Gos Phil 77:15-16).

\(^2\)Pearson, 42.

\(^3\)Horsley, “Gnosis in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 8:1-6,” 43-47.

\(^4\)Gardner, 25. See also Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 366, n. 34.

\(^5\)Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 140. He presents three possibilities by which one may come to grips with the term, that “it can be understood as enlightenment on the nature of the gods in the sense of popular philosophy, or as an illumination of the pneumatic, or as a specifically Gnostic insight into the depths of the world and of being. Here we must take account of the fact that these possibilities cannot always be strictly separated” (ibid., emphasis mine).

\(^6\)Robert Morgenthaler, Statistik des Neuestamentlichen Wortschatzes (Zürich: Gotthelf-Verlag, 1982), 85. Also, it is used 6 times in 2 Corinthians (2:14; 4:6; 6:6; 8:7; 10:5; 11:6),
suggests that Paul was confronted with problems associated with an early form of Gnosticism in Corinth. However, Schmithals goes too far in remarking that all the elements of both libertinism and asceticism that Paul refutes were among the main features of Gnostic thinking. Although Conzelmann argues that Gnosticism is an unnecessary hypothesis for understanding 1 Corinthians, his conclusion is that "the Corinthians could be described as proto-Gnostics."  

As earlier indicated, the main reason most scholars doubt any trace of Gnosticism in 1 Corinthians is because the essential features of the system in its fully developed form in later centuries are almost completely lacking in the New Testament. Thus, the gnostic provenance of the letter is not taken seriously by most scholars. Even those who seem to note isolated traces of Gnosticism in nascendi in the letter are yet to develop acceptable criteria, because "it is not the occurrence of such terms, concepts, myths, and theological doctrines, but only the movement of interpretation of such traditional language, together with the quest for the criteria and for the direction of Paul’s interpretation, that will inform us about Paul’s thought and about his 

times in Romans (2:20; 11:33; 15:14), and only once in Ephesians (3:19), Philippians (3:8), Colossians (2:3), and 1 Timothy (6:20). The form γνώσις shows up 23 times in all of Paul’s hauptbriefe. Cf. John R. Kohlenberger III, Edward W. Godrick and James A. Swanson, The Greek English Concordance to the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 132. Barrett adds that: "If figure proves anything, these figures show that it was primarily in the Corinthian situation that the idea of γνώσις developed, and that the γνώσις was much, though not exclusively, concerned with the problem of εἶδωλοθύτων" ("Things Sacrificed to Idols," 150).


2Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 15.
understanding of Christian experience, even if he shares the theological terminology of
his opponents.\textsuperscript{1} In fact, C. C. Tittmann had earlier argued that Gnosticism is a second
century Egyptian phenomenon that is syncretistic, accommodating Greek philosophy as
well as both the Jewish and Christian theologies. He concluded that "no traces of the
Gnostics are to be found in the New Testament."\textsuperscript{2} However, because 1 Corinthians
indicates some traces of a "proto"/"incipient" gnostic elements, I hold that the evidence
cannot be ruled out completely either.

Paul reflects on many of the Corinthians "proto-gnostics" catchwords in 1
Corinthians with the intent to correct a misunderstanding of what they arrogantly claim
to know (cf. 1 Cor 1:26-31; 3:3-4, 18-23; 4:6-8). For example, the expression οὐδαμὲν
ὅτι πάντες γνῶσιν ξύσειν (8:1b) is a rhetorical strategy that anticipates the objections of
the strong so as to correct their views of knowledge.\textsuperscript{3} That is, Paul is not just responding
to the questions of the Corinthians concerning εἰδωλοθυτά but he is also questioning
their claims by teaching them a correct view of γνώσις, based on ἀγάπη. Hence, in 8:1c
Paul says: ἡ γνώσις φύσιος,\textsuperscript{4} ὡς ἀγάπη οἴκοδομεῖ ("knowledge puffs up, but love


\textsuperscript{3}The expression, οὐδαμὲν ὅτι πάντες γνῶσιν ξύσειν "we all have knowledge" (1 Cor
8:1b), seems to contain an awkward repetition of the first-person plural ending with οὐδαμὲν ξύσειν which is difficult to explain unless οὐδαμὲν ὅτι is the introduction to a slogan Paul is quoting (Willis, 67-70).

\textsuperscript{4}Φυσίος appears six times in 1 Corinthians (4:6, 18-19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4), once in 2 Cor 12:20 and Col 2:18. It seems that Paul’s use of Φυσίος in 1 Cor 8:1c is probably a Septuagintal
builds up”).

Paul’s reaction against the way γνῶσις was functioning at Corinth is further indicated in 1 Cor 8:2-3: εἰ τίς δοκεῖ ἐγνωκέναι τι, οὔπω ἐγνὼ καθὼς δεῖ γνωμαίει. εἰ δὲ τίς ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν, οὗτος ἐγνωσται [ὑπ' αὐτοῖ]. 1 By this statement, Paul expresses the inadequate claims of γνῶσις as a way of relating to God. 2 The crucial word is the perfect indicative ἐγνωσταί because it signifies that the “strong” Corinthians consider themselves as having possessed an unusual knowledge. That is, they perceive themselves to have attained a kind of knowledge that the “weak” do not have. However, Paul’s use

υποστελλω, reminiscent of ἒπει “to swell or be lifted up,” as in Hab 2:4a. Paul’s point is that, unlike γνῶσις which “puffs up” by seeking its own interest, ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ φυσιούτατα (1 Cor 13:4e).

οἰκοδομέω appears 18 times in the NT, half of them in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Cor 3:9 Paul describes the Corinthian church as God’s building as he considers his own role as one who had laid its foundation so that “if someone is building” (εἰ δὲ τίς ἐποικοδομεῖ) on this foundation, the individual should use the right materials (3:9-15). Again, Paul uses the word in an ironic sense when he speaks of the danger that knowledge wrongly applied to eating idol food can cause to the weak brother, if he happens to see the strong eating such food at the idol’s temple. Thus, he asks: οὐχὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς δυτος οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὰ εἴδωλα; οἱ οἰκοδομεῖν (8:10b). In 2 Cor 10:8; 12:19; 13:10, the word is used to describe Paul’s own apostolic authority, that is, as one called to “build up” the Christian church or community. It seems that the building metaphor in almost every occurrence of its Pauline usage is either in reference to the “building up” of the temple or Israel as the covenantal people of God in the Old Testament, or a follow-up to its use by Jesus (cf. Matt 16:18). Also, see Philipp Vielhauer, Oikodome: Das Bild vom Bau in der christlichen Literatur vom Neuen Testament bis Clemens Alexandrinus (Karlsruhe-Durlach: Tron, 1939), 94; O. Michel, οἰκοδομέω, TDNT (1967), 5:136-148.

1Zuntz, 31-32.

3For example, the oldest Greek manuscript P46 favors the longer reading that adds τι in 8:2 as original. Bruce Metzger argues that its omission in the witnesses was either a deliberate or accidental oversight since the weight of evidence supports the longer reading (Metzger, 556). For Fee, the shorter reading drops τι and “fits the context so perfectly that it is either the Pauline original or else the work of an editorial genius” (Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 367; see also Zuntz, 31).
of the ingressive aorist form of the verb ἔγνω points to what constitutes the true γνῶσις. For Paul, ἀγάπη, not γνῶσις, marked out 'the one who knows.' That is, "the one who loves [ἠγαπᾷ] is the one who really knows [ἐγνώσται] (i.e. has the true knowledge)" (vs. 3).

The NIV translates "the man who loves God is known by God" is also based on the best manuscript (papyrus 46) that I used in translation of 1 Cor 8:3. However, the added elements represented in italics of the NIV translation are not to be preferred. Besides the fact that both the P46 and Clement of Alexandria omit τὸν θεόν and ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ, the text does not call for the addition in translation. Hence, the shorter reading of the passage makes more sense in the context in which Paul is questioning the Corinthians' claims to γνῶσις. The "true gnōsis consists not in the accumulation of so much data, nor even in the correctness of one’s theology, but in the fact that one has learned to live in love toward all." Gardner points out that "the clause οὕτως ἐγνώσται ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ was not a clever twisting of the subject, nor a play on words in which Paul showed that it was God’s knowledge that is really important. The point of comparison was between γνῶσις and ἀγάπη, not between γνῶσις of man and γνῶσις of God."
Paul Warns About the Corinthian Usage of γνώσις

Although the content of γνώσις is not mentioned in 1 Cor 8:1b, it is explicitly stated in vss. 4-6 as a strategy to warn the strong. In addition to defining "knowledge" by contrasting it with ἀγάπη, Paul develops the implications of the position of the strong for eating idol food because of their knowledge of monotheism. The key argumentative strategy is in his use of logos,¹ that is, persuasion through logical argumentation from a position of agreement as in vs. 4bc: οἴδαμεν ὅτι οὐδὲν εἶδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ, καὶ ὅτι οὐδείς θεός εἰ μὴ εἶς ("We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and there is no God except one," cf. 10:19). Yeo correctly captures the force of Paul's rhetorical strategy when he writes, "By partially quoting the Corinthians' slogan in the first five verses, Paul has gained a strong foothold for his persuasion. . . . But Paul does not just quote, he also clarifies."²

The knowledgeable have argued that since idols are nothing, the practice of eating food offered to idols means nothing as well. The conclusion of the strong, which is reached through the process of deductive reasoning,³ resembles the use of an

¹Logos is the third element of persuasion as specified by Aristotle and recognized by rhetoricians (Aristotle Rhet 1.2.6, 8-22; 2.20-26; Cicero De Ora 2.53.215; De Inv 1.31-41; Quintilian Inst 5.8-14; cf. Lausberg, Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik, 358-365; Martin, Antike Rhetorik, 106-107; Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation, 15). Although Paul's appeals to his own character (ethos) are the first means of persuasion as in 1 Cor 8:13-9:27, still, in addition to logos at the beginning of 8:1 he introduces the second persuasive element, pathos (i.e., persuasion by entreaty to the emotions of the audience), in the development of his logical argument so that persuasion is achieved from the areas of commonality with the Corinthians.

²Yeo, 185.

³Aristotle presents two stylistic methods of logical arguments that are worked out either deductively by means of "a kind of quasi-syllogism" (Aristotle's ῥητορικὸς συλλογισμός) called
enthymeme\(^1\) (ἐνθύμημα), thus, linking monotheism to eating idol meat.\(^2\) And, despite the fact that Paul does not indicate the connection between monotheism and idol food in chap. 8, Magee provides an example of how the Corinthians could have used the enthymematic argument of monotheism to imply permission to eat idol food as follows:

“No unreal entities can taint food. All foods are unreal entities. Therefore, no idol can taint food. No untainted food is forbidden to Christians. All idol meat is untainted.

---

\(^1\)An enthymeme is different from a syllogism in that it is “deduced from few premises, often fewer than a regular syllogism” (Aristotle *Rhet* 1.2.13; cf. Quintilian *De Inv* 5.10.3). While syllogism is a perfect deductive form of reasoning with fully expressed premises, the former is an imperfect deductive form of reasoning because a conclusion drawn from it is tentative and refutable. When an enthymeme moves from the premise to the conclusion, it is followed by a conjunctive adverb such as οὖν, “therefore,” “thus.” However, if it is the other way round, the use is accompanied by such conjunctive adverbs as ὅτι “because,” γάρ “since.” Quintilian gives examples of both ideas (*Inst* 5.14.25). Paul’s citation of Ps 24:1 in 1 Cor 10:26 at the middle of the tricky issue over the question of eating idol food seems to follow the latter use of enthymeme because one of the premises is missing or implied, and the audience is expected to assume the missing premise. Perhaps, this is also one reason Tomson concludes that Paul’s advice in 10:23-11:1 is *halakhic* because it seeks to define what is “idol food” in doubtful situations (208).

\(^2\)Perhaps, this is the reason Fisk concludes that Paul’s warning in 1 Cor 8:7 is directed to the weak “since this applies only to some (τινὲς), it must be possible for others to eat οὐχ ὃς εἰδωλόθυτον. Paul’s point is this: the ability of εἰδωλόθυτα to contaminate is determined solely by the belief system of the one eating. Accordingly, when an individual has no subjective difficulty with eating, there is no objective defilement” (60).
Therefore, no idol meat is forbidden to Christians."

As the “strong” in Corinth, Paul agrees that “an idol has no existence” (1 Cor 8:4b), and “there is no God but one” (vs. 4c). However, because this γνώσις is not yet internalized by the weak brother, in 1 Cor 8:7 he introduces a warning: ‘Αλλά οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γνώσις τινὲς δὲ τῇ συντεθείᾳ ἕως ἅρτοι του εἰδώλου ὡς εἰδωλοθυτον έσθιοσυν, καὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἄθετης οὐσα μολύνεται. The strong adversative, ἀλλ’, best opens the clause to read: “but it is not everyone who has this knowledge.”

Bruce R. Magee, “A Rhetorical Analysis of First Corinthians 8:1-11:1 and Romans 14:1-15:13” (Th.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988), 61. A similar argument is used in support of immoral sexual practices among the Christians because it is claimed that whatever one does to the physical body has nothing to do with the spiritual nurture (1 Cor 6:12-20; Rev 2:14-15).

Research indicates that much has been discussed on the subject of γνώσις in light of the Corinthians’ claim to knowledge of monotheism as a basic Christian doctrine and the rationale for dining in idol-temples (1 Cor 8:4-6). For details, see Richard Horsley, “The Background of the Confessional Formula in 1 Cor 8.6,” ZNW 69 (1978): 130-135; Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 369-376; Gardner, 33-40; Bruce Winter, “Theological and Ethical Responses to Religious Pluralism—1 Corinthians 8-10,” TB 41 (1990): 220, n. 39; A. Denaux, “Theology and Christology in 1 Cor 8.4-6: A Contextual-Redactional Reading,” in The Corinthian Correspondence, 593-606.

Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 194. Again, because the heresiologists associate the practice of eating food sacrificed to idols with Gnosticism, the argument that the Gnostics did make use of Paul in supporting their right to eat idol food as 1 Cor 8:7 stands. According to Elaine Pagels, “the Valentinians cite this passage to show that those who do have gnosis need not hesitate to eat meat sacrificed to idols, ‘since they cannot incur defilement’,” that Paul only “warns the gnostics not to allow their gnosis and their authority to become an obstacle to ‘the weak,’ to psychics. Instead they are to help the psychics whom Christ came to save, even if this means giving up the freedom their gnosis affords them. Paul himself, the pneumatic apostle, chooses to give up his liberty in this age (8:13) rather than to harm his ‘weaker brother’ by asserting it” (The Gnostic Paul: Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975], 71). The problem I have with Pagels’s observation is that there are clear differences between Paul’s attitude to idol food and those of the Gnostics. Besides, no Gnostic text parallels to Paul’s approach in the treatment of problems involving meat sacrificed to idols (cf. Wayne A. Meeks, The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983], 91-92, 165; Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 1:65).
Unfortunately, even those who have the knowledge (γνῶσις), in its accurate noetic sense, apply it wrongly, for they use their gnosis without regard for the weak brother (cf. 15:34). They do so not only by eating food sacrificed to idols that is sold in the marketplace, they do so blatantly by eating this food in pagan temples, as Paul discusses in chap. 10.1 Thus, for Paul, the wrong use of knowledge is equally as dangerous as not having the knowledge.

The above, however, raises an exegetical problem because Paul’s statement in 8:7a, οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἢ γνῶσις; contradicts the Corinthians’ slogan he seems to quote with concurrence in 8:1b, πάντες γνῶσιν ἐχομεν. The point is, if some Christians who are weak do not have the γνῶσις because of their “weak συνείδησις,”2 then, what exactly is the γνῶσις that the strong have but which the weak lack?3

Fee suggests that the relationship between 1 Cor 8:1 and 7 is to be found in the distinction between γνῶσις at a theoretical level (head knowledge which all have—vs.

---

1This is alluded to in 1 Cor 8:10.

2The concept of a "weak conscience" in 1 Cor 8:7c is completely absent outside 1 Corinthians. However, there is one closer parallel in meaning in LXX Wis 9:5: ὅτι ἔγω δοῦλος σάς καὶ νόμος τῆς παιδίσκης σου ἄθετης καὶ ἀλλογράνιος καὶ ἐλάσσων ἐν συνείδεις κρίσεως καὶ νόμων. Cheung suggests that "judging from the evidence of 1 Corinthians 8-10, it seems that συνείδησις is the weak’s counterpart to the knower’s γνῶσις. The knowers have γνῶσις but are not said to have συνείδησις. The weak have συνείδησις but lack γνῶσις. This suggests that we should probably look for the significance of συνείδησις in the cognitive domain" (131, n. 148; see also Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 382, n. 32).

3Allo holds that “this ‘knowledge’ is not that which is shared by all, it is the conviction that an idol is nothing in the world” (203, my translation). Conzelmann further remarks that the weak man at Corinth thinks “the gods are still powers and by his compliance he honors them as such” (1 Corinthians, 149). Willis also argues that “the real definition of the ‘weak’ in Corinth is ‘those not having knowledge’ (94). Fisk understands this to mean that “they [weak] recognize that what they eat has been offered to an idol and for them, this knowledge is highly significant” (60, italics his).
He holds that the weak know the truth of monotheism, but emotionally and experientially they do not have the knowledge of the nothingness of the idols as do the strong. On 8:7, he avers that, "as the rest of the verse makes plain, by this he [Paul] means that even though all may believe at the theoretical level that an idol is no God, not all share this 'knowledge' at the experiential, emotional level." In other words, for Fee, Paul shifts his argument on γνώσις from a theoretical exposition of monotheism to an emphasis upon a personal, experiential knowledge of God. It is argued that because of the difference between theory and practice, the weak, who "up to now have been accustomed to idols," are thus challenged to overcome their scruples by adjusting themselves to the experiential γνώσις.

Fee and Murphy-O’Connor make the point that the weak in 1 Cor 8:7 possess only a theoretical understanding of the nonexistence of idols; the understanding needs some time to become internalized. This accounts for the reality of the relationship

---

1 Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 379.

2 Ibid. Conzelmann understands Paul as saying that "some" still regard sacrificial meat as they once regarded it, not because it has a negative quality itself, but because they still classify it, e. g., avoid it, as such, from habit (I Corinthians, 146).

3 Murphy-O’Connor argues that because the “weak” are the converts from paganism “it is a question of an habitual attitude towards idols which remains up to the present moment (cf. IV, 13, XV, 6). The continuance of this attitude is what makes some ‘weak.’ It is not, therefore, a good thing in itself. It is part of the baggage of one’s past which should have been left behind at conversion” (“Freedom or the Ghetto,” 552; see also Conzelmann, I Corinthians, 146-147; Héring, 72). I wholeheartedly agree with Fee and Murphy-O’Connor’s position of the distinction between theory and experience. Because Gardner takes the distinction too literally and out of context, he is mistaken to conclude that in 1 Cor 8:7 Paul “was not concerned with distinctions of theory and experience” (40; see also Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 197-198, n. 40).
between the conscience (σωμείδησις) of some members of the Corinthian community, who Paul states are “weak” (8:7bc, 10b, 12b) and the γνῶσις they also lack. The point is that, despite renouncing their former belief, the Gentile converts (“weak”) retain the emotional conviction that eating food sacrificed to idols would destroy their relationship with Christ. They simply cannot easily come to terms with the fact that these gods, whom they have been worshiping from birth, are in fact nothing. Thus, it appears that in 8:7 Paul shifts his emphasis from a theoretical affirmation of monotheism to an emphasis upon a personal, emotional, experiential knowledge, as Fee and Murphy-O’Connor resolve the apparent contradiction between vss. 1 and 7.¹

Paul’s chief concern in 1 Cor 8:7 is that he does not want the strong to flaunt their knowledge (that there are no gods behind the idols—which he concurs with) to the detriment of the weak who know this intellectually, but have not internalized it.² The danger then is that the actions of the strong might embolden the weak to eat food against their conscience, οὐχὶ ἡ σωμείδησις αὐτοῦ ἁθενοῦς δυτος οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὸ τῇ εἰδωλοθυτα ἑσθείειν (“Will not the conscience of the weak be built up to eat the foods as offered to idols?” vs. 10b), and this could cause their destruction because they would feel they had been unfaithful to the Lord (vs. 11). Thus, Paul’s argument in vs. 7 holds that a

¹In fact, it is one reason why Paul’s concerns for the weak remain resolute throughout the discussion in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 and, especially, in the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30.

²“We know from v 7 that the weakness of conscience is a lack of appropriate knowledge regarding the nonexistence of idols; therefore, ‘weakness of conscience’ is most clearly understood in reference to the inability of these people to make appropriate moral judgments. The apostle agrees with those ‘having knowledge’ that these people lack due enlightenment, but he points out that it is precisely for this reason that they can be led into what is for them an act of idolatry” (Dawes, 96; see also Cheung, 129-130).
mere claim to γνῶσις, even if the knowledge is true, is inadequate if love does not
govern the use of that knowledge vis-à-vis the weak church member.¹

Paul uses the word σωφροσύνης, (Lat. ‘conscientia’), to mean “self-awareness of
knowledge,” “faith,” “conscience,” more than any other NT writer.² Unfortunately,
however, he does not define the word or describe its function.³ This makes his use of the
word to be somewhat difficult to characterize.⁴ Perhaps, this is the reason for which the
origin, meaning, and function of the word have been the subject of an endless debate in
Pauline studies. For instance, Thiselton highlights at least three different stages research
into the Pauline usage of σωφροσύνης have passed in nuances.⁵ Scholars agree that Paul’s

¹Perhaps, this is why Gardner remarks that Paul in chap. 8 is saying that “knowledge that
acted on a belief in monotheism was inadequate unless filled out by an understanding that ‘gods’
and ‘lords’ did exist as real demonic powers. As Paul would go on to show [Gardner no doubt
alluding to chap. 10], this meant that ‘falling’ was a real danger, one from which the ‘strong’ at
Corinth, for all their affirmation of monotheism, were not immune” (Gardner, 40).

²See Pierce, 62-63. In the synoptic Gospels the term does not occur except as a synonym
of “heart,” as in Mark 3:5, and more doubtfully in 6:52; cf. Matt 15:10-20. It is only implied in
Luke 12:37. But in John 8:9, the word conscience is used as a means of passing judgment on
oneself. Besides the six occurrences in the Pastorals (1 Tim 1:5, 19; 3:9; 4:2; 2 Tim 1:3; Titus
1:15), there are fourteen occurrences in Paul (1 Cor 4:4; 8:7, 10, 12; 10:25, 27, 28, two in 29;
Rom 2:15; 9:1; 13:5), five in Hebrews (Heb 9:9, 14; 10:2, 22; 13:18), three in 1 Peter (1 Pet 2:19;


⁴For instance, the exact meaning of σωφροσύνης in 1 Cor 8-10 is difficult to understand
and, elsewhere, his use of the word is at times tenuous as in Rom 13:5. It is interesting that
σωφροσύνης is not even used in Rom 14 where Paul argues on behalf of harmony between the
“strong” and the “weak” concerning the food problem.

⁵Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 641-644; cf. Jewett, Paul’s
Anthropological Terms, 402-406. First, with no precise equivalent in the Hebrew OT except for
Jewish writers already influenced by Greek thought, σωφροσύνης means ‘consciuosness or man’s
knowledge’ (Holtzmann, Spicq, Bultmann, Dupont, Jewett). Second, because σωφροσύνης is not a
source of knowledge as in Seneca and Stoics, it is literally taken as “conscience” which gives rise to
“the pain consequent upon the inception of an act believed to be wrong” (Pierce, 82). With
usage of συνείδησις in 1 Cor 8 and 10 is best determined within the socio-religious context of the “strong” Corinthians who claimed to possess γνώσις and ἐξουσία (1 Cor 8:1-4, 7, 9-11; 10:22b).¹ Thus, he seems to pick up its usage here from the enlightened Corinthians already influenced by the Hellenistic Jewish theology represented by Philo of Alexandria, Aristobulus, and Pseudo-Solomon.²

Paul taught that συνείδησις as a synonym of the faith of others is always to be respected. In fact, his use of the word eight times in the discussions of εἰδωλοθυσία (1

---


²Erwin R. Goodenough, An Introduction to Philo Judaeus (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962); Christoph Burchard, Untersuchungen zu Joseph und Aseneth (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1965), 99-107; Richard N. Longenecker, Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 44-49. The same view has been expressed by Conzelmann who, nevertheless, failed to make use of it in his interpretation of 1 Cor 8 (1 Corinthians, 142).
Cor 8:7-12 and 10:25-29), and nowhere else in 1 Corinthians, further accounts for the concern he has for the brother whose conscience (faith) is weak to eat “idol food.” The fact is, Paul distinguishes between a strong and a weak conscience probably because he intends generally the opposite of “the shifts in meanings” as may be assumed in the modern understanding of the term.¹ For instance, he holds in 1 Cor 10:29b that the person with the strong conscience eats the food as mere food, but can adjust to various circumstances and to the various convictions of the weak who cannot eat the food as such.²

Because love for the weak brother, not knowledge, should be the guiding principle, Paul uses inductive reasoning³ to warn against the thesis of the strong or gnostics. For example, in 1 Cor 8:8 he corrects their argument with the addition of οἷον before the future active παραστήσει. The verb παραστήσει has a variety of meanings,⁴

¹Materials in the field of social sciences tend to define and describe the term “conscience” in a technical and elaborate manner that are difficult to relate with Paul’s appeals to the “strong” to consider the “weak” brother’s “conscience” in the discussion of idol food in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1.

²Unfortunately, however, Paul does not address the question of who may have an oversensitive συνειδήματι. Because he knows that conscience alone is an inadequate guide for Christian ethics, he simply advices that conscience follow the love ethic.

³Inductive argument is reasoning in which conclusion is drawn from particular instance or fact, and as part of the logos of a discourse, it “uses a series of examples [παράδειγμα] to point to a general conclusion” (Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation, 16). In fact, H. Merklein argues that Paul’s example in 1 Cor 8:10 reflects a factual situation in the Corinthian community (“Die Einheitlichkeit des ersten Korintherbriefs,” Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 75 [1984]: 163-167).

⁴It is suggested that if the word παραστήσει should translate “commend” (for example, Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 195), then, we should expect συνειδήματι rather than παραστήσει because “the two verbs are not usually synonymous” (Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 646; see also Murphy-O’Connor, “Food and Spiritual Gifts in 1 Cor 8:8,” 296, n. 24; Zuntz, 161-162; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 148, n. 21).
but its use in the forensic sense of the future (cf. Rom 14:10-12; 6:13; 2 Cor 4:14) has the strong external support of P^46, N*, A, B, P, Ψ.\(^1\) Certainly, Paul does agree that food in itself does not commend one to God (cf. Rom 14:17). However, on the basis of the stumbling-block principle, eating idol food does matter to God because such eating troubles and destroys the brother who cannot eat in good conscience (1 Cor 8:9-13). The gnostic position looks something like this: ‘As long as eating this idol food does not commend [present or prove] (παριστημα) one to God, it does not matter because those who eat idol food are not worse than those who do not.’ This position Paul denies outright.\(^2\)

Murphy-O’Connor’s contribution to the discussion of 1 Cor 8:8 deserves careful consideration even though there are problems. He points out that it is difficult to know whether Paul is quoting the Corinthians or twisting their words to warn the gnostic.\(^3\) He notes that one reason for the difficulty is the textual problem that affects the

---

\(^1\)The Western and Byzantine textual traditions, however, take παριστημα in the present instead of the future, which does not fit the context. The best reading is that which translates “to bring to stand before a judge,” “to prove, demonstrate, show something to someone” (BAGD, 627-628; see also Hering, 73).

\(^2\)Fee thinks Paul does agree with the gnostic in that “even though the verb can be either positive (‘present us to God for approval’) or negative (‘bring us before God for judgment), the sense in either case is that food as such has nothing to do with our relationship to God. This, of course, would be the perspective of both Paul and the Corinthians. What they may well have been urging in their letter is something they could easily have picked up from him” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 382). Also, see Allo, 204; Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 195. The fact is, Paul’s ethical response is very complex; at some points, it appears as though he does not conclude simply that food offered to idols is right or wrong except for the harm it can cause for the weak brother (Brunt, “Rejected, Ignored or Misunderstood?,” 113-124).

\(^3\)Murphy-O’Connor and Lietzmann argue that because the “strong” Corinthians believed food to be διαφορ, therefore, parts or all of 1 Cor 8:8 are a quotation from the Corinthian position (“Food and Spiritual Gifts,” 294-298, esp. 297; Lietzmann, 39; see also Allo, 204).
interpretation of the passage and “forces us to an examination of the variant readings for v 8bc”1:

(1) οὐτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστεροῦμεθα, οὐτε ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν
(2) οὐτε ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν, οὐτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστεροῦμεθα
(3) οὐτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν, οὐτε ἐὰν φάγωμεν ὑστεροῦμεθα.2

Despite the poor textual evidence in support of the third variant, Murphy-O’Connor still takes it as the original because it expresses “a Corinthian statement which reflects the attitude of the Strong” that Paul twists.3 He argues that the gnostics consider their knowledge as proof of God’s approval in that if they had sinned by eating idol food God would have taken away their spiritual gifts. The fact that they still have their spiritual gifts means that their participation in pagan feasts is not wrong. Thus, Murphy-O’Connor concludes, “this verse is intended to demonstrate that the eating of idol-meats is not an indictable offence in the eyes of God. The Strong claim that the eating of such food will not bring them before the judgment seat of God (v. 8a). . . . Hence, the eating

1Murphy-O’Connor, “Food and Spiritual Gifts,” 294.

2The first variant considers Paul as the author of the statement in that it is the ‘harder reading’ supported by P46 B 81 and various minuscules. Zuntz, who thinks the second is a catchphrase of the strong, claims that it “is vastly superior, not only in numbers but in weight. To reject it is impossible, unless P46 B reading can be shown to be intrinsically superior. In fact it is inferior” (161). Barrett writes that, “The strong Corinthians would have worded the differently: If we eat sacrificial food we lose nothing of our Christian status or Christian reward; if we do not eat, but abstain as the weak Christians do on rigorist grounds, we gain no advantage” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 195; also, see Yeo, 192-193).

3Murphy-O’Connor, “Freedom or the Ghetto,” 547; idem, “Food and Spiritual Gifts,” 295. Barrett, however, holds that the first clause in 1 Cor 8:8a represents the Corinthian position while “the first and third clauses begin Paul’s correction of the Corinthian position” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 195).
of idol-meats was morally neutral, since God did not react one way or the other.”

However, because Paul neither allows the wrong use of knowledge on the part of the strong nor reverses his concern for the weak brother, Murphy-O’Connor’s explanation cannot hold. For instance, Fee writes “that the Corinthians were using an argument from Paul, but applying it in a way he will disallow,” because while it is true that what one eats is not an indictable offense in the eyes of God, for Paul, “it is not true about where—first of all [the place one eats such food as indicated in vs. 10] because of what it can do to a brother.” Perhaps, this is one reason Hurd prefers to take the force of the coordinating conjunction δὲ in 1 Cor 8:8a (vss. 7-9) as belonging to “a series of criticisms of the liberal position and thus as originating from Paul.” Because Paul corrects the gnostic slogan, he places οὐτὲ at the beginning of both clauses. And, even though the first two variants are essentially the same, the weight of Paul’s argument concerning βρῶμα with the strong appears clearer in the first variant: οὐτὲ ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑπερούσειμα, οὐτὲ ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύμεν (‘we are no worse off if we do...

1Murphy-O’Connor, “Freedom or the Ghetto,” 547; idem, “Food and Spiritual Gifts,” 297-298.

2Fee, Ἐλδολόθυτα Once Again,” 191 (emphasis supplied). See also Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 195. Perhaps, it is one reason Yeo, Gardner, and Thiselton conclude that Paul is addressing the whole community because of the assertive and triumphalist claims the ‘strong’ imposes on the ‘weak’ (Yeo, 192-193; Gardner, 49-50, n. 178; Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 645-649).

3Hurd, The Origin of 1 Corinthians, 123; Gardner, 50. Mitchell writes that Paul, in using the deliberative rhetoric in 1 Cor 8:8, appeals not to “personal advantage” but to “the community advantage” (Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 241-142, cf. 25-38).
not eat, and no better off if we do”).

Because the Strong hold that eating idol food is a matter of indifference (ἀδικίας), Paul’s statement in 1 Cor 8:9 opens with the imperative βλέπετε, which always invites very serious attention, sometimes, even a warning (10:12, 18; cf. 1:26; 16:10). He warns the knowledgeable against the popular philosophical idea of ἐξουσία of his day, that authority or freedom means to act as one pleases without minding its effects on others. However, as with γνῶσις, Paul is not against the correct use of ἐξουσία. Rather, he is against the wrong use of authority/freedom (6:12; 10:23) as in vs. 9a: ητε ἐξουσία ἰμών αὐτή (“this right of yours”), which Paul warns should not become a stumbling block (πρόσκομμα [cf. σκανδάλιζω, 2x in 8:13; ἐγκοπή in 9:12c; ἀπρόσκομμα in 10:32]) to the weak brother.

1 Most modern critical editions of the New Testament accept this reading as the proper wording.

2 Heinrich Schlier, “ἐλεύθερος,” TDNT, 2:487-502; Foerster, 2:562-575, esp. 562. Although scholars differ over the origin and meaning of the key term ἐξουσία as discussed earlier, whatever the source and translation, the majority agree that Paul picks up the word from the Corinthian Christians to mean “right/authority” or “freedom/liberty” because, with the exception of its eleven occurrences in the Corinthian letters (1 Cor 7:37; 8:9; 9:4, 5, 6, 12, 18; 11:10; 15:24; 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10), elsewhere it is used only five times (Rom 9:21; 13:1, 2, 3; 2 Thess 3:9). In fact, it is completely absent in Rom 14-15 because Paul deals with a different issue on eating food.

3 πρόσκομμα and σκανδάλιζω are metaphors which often indicate the danger of losing one’s faith or salvation or of an unbeliever’s failure to come to faith (G. Stählin, “πρόσκομμα,” TDNT, 6:745-758, esp. 752). In 1 Cor 1:23 Paul used the word σκάνδαλον which is derived from the so-called “stone texts” of the LXX Isa 8:14 and 28:16 (cf. LXX Ps 117:22; Rom 9:33) addressed to a rebellious Israel. In the MT Isa 8:14 the stone (יהל) is a snare (מִשְׁלֹה) that threatens the rebellious kingdoms, but in the MT Isa 28:16 it is a ‘testing’ stone (יהל) for the promise of salvation. Paul finds in Isa 8:14 that God is described as a λίθος προσκόμματος, “stone to stumble over,” for the two disobedient houses of Israel, whereas in 28:16, a θεμέλιον, “foundation stone,” is laid by God for the Israelites who ‘believed’ in and ‘feared’ the Lord and...
Moreover, in order to dissuade the knowledgeable from the wrong exercise of authority, Paul presents a conditional proposition (ἐὰν γὰρ) in 1 Cor 8:10 that clearly demonstrates the implications of their thoughtless behavior. The rhetorical question asked in the verse as in a proserotonta1 not only summarizes Paul’s position on the eating of idol food but also makes absurd the wrong claims of the strong to ‘knowledge and rights.’2 This is reflected in the change from the plural to singular using οὐ.

Kennedy reminds us that this “apostrophe and other changes of person were a regular feature of public address in his [Paul’s] time,” that the early Christian audience would have recognized the group Paul addresses, “and they would have felt them as part of the internal dynamics” of the argument.3

The conditional phrase, ἐὰν γὰρ τις ἦν οὐ in 1 Cor 8:10a, thus introduces what

---

1 Proserotonta is the practice of posing a question to the opponents as one’s strongest point in order to make their case appear the weakest (Aristotle Rhet. 36.1444b). It is the method in argumentation for which “one dissuading must apply hindrance by the opposite means: he must show that the action proposed is not just, not lawful, not expedient, not honorable, not pleasant, and not practicable” (ibid., 1.1421b).

2 Foerster, 2:562-575; James H. Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1930), 225. As in the contemporary Hellenistic philosophy of authority, ἐξουσία does reveal the cultural ethos of the Corinthians' γνώσεως since it is related to freedom: “whoever has the power to do whatever he wishes (ἐξεστὶν διὸ βούλεται πράττειν) is free (ἐλεύθερος), and whoever has not that power is a slave ὅτι δὲ μὴ ἐξεστὶν, δοῦλος” (Dio Chrysostom 14.17; cf. Epictetus Discourse 4.1.1).

3 Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation, 42. Similar change occurs also in Paul’s two rhetorical questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30.
is possible and not merely a hypothetical situation. The *exemplum* which takes the form of a rhetorical question is important (even though it is not expecting an answer) in that the question invites the knowledgeable to see for themselves the negative consequences the wrong use of *εξουσια* can have on the “weak” brother who cannot eat idol food because of conscience. Paul uses the deliberative future passive, *οἰκοδομηθήσεται*, ironically or sarcastically to undercut the argument of the strong as implied in the question the Corinthians posed to him: οὔχι ἡ συνελήφθης αὐτοῦ ἁθενοῦς δυνάμενος *οἰκοδομηθήσεται* (“Will not the conscience of the weak be built up?”). This is because, for Paul, the strong are wrongly building up the weak through their bad examples and, moreover, endangering themselves by participating in pagan feasts, a theme he develops in chap. 10. That is, the Corinthians’ claims are wrong because “Christian behavior, he tells them, is first of all not a matter of following the way of *γνώσις*, (or the way of

---

1Fee states that the aorist subjunctive in 1 Cor 8:10a ἵνα with *ἐὰν* introduces an indefinite possibility which “takes the form of a present general supposition,” but “the urgency of the argument suggests that we are dealing with a real, not a merely hypothetical situation” (Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 385; note also Hurd, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 125). Thus he, as others, concludes that the ‘real issue’ in 8:10 is like that developed in 10:1-22 [14-22, esp. v. 20]: “eating idol meat in an idol temple,” rather than eating marketplace food in private homes as discussed in 10:23-11:1 (Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 357-361, 386; idem, *Elision Once Again*, 176-177; Willis, 237-240; Gardner, 63).

2Weiss remarks that Paul speaks in 1 Cor 8:10 “mit ironischer Feierlichkeit” (Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 230). Fee concludes that “Paul’s ironic use of *οἰκοδομηθήσεται* in v. 10 suggests that the ‘gnostic,’ was perhaps urging the same action on another (as a means of emancipation from foolish notions about idolatry?)” (Elision Once Again,” 190). Thus, Jewett writes that “Paul subtly reduces the positive of *οἰκοδομέω* by appealing to the clause εἰς τὸ εἰδωλόθυτα ἔσθειν which implies that the conscience itself is not really edified but merely led to acquiesce in an act which at best was theologically inconsequential (1 Cor. 8:8) and which under these conditions was destructive (1 Cor.8:11)” (Paul’s Anthropological Terms, 422-423). Godet describes Paul’s use of sarcasm: “He enlightens him to his loss! Fine edification!” (1:426).
εξουσία) but the way of love. Going to the temples is wrong twice: it is not acting in love and (later) is fellowship in the demonic.”¹

Having presented the wrong use of εξουσία in 1 Cor 8:10 from a number of circumstances that are dangerous to the weak brother, Paul evaluates the implications of the thoughtless behavior of those who have knowledgeable on others in vss. 11-12:

απαλλαται γὰρ ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἐν τῇ σῇ γνώσει, ὁ ἀδελφὸς δὲ ὁ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν. οὕτως δὲ ἀμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν² εἰς Χριστὸν ἀμαρτάνετε (“The weak one is destroyed by your knowledge, the brother for whom Christ died. And, in this way, when you sin against the brothers/sisters [the weak] and wound their conscience³ when it is weak, you sin against Christ”). The three adverbial participles in vs. 12 explain the intensity of his deliberative argument against the strong that their wrong use of both γνώσις and εξουσία is the stumbling block for

¹Fee, Εἰδωλολάτρεια Once Again,” 191, emphasis mine.

²Metzger notes that: “the absence of ἀσθενοῦσαν from P 46 and Clement was regarded as either an accident in transcription or a deliberate modification, introduced to prevent the reader from assuming that wounding a brother’s conscience is allowable except when it is ‘weak’” (557).

³Jewett provides a good discussion on the possible background to Paul’s use of συνείδησις in 1 Cor 8 and 10. He argues that there are two definitions of conscience as in his following comments: “The Gnostics in Corinth thought of conscience as identical with the inner man and the νοῦς; since it was the agent of knowledge it had to be edified so as not to be pained by enlightened, libertinistic actions, Paul rejects the idea of the identity between συνείδησις and the person and insists upon the inviolable autonomy of the conscience even when it is misguided. But he accepts the idea of conscience as the agent of knowledge of one’s deeds. The ‘Weak’ in Corinth thought of conscience as painful knowledge which ought to be avoided if possible. Paul does not attack this idea directly but sets forth a plan to exercise Christian freedom without inducing conscience pangs. He accepts the idea of conscience as the painful knowledge of one’s transgression” (Paul’s Anthropological Terms, 458-459). Also, Tomson admits that based on the philosophical links to the Greek education and culture, Paul had given the word συνείδησις a specific halakhic nuance in the discussion of 1 Cor 8-10 (214-215; see also Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 640-644).
the weak brother.\textsuperscript{1}

Thus, in 1 Cor 8:13, Paul draws to a conclusion the first part of his argument by appealing to his own conduct. With a strong conjunction \textit{διότι} ("therefore") he tells the strong of the lengths to which he is prepared to go for the sake of the weak brother (8:11): "If eating meat sold in the marketplace causes my brother to stumble, I will absolutely never eat meat, that I may not cause my brother to stumble." In other words, Paul seems to say that he would rather choose to remain a vegetarian because of love than to cause a weak brother to fall. This type of self-renunciation for the sake of the common good (\textit{τὸ συμφέρον}) leads him into a series of rhetorical arguments in chap. 9 on the right use of \textit{ἐξουσία} as against the wrong exercise of authority by the strong.

\textbf{Paul's Renunciation of \textit{ἐξουσία} in 1 Cor 9:1-27}

In addition to Paul's use of \textit{γνώσις} in 1 Cor 8, his use of \textit{ἐξουσία} in chap. 9 also helps to throw important light on the discussion that led to the two questions asked in 10:29b-30. However, some scholars argue that chap. 9 is a digression or an insertion from another letter, because the chapter seems to interrupt the flow of Paul's discussion on idol food (\textit{ἐἴδωλοθύτα}). For example, Hering believes that "a transition from 8 to 9 is

\begin{quote}
1Because of the wrong use of \textit{γνώσις} and \textit{ἐξουσία}, the strong thus cause "the weak to fall, sin against Christ, and damage their relationship with God" (Smit, "The Rhetorical Disposition," 480). Fee writes that "to sin against Christ thus means to destroy his body the church. In either case, the ultimate wrong of the 'gnostic' is not simply that he lacks true knowledge, nor even that he is responsible for the loss of a brother, bad as that is, but that in so doing he is directly sinning against Christ himself in some way. The net result of such an argument, of course, is prohibition" (\textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, 389; see also Murphy-O'Connor, "Freedom or the Ghetto," 563-564; Willis, 107).
\end{quote}
lacking. Furthermore, the question [the issue of εξομα] is out of place.”¹ It is noted that the series of forceful rhetorical questions beginning with four in 9:1, along with twelve others in the same chapter, add to the argument that Paul is dealing with a new topic.² In the attempt to subvert the unity of 8:1-11:1 several scholars conclude that a sharp break occurs in chap. 9 because the issue that precedes and follows is no longer idol food but on what Raymond F. Collins calls Paul’s apologia pro vita sua (“apology for his life”).³ Thus, Barrett argues that if Paul is still addressing the issue of idol food, he “would hardly have spent so long on the question of apostolic rights”⁴ in chap. 9.

But, in view of the logic of Paul’s argument, several features indicate that chap. 9 is organically connected to the issue of idol food in 8:1-11:1. First, although 9:1 seems to

---

¹Hering, xiii, 75. See also Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, xxxix-xlili; Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth, 87-113.


³Raymond F. Collins, First Corinthians, SP, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 328. Also Yeo doubts whether Paul can argue from different rhetoric genres of ‘ABA’ suggested by Mitchell and others in the discussion of 1 Cor 8-10 (76-77; see also Song, 293-298).

⁴Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 200. Even Fee, who supports the unity of 1 Corinthians, argues that there is no indication in 1 Cor 9 that Paul is appealing to the Corinthians to follow his example of self-denial (8:13). Rather, the chapter deals with the defense of his rights to apostleship “since a crisis of authority lies behind much of this letter (cf. 4:1-5; 5-6; 14:36-37)” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 393, 395). However, Schrage agrees that chap. 9 fits the force of Paul’s argument in 8:1-11:1 on the role of example for the Corinthians (2:280-281). Even though Willis fails to address 1 Cor 9 in his 1981 dissertation on Idol Food in Corinth, he later apologizes that “space and time limitations precluded an explicit investigation into ch. 9 at that time” (“An Apostolic Apologia? The Form and Function of 1 Corinthians,” JSNT 24 [1985]: 41, n. 1). He also holds that “the discussion of ch. 9 does not function as a defense, and Paul is not really defending his conduct, but is arguing from it” (ibid., 40; for a similar problem, see E. A. Casteli, Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power, LCBI [Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991]).
indicate a shift in style from a direct statement to rhetorical questions such as those in 10:29b-30, still, the verse remains in the first-person singular as in 8:13 (cf. 11:1).

Second, Willis writes that “simple work with a concordance will show several word links between 1 Cor. 9 and chs. 8 and 10 which suggest coherence.”¹ For instance, the use of ἐξουσία in 8:9 and 9:4-6, 12 and 18 in the sense of personal right and freedom is specific to 1 Corinthians, and differs remarkably from its meaning elsewhere in Paul.² Third, the reference to the weak in vs. 22 reminds us that Paul is still dealing with the main theme of chap. 8, and the apparent digression (similar to chap. 13) may indicate “a relevant examination of motivations or attendant circumstances.”³

Paul’s use of himself as an example in argumentation (oratorical ethos) in 1 Cor 9 thus connects with what precedes and follows it. Beginning with 8:13 he explains the reasons for renouncing his rights achieved, by means of παράδειγμα that Aristotle defines as a “proof from a number of particular cases that such is the rule.”⁴ Paul seems to establish at least three reasons for his renunciation of rights in chap. 9. First, it is evident in the proofs of apostolic ἐξουσία that he chooses not to exercise his “rights” like the other apostles (vss. 1-14). Second, it is also evident in his example of self-abnegation, because Paul voluntarily subjected himself as the bond-servant of Christ for

---

¹Willis, “An Apostolic Apologia?,” 39, italics his.

²Richard Horsley, “Consciousness and Freedom Among the Corinthians,” CBQ 40 (1978): 579. Even the use of ἐξουσία in 1 Cor 11:10 is very different in the letter.


⁴Aristotle Rhet 1.2.9.
the salvation of others (vss. 15-22). Finally, his renunciation of ἔξοσια is further illustrated in what appears to him as the advantageous course of action to follow for the sake of the Gospel (vss. 23-27). These are accounted for as follows:¹

The Proofs of the Apostolic ἔξοσια

In 1 Cor 9:1-14 Paul uses the instance of his own apostolic “rights” as proof to answer a possible objection of the principle of self-renunciation he set forth in chap. 8 (also as in 10:29b-30).² Beginning with vss. 1 and 2, he unleashes four striking rhetorical questions that follow each other in rapid succession as the basis upon which his argument is pursued in the chapter. Because each of them opens negative ὥξ, Fee says that these questions “expect a positive answer: ‘Of course I am; of course I have.’³ It thus makes sense, for instance, to translate the rhetorical question, ὥξ εἰμι

¹Mitchell underscores the part played in deliberative rhetoric in Paul’s use of ‘proofs by example’ throughout his argument in 1 Corinthians (Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 47-50, 130-140).


³Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 394. I do not agree with Fee’s conclusion that Paul’s rhetorical intent in 1 Cor 9:1-2 is evidence for the supposed confrontation of the Corinthians on Paul’s rights to the apostolic office. I agree with Gardner that “the questions themselves should be allowed to function in a truly rhetorical manner, that is, as ‘strong affirmation’—without prejudice to the views of the audience. It is unlikely that such questions indicate confrontation” (68-69). Also Willis remarks that “the ἀπολογία could not be a defense of his apostolic office” (“An Apostolic Apologia?,” 34). Thiselton further warns against any tendency to take 1 Cor 9:1-2 as Paul’s defense of his apostleship, and to think “this were the central issue in its right is to miss the point of Paul’s theology, ethics, and rhetoric in these verses” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 666). Mitchell, however, mentions “a mock defense speech” because of Paul’s “use of himself as the example for imitation, a rhetorical stance paralleled in antiquity, because he is well aware of the risks he takes in using himself as the example for imitation” (Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 130, 246-247).
108

ἀπόστολος; (9:1b), as “of course, you well know, I am certainly an apostle,” instead of “don’t you know I am an apostle or am I not an apostle?” This is because Paul neither defends his apostolic office nor demands his rights as an apostle. Rather, he reminds the Corinthians of the rights of an apostle even though he chooses not to exercise such rights as their apostle. Because the four rhetorical questions in 9:1 are phrased as positive statements, there are four demonstrable facts by which Paul could claim the right of financial support and other benefits over the churches he serves. First, Paul is an apostle because he is called and appointed by God for a specific mission (cf. Acts 9:15; 22:15). Second, he is free in his choice to serve in the ministry, not by demanding his rights from the churches he serves. Third, he has seen and experienced Jesus Christ in his ministry. Fourth, he is the founding father of the church at Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 3:10).

The ‘proofs’ of his rightful ἐξουσία to receive remuneration in recognition of his work as an apostle are thus argued throughout 1 Cor 9:4-14 on the basis of four authorities. With great rhetorical force, he appeals (1) to the behavior of other apostles (vss. 4-6); (2) to common sense or to the ordinary social life that no one can dispute (vs. 7); (3) to the OT laws (vss. 8-13); and, finally, (4) to a word of command from the Lord (vs. 14; cf. Matt 10:10; Luke 10:7).2 All these proofs demonstrate without a doubt that

1Because 1 Cor 9:4 also has the force of a positive affirmation, it may read as “surely it is not [μὴ] the case that we do not [οὐκ] have a right to eat and drink.” See also Gardner, 69, n. 14; Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, 233.

2Paul’s deliberative arguments help to make the point. For instance, he uses three rhetorical questions as examples in the first two proofs. The details of his rhetorical arguments are both interesting and persuasive, but, because they are self-explanatory, it is not necessary to repeat them in this dissertation. Willis writes that 1 Cor 9:4-14 makes “a statement of the obvious... Paul has established his rights so strongly so that he can make something of his renunciation of
just as the other apostles have the right to receive material support from their labors, so he and Barnabas have similar rights over the churches (vss. 4-12a). Paul makes the point that if the Corinthians hold to their presumed rights to eat and drink at the pagan temples, so he and Barnabas have the right to receive from the Corinthian church. He freely refused to exercise the right as the church’s founder/apostle because he does not want to be a stumbling block for the reception of the gospel. Thus, Paul connects the actual question of the right of the “strong” at Corinth to eat meat offered to idols with his own exemplary apostolic practice noted in 8:13.

Paul’s purpose of introducing the rhetorical proof is also indicated in 1 Cor 9:12b: “We have not used this right, but we endure all things in order to put no obstacle (πρόσκομμα [8:9]; ἐγκομί [9:12]) in the way of the gospel of Christ.” His logic is that if he and Barnabas could renounce their legitimate and undisputed rights to eat and drink, so as not to become a hindrance to the gospel, he expects the “strong,” by imitation, also to renounce their presumed rights to eat and drink to avoid becoming a stumbling block to the salvation of the weak brothers. That is, just as he relinquishes his rights for the good of the gospel, similarly, the “strong” are to relinquish their rights for the good of the weak brothers. Paul explains his reasons for choosing not to exercise his right to receive them! The effect of this rhetorical plan would have been very arresting for the first hearers who, after the listing of the reasons why Paul should be supported, would most likely anticipate his ‘accounts due’ statement!” (“An Apostolic Apologia?,” 35, italics his).

1Paul’s argument follows a similar pattern in 2 Thess 3:8-9 where he counters the tendency to idleness: “We never accepted food from anyone without paying for it. We work hard day and night so that we would not be a burden to any of you. It wasn’t that we didn’t have the right [ἐξουσίαν] to ask you to feed us, but we wanted to give you an example to follow” (NLT).
wages from the Corinthians in the example of his renunciation of ἐξουσία in vss. 3-14.1

The Example of Paul’s Renunciation of ἐξουσία

Because Paul’s concern is for the weak brother, he introduces the example of his self-renunciation of ἐξουσία to challenge the strong. Having established his right to receive wages from the Corinthians in 1 Cor 9:3-14, in vss. 15-22 Paul goes on to show that he did not exercise his apostolic right in the way the Corinthians had expected. Instead, for example, he forgoes his right to receive wages, and expects the strong to do likewise in the interest of the weak over the question of eating idol food.

However, the differences between vss. 15-22 and the preceding argument in vss. 3-14 are in tone and motivation. For instance, the tone in vs. 15 is much more distinct than the previous one. It introduces five sentences that begin with γάρ to continue the thought of vs. 12b. These sentences seem to anticipate a possible misunderstanding by the Corinthians that he wanted such wages. Now he speaks in a highly rhetorical style in the first-person singular that he has no desire for such support in Corinth. Accordingly, he introduces an aposiopesis (a sudden interruption of thought in the middle of a sentence, cf. Gal 2:6) to suggest that he would rather die than negate his boast (καυχήσαται) for preaching the gospel. Omanson seems to capture the force of Paul’s sentiment. He translates vs. 15c, “for I would rather die—no one shall make my boast an empty one!”2

---

1For a discussion on the issue of financial support at Corinth, see Gardner, 81-85.

2R. L. Omanson, “Some Comments about Style and Meaning: 1 Corinthians 9:15 and 7:10,” BT 34 (1983): 138-139; see also Metzger, 492. However, 1 Cor 9:15 contains a shift from one grammatical structure to another within a sentence. This is called anacoluthon, which makes, for example, the clause “καλὸν γὰρ μοι μᾶλλον ἀποθανεῖν ἢ τὸ καυχήσαται μον ὀνείδος...
This hyperbole language is likely intended to sway the emotion of the readers (cf. 2 Cor 11:7-11).

The explanatory γάρ in 1 Cor 9:16 introduces Paul’s motive, and suggests that he did not boast of his preaching (οὐκ ἔστω μοι καύχημα). He insists that God’s compulsion presses upon him, like Jeremiah (Jer 20:9; Amos 3:8), that his commission to preach the gospel is involuntary (cf. 1 Cor 7:37). Hence, in vs. 17, Paul differentiates ἐκὼν and ἄκὼν to describe what he does voluntarily from that which he does under obligation as an apostle. It is not that the other apostles who voluntarily preach the gospel are entitled to wages and that Paul is not. It seems that the contrast is rather between doing as one’s choice something that goes with a reward1 and doing it under compulsion (ἀνάγκη) without a choice for reward (cf. Matt 6:1-6, 16).

Instead of Paul’s comparing himself to a workman who earned wages, he now compares himself to a slave who worked without wages. This suggests that Paul takes his calling as an irresistible obligation or commission because God called him as a slave or steward (οἰκονόμος) with a job to do (1 Cor 4:1-2).2 For this reason, it seems best to

1 Fee thinks the conditional clause (ἐὰν + ἐκο) in 1 Cor 9:17 “is not helpful in this case since the two clauses are in balanced contrast, the one setting up the other, which is the real condition” (Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 417; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 157; Collins, 346-349, 99-101).

2 Barrett writes that “the language recalls the appointment of imperial secretaries, who as a rule were either slaves or freedmen” (ibid., 209; see also Philipp Bachmann, Der erste Brief des
translate vss. 17 and 18a: “But if I do this from my own intention I have a reward, but if not from my own intention but from the commission God has given me, then what is my reward?” Paul’s analogy suggests that in vs. 17a μισθός is present but in 18a it is eschatological (3:8, 14; 9:24-27), which corroborates his appeals on the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30. The analogy also suggests a means of putting pressure on the strong Corinthians to imitate his example of self-renunciation of εξουσία.

Paul provides a second illustration in 1 Cor 9:19 from his own apostolic practice to validate his appeal to the Corinthians. With the emphatic word ελευθερος he recalls the question formulated in 9:1 in the first person singular in vss. 19-23, to redefine the concept of freedom held by the “strong.” As in the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30, Paul declares in 9:19 that although he is free from domination by others, he is not free from his responsibility to others (9:16-18; cf. Rom 6:16-23). Thus, the present

---

1 Collins writes that “boasting’ is a major theme in 1 Corinthians. . . . The object of Paul’s boasting is not the preaching of the gospel. . . . Paul’s boast is that he has not made use of the rights to which he is entitled. . . . That Paul chose to support himself by the work of his own hands might have been a source of contention among the Corinthians” (346). Paul, therefore, makes his point by imploring the strong to renounce their “right” for the common good (Mitchell, Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 248; Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 422).

2 The RSV translates both εξουσία and ελευθερία as “liberty,” which suggests the closeness of meaning of the two terms used by Paul interchangeably. Willis remarks that “although in 1 Cor 8 the term employed is εξουσία it is to be understood as virtually synonymous with ελευθερία. This is clear in 1 Cor 10:23, 29 where Paul interchanges the two words” (Willis, Idol Meat in Corinth, 113; see also Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth, 231).

3 Martin Luther underscores Paul’s principle by stating that “a Christian is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone” (“Concerning Christian Liberty,” in Luther’s Primary Works, ed. H. Wace and C. A. Buchheim [London: Murray, 1883], 104.)
participle ὅν in the concessive clause is immediately followed by ἵνα that governs κερδήσωμεν.¹ This suggests that Paul is not free in order to exercise his apostolic rights and privileges. Rather, he is free because he can accommodate his rights to the needs of others. If the strong Corinthians are really free, then, they should be free to accommodate the weaker brothers by restraining their participation in pagan fellowship meals.

Paul’s argument by example is further indicated in the rhetorical parallel on the principle πάσιν δουλεύω ἐκείνον in the practice of his accommodation in 1 Cor 9:20-22.² He identifies himself with three categories of people: the Jews, the Gentiles, and the weak,³ so that the Corinthians could see the nature of his character and, thereby, judge

¹1 Cor 9:19 translates: “For though I am free of all, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the many.”

²For instance, Paul repeats ὃς “as” 3x (1 Cor 9:20a, 20b, 21), ἵνα “in order that” 7x (9:19, 20a, 20b, 21, 22a, 22b, 23), and the forms of κερδάων “gain/win” 5x (9:19, 20a, 20b, 21, 22a); and σωζω “save” 1x in vs. 22b.

³Some interpreters argue for four separate groups: (1) τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις [non-Christians Jews, 1 Cor 9:20a], (2) τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον [Jewish Christians, vs. 20b], (3) τοῖς ἀνόμοις [Gentiles, vs.21a; Rom 2:14], and (4) τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν [Gentile Christians, vs. 22a; 8:7]. See Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 423, n. 9; Barbara Hull, “All Things to All People: A Study of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23,” in The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John, ed. Robert T. Fortna and Beverly R. Gaventa (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 139; Gregory J. Lockwood, I Corinthians, CC (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 311-313. Because Paul seems to have no specific occasions or groups of people in mind, the listing is not a central issue as some argue (e.g., Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 427; Richardson, 95; C. L. Blomberg, I Corinthians, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 1994], 184). And, if Paul does, his reference to the “weak” hardly fits the context of his Jewish/Gentile schema (Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 422-433; D. B. Martin, Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity [London: Yale University Press, 1990], 118-124; cf. 1 Cor 10:32). Why does Paul not just speak of the division between Jew and Gentile as he mentioned in 1:22-24; 10:32 and 12:13? Since the discussion in the letter is not about the law as in Galatians and Romans, of what use is Paul’s introduction of it in 1 Cor 9:20-21?
for themselves whether or not his appeal on the issue of idol foods can be trusted. Because Paul never claims he becomes 'strong to the strong or an idolator/adulterer to the idolators/adulterers' in his principle of flexibility suggests that he is speaking in clear terms concerning his principle of accommodation.

His solidarity with the Jews "who are under the law" and the Gentiles "who are without the law" is neither to teach about the law nor "for the Corinthians likewise to work for their living, but rather to be accommodating of one another in all things, but especially in regard to meat-eating practices." The objective of Paul's solidarity is indicated in the occurrence of the verb κερδοίνω, gain/win, which comes at the end of each of the six consecutive ινα clauses in vss. 19b-22b that emphasize the theme of self-accommodation. Because of the verb κερδοίνω, Fee writes that the "language, as the interchange with 'save' in v 22b makes clear, can only refer to evangelizing" the non-Christians, even though Paul's goal does not exclude the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ (9:20-22; 10:31-33).

Paul's accommodating behavior to the Jew and Gentile does not allow either νόμος or ἀνομος to define the status of the Christian community before God. Neither does his mentioning of the "weak" as the final specific group in 1 Cor 9:22a define a status, nor do the "strong" have to regard the gifts of γνώσις as requisite markers. The

---

1Mitchell, Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 248.

2Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 427, n. 26. Also, Black holds "that Paul's ultimate purpose in accommodating himself to others is the preaching of the gospel and the consequent conversion of non-believers" (Paul, Apostle of Weakness, 118-119).

3Hays, 152-155; Schrage, 2:340-341.
fact is that none have need of boasting in such prerogatives since the Corinthians themselves were weak when they were first called (cf. 1:27-31). Therefore, in the example of his self-renunciation of ἐξουσία, Paul presents “himself to many groups, among whom are the weak, in order to win them, so the Corinthians, in imitation of him, should adapt themselves at least to their weak brothers”¹ to further the cause of the gospel.

All Things for the Sake of the Gospel

Paul’s preceding argument about giving up his ἐξουσία to accommodate others is summarized in 1 Cor 9:23. Paul knows quite well that he is “free from all” like the Corinthians to exercise his rights. But, he chose to become “all things to all people, so that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I become a partaker of its blessings” (vss. 19-23).² For Paul, the attitude of self-renunciation is the basis of being assured a “joint participant” (συγκοινωνός) in the blessings of the gospel. While the previous six purpose clauses in vss. 19-22 deal with Paul’s concerns for others, the last purpose clause ἵνα συγκοινωνός in vs. 23b concerns his reward. The NIV reads “that I may share in its blessing.” That is, just as the Corinthians desire to share in the joy of being “joint participants” by attending the pagan

¹Smit, “The Rhetorical Disposition,” 488; see also Gardner, 103-107.

²Henry Chadwick writes that “it is possible, though not demonstrable, that here he [Paul] is actually quoting from his adversaries. It would be quite consistent with his usual practice if he were doing so, and in the Corinthian letters Paul seems especially inclined to take charges of his opponents and quote them back in an ironic tone” (“All Things to All Men’ (1 Cor. 9:22),” NTS 1 [1954]: 263).
feasts of their relations, Paul reminds the Corinthians that his radical identification with every person is in sharing the blessing of the gospel. "The whole of his concern is to make clear that the changeless gospel ... empowers him to be free to change his stance." Thus, Paul develops an ethos argument that he himself has to exercise self-control (ἔγκρατεια) like an athlete if he is to partake in the eschatological reward.

In 1 Cor 9:24-27 Paul draws an example from Greco-Roman competitive pursuits, namely, the Isthmian games, in order to move the Corinthians towards the course he wants them to follow. With the opening rhetorical question in vs. 24a (Οὐκ οἴδατε) he made the Corinthians reflect on their own experience. Victor C. Pfitzner writes that Paul’s use of the agon motif compares the rigorous training an athlete undergoes in order to win a sport contest to the need for self-restraint in the Christian life. The rigorous effort required of an athlete is so enormous that it takes everything in preparation to obtain the prize (βραβείον). It involves giving up one’s ἔσοδος by going through...

---


2J. Murphy-O’Connor writes that Isthmian Games were one of the four great all-hellenistic festivals, ranking second only to the Olympic Games and above those of Delphi and Nemea (St. Paul’s Corinth: Text and Archaeology, GNS 6 [Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983], 14-17; see also O. Broneer, “The Apostle Paul and the Isthmian Games,” BA 25 [1962]: 2-31; Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 433-434).

3Victor C. Pfitzner insists that the metaphors from the games are to “set the stage for the theme of ἔγκρατεια, which follows. All the endeavors of the athlete are in vain if he has not trained his body and abstained from all that may in any way harm his physical condition” (Paul and the Agon Motif: Traditional Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature [Leiden: Brill, 1967], 87, emphasis his).
anything to win, including “those areas of Corinthian dispute: sexual behavior and diet.”¹

Paul’s emphasis is that if an athlete can be so self-disciplined in order to win a corruptible prize, then a Christian should be more self-controlled to win an incorruptible prize (1 Cor 9:25). And, just as many people run in a race, but only one person gets the prize, similarly, Paul tells the Corinthians that because a Christian can fail to receive an eschatological prize, diligence is always necessary for a successful end. It seems that Paul’s emphasis on the race is not just about good moral behavior but much more about completing what had been started.

In 1 Cor 9:26-27 Paul pictures himself as one who starts a race or a boxing match with only one goal in mind: the determination to win. He uses a contrast litotes to make his point.² By claiming that he does not run without a sense of direction, Paul holds that he runs with a goal in mind (vs. 26a). And, by stating that he is not like a shadow-boxer sparring with the air (or swinging purposeless blows), he means to say that he is a good fighter (vs. 26b). Thus, he does not start to run without a goal (δωρεά δέρων) or box by beating aimlessly (σέ τάν κακά).³ Because Paul as an apostle is yet to win the eschatological prize, he calls on the strong, first of all, to curtail their behavior for the

¹Mitchell, Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 249.

²Paul’s use of the metaphors of a “runner and a boxer” are litotes in his argument in 1 Cor 9:26. It is used to make a point by denying the contrary, that is, to understatement a point in which a positive answer is indicated by stating the negative of the contrary. Paul states what he does not do to affirm emphatically what he does do.

³Weiss states that to run with or without a clear goal (τρέχω [όκ] δωρεά δέρων) is a technical term in antiquity. He also compares 1 Cor 9:26 with Phil 3:14 (Der erste Korintherbrief, 248, n. 2). Cf. 1 Cor 14:8.
good of the weak brother (8:9-13) and, second, to do so for their own self-interest (9:24-27). He hopes his gnostic opponents get the point.

Thus far, in 1 Cor 9 Paul redefines the place and function of ἐξουσία because his opponents hold to a wrong use of authority as they do with knowledge in 8:7-13. For example, his call to the ministry, with the right to receive payment is significant in that he chooses to lay aside that right for the sake of the gospel in the context of his concern for the weak, as the two questions stand in 10:29b-30. Paul expects that his own example of nonuse of his rights would appeal to the strong against their wrong use of ἐξουσία. In fact, his statement in 9:25, coupled with a series of sad experiences in Israel’s history in 10:1-22, confirms his stern warning in 8:9. In this way the appeal to his own behavior as an example in chap. 9 is meant for the strong to consider their weak counterparts in the community. Because Paul’s present ministry does not guarantee his future approval, he presents stern warnings to the Corinthians. This, however, provides the transition to chap. 10 where he describes at length the instances of Israelites’ flagrant abuse of ἐξουσία.

Paul’s Use of the OT Examples in 1 Cor 10:1-22

The Problems of Locating the Subject Matter

Paul presents the example of the Israelites’ wilderness experience and the specific application for the Corinthian Church in 1 Cor 10:1-22 as an argumentative and

1The passage recalls 1 Cor 9:12: “πάντα στέγομεν, ἵνα μὴ τινς ἐγκοπήν δῶμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.” Paul regards himself as an athlete in training “not to spare my body [ὑποτάσσω μου τὸ σῶμα], but to bring it under strict control [δουλεύω], for fear that after preaching to others, I should find myself disqualified [ἀδόκιμος]” (vs. 27, REB).
rhetorical strategy to warn the strong on the wrong use of freedom ἐξουσία (ἐλευθερία).

Scholars, however, observe that the pericope is saddled with multifaceted problems. For example, because it is difficult to locate precisely the subject-matter of the passage, two different approaches have been adopted to interpret it.

The first approach views the passage as a Pauline refutation of the Corinthian “sacramentalists” that is antithetical to the Lord’s Supper. It is claimed that Baptism and Eucharist work ex opere operato to the extent that the “knowing” Corinthians doubt the possibility that anyone could be rejected by merely eating idol food at the pagan temple or that the future salvation can be threatened at any time. Thus, it is argued that Paul wrangles with the over-confident Corinthians who got themselves involved in a mechanistic, magical view of the sacraments derived from the Hellenistic mystery cults.

The second approach does not view the subject-matter as dealing with “sacramentalism” but rather with the dangers of idolatry. Because of this, in chap. 10 (esp. vss. 6, 7, 11, 14), Paul uses the OT stories of Israel for the purpose of warning the Corinthians against idolatry and the serious consequences they may face if they continue to pursue their present course. Thus, it is argued that Paul’s focus in vss. 1-22 is not a

1Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, 256; Wendland, Die Briefe an die Korinther, 82.


discussion about the ‘sacraments’ (as in 11:17-34), but about the wrong use of knowledge and authority. This study, however, follows the line of interpretation of the second approach because Paul’s sacramental language is accidental, not intentional.

Scholars also point out other problems of subject-matter in 1 Cor 10:1-22. For example, Meeks asks: “What is the connection between the example of the wilderness experience of Israel and the dangers of pagan society in the city of Corinth?”1 Again, as discussed earlier, chap. 10 is subject to various supposed literary breaks and criticisms. Willis states that 1 vss. 14-22 “is a definable section within the larger argument of

---

1Wayne A. Meeks, “‘And Rose up to Play,’: Midrash and Paraneisis in 1 Corinthians 10:1-22,” *JSNT* 16 (1982): 64. At times, apart from 1 Cor 10:7, it is even difficult to establish whether Paul is citing from the Scriptures in his *pesher* on 10:1-22. For example, on 10:10 Willis writes that “this final warning of 10:10, μηδὲ γογγύζετε, is even more difficult to relate to any known problem at Corinth, or even to any certain Old Testament passage. Among those Old Testament passages suggested as possible sources are: Num 14:2, 36; 16:41-49; Ps 106:25-27” (Idol Meat in Corinth, 152). Morna D. Hooker’s observation is that “although he [Paul] may frequently quote from scripture, the interpretation he gives it often lies beyond the obvious meaning of the text. His somewhat artificial exegesis leaves one wondering whether there is anything which it would not be possible for him to argue on the basis of scripture” (“Beyond the Things That Are Written? St Paul’s Use of Scripture,” *NTS* 27 [1981]: 296). Because of the skepticism on Paul’s appeal to the OT Scripture, it is not clear whether Paul’s method in vss. 1-13 is properly dubbed parenesis, typological, allegorical, or midrashic to the Corinthian situation (vss. 14-22). However, because Paul’s rhetorical hermeneutic seems to use a combination of all, it patterns the traditional methods found in the Rabbinic and Christian circles (Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 250-251; Leonhard Goppelt, “Paulus und die Heilsgeschichte: Schlussfolgerungen aus Röm iv und 1 Kor x:1-3,” *NTS* 13 [1966]: 32; idem, “τύπος, ἀντίτυπος, τυπικός, ὑποτύπωσις,” *TDNT* [1972], 8:255-256; see also Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 227; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 168; Klaus Galley, *Altes und neues Heilsgeschichten bei Paulus* [Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1965], 56; Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical τύπος Structure*, AUSDDS 2 [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981], 296, 284-310; Meeks, “And Rose up to Play,” 66-71; Gary D. Collier, “‘That We Might Not Crave Evil’: The Structure and Argument of 1 Corinthians 10.1-13,” *JSNT* 55 [1994]: 74). Lawrence Wills, therefore, concludes that “Paul may be adapting an older sermon, or intentionally imitating sermonic style; either way, the word of exhortation has influenced the composition of this passage” (“The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity,” *HTR* 3 [1984]: 289; see also Ulrich Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, BEVT 49 [Munich: Kaiser, 1968], 117-123; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 165).
chapter 10. . . . It is distinguished from 10:1-13 both by the change in form and in method—no longer is there a use of the Old Testament. . . . Where to end this section beginning with 10:14 is less certain.”¹ While Tomson argues that chap. 10 consists of more than three parts, with “10:23-11:1 as an exegetical crux,”² Schmithals concludes that the connection of 10:23 with 10:14-22 “is simply impossible.”³

However, because Paul’s appeal to the OT Scriptures in 1 Cor 10:1-22 is used as an argumentative and rhetorical strategy designed to respond to the Jewish Christian gnostics’ wrong use of knowledge (chap. 8) and their flagrant abuse of authority (chap. 9), which led to indifference to the idolatrous rites (chap. 10), the passage correctly accounts for the examples appealed to in the OT Scriptures, and perfectly fits the rhetorical strategy of the discussion that began in 8:1.⁴ Despite the difficulty of locating the subject matter in 10:1-22, Paul’s appeal to the OT Scriptures makes the connection between the examples of the Israelites’ wilderness experience (vss. 1-13) and the dangers 

¹Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth,* 165. See also Smit, “‘Do Not Be Idolaters’,” 42-43.

²Tomson, 200-203. However, I consider the assumptions of a literary break in 1 Cor 10:1-22 unconvincing for the following reasons. First, in 9:27 Paul speaks of the possibility of being disqualified, and then in 10:1-11 he illustrates this from the history of Israel in the wilderness. Second, in vs. 12 he repeats the same principle of possible disqualification in terms relevant to the Corinthians and himself. Thus, 1 Cor 10:14-33 becomes a continuation of Paul’s admonitions or arguments against the dangers of idolatry and, therefore, belongs together as a unit.

³Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth,* 93.

⁴Thus, Smit suggests that Paul dealt with the discussion in 1 Cor 8:1-10:22 on two fronts. First, that in 8:1-3 and 8:7-9:27 the apostle argues on the social level because of the effect participation in idol meals has on fellow Christians. Second, in 8:4-6 and 10:1-22 he argues on the theological level because participation in idol meals severs one’s relationship with God (Smit, “‘Do Not Be Idolaters’,” 42-43).
of pagan society for the Corinthian church experience (vss. 14-22). To be sure, in vss. 1-13 Paul recalls at length a series of sad Israelite experiences to warn the Corinthian Christians who are in a similar danger as the discussion in vss. 14-22 shows. Hence, 10:1-22 is organically connected with what precedes and follows, especially, in view of Paul’s advice to the strong in the two rhetorical questions asked in vss. 29b-30.

The Israelites’ Wilderness Experience

The explanatory particle γὰρ in 1 Cor 10:1a1 indicates the close connection of chap. 10 with what precedes in 9:24-27, especially, on the need to exercise self-control and the possibility of falling away.2 Paul’s use of the litotes in the introductory formula in 10:1a, οὐ δὲ ἰμαντίς ἐγνοεῖν, occurs five times elsewhere in his undisputed letters (1 Thess 4:13; 1 Cor 12:1; 2 Cor 1:8; Rom 1:13; 11:25)3 to suggest that he addresses the strong, that is, the Jewish Christian gnostics (cf. vs. 15). Central to my thesis is the fact that in vss. 1-13 Paul uses the experience of the people of the wilderness generation to give a severe warning to the Jewish Christian gnostics against their flagrant use of authority and freedom to participate in the pagan temple fellowship meals. Smit points

---

1 γὰρ is left untranslated in the RSV. But Fee notes that “an explanatory ‘for’ and the vocative ‘brothers [and sisters]’ indicate that the present argument has close ties with the exhortation and warning just preceding it. They are to run as those intent to winning; that is, they must exercise self-control in all things lest they end up being disqualified. . . . Most commentators either ignore this γὰρ or minimize it as having a ‘loose’ connection with what precedes” (Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 443, n. 7).


3 See Schrage, 387, nn. 26 and 27. Note also Josephus Antiquities 13.354; Epictetus Dissertations 4.8.27.
out that Paul’s reason for this is that following “the preceding part [8:1-9:1-27] with the effect participation in sacrificial meals has on fellow believers [i.e., the weak or Gentile Christians], he now directs his attention to the effect it has on the relationship with God,”1 that is, the effect participation in pagan fellowship meals has on the participants themselves.

In order to establish a link between the outcome of the Israelites’ flagrant abuse of authority and freedom vis à vis the Jewish Christian gnostics who are in a similar danger, Paul in 1 Cor 10:1-5 finds that Israel’s past mirrors the present experience of the Corinthian believers. His reinterpretation of the OT Scriptures enables him to establish that Israel, as Corinth, had its own form of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.2 Even though Paul is not explicit as to how the events in vss. 1-4 are comparable to similar ones in Corinth, still, as in a deliberative rhetoric, he writes in vs. 6 that “these things” (those

1Smit, “‘Do Not Be Idolaters’,” 43.

2Weiss calls 1 Cor 10:1-5 “a Midrash” (Der erste Korintherbrief, 250; see also Earle E. Ellis, “How the New Testament Uses the Old,” in New Testament Interpretation, ed. I. Howard Marshall [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977], 207) probably because of the examples of the intriguing elements of the first four verses, viz.: ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ (vs. 2); πνευματικὸν ὄνομα ἔφαγον, (vs. 3); πνευματικὸν ἐπιον πόμα, (vs. 4a); and ἀκολούθουσις πέτρας, (vs. 4b). However, while some elements read like a gloss, there is also the problem of understanding the meaning Paul attaches to each element. For instance, since Israel was not covered with water but rather passed through on dry land, what does Paul mean by “all were baptized (ἐβαπτίσθησαν) into Moses by means of the cloud and by means of the sea”? Although there is a strong MSS support for aorist passive ἐβαπτίσθησαν in the UBS 4th ed., the middle voice, ἐβαπτίσατο, is preferred as in other critical editions because it is a more difficult reading in spite of the strong attestation for the passive that is easier to read. Moreover, the middle form tends to conform to the Jewish practice of proselyte baptism, wherein the participants actually baptized themselves. Thus, the passive form in the prevailing Christian practice would have been introduced by a Christian copyist (cf. Robertson and Plummer, 200; Zuntz, 234; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 164, n. 1; Heinrich A. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistles to the Corinthians, trans. D. Douglass Bannerman [New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 1884], 1:279).
described in vss. 1-5) occurred as “examples” (τύποι/παράδειγματα) for Christians.\(^1\)

The exegetical question is whether the examples chosen in vss. 6-10 were given because of Israel or because of the situation in Corinth. That is, as Fee asks, “were they [i.e., the examples] simply chosen at random to illustrate Israel’s fall, and as such become for the Corinthians simply another Pauline sin list, or were they chosen because in a very precise way they reflect the situation in Corinth?”\(^2\)

Because the examples chosen in 1 Cor 10:6-10 concern the ancient Israelites’ wrong use of knowledge, authority, and freedom, Paul made two strong appeals that focus on the arrogance of the Jewish Christian gnostics in Corinth. The first is the principle that those who claim to “stand” need to take heed lest they fall (vs. 12). The second concerns his direct appeal to them “to flee from idolatry” (vss. 14, 7). Andrew J. Bandstra notes that the “over-all pattern, namely, the possibility of divine judgment even after the reception of gifts of grace, is the occasion for Paul’s continuing the argument in verses 6-11.”\(^3\) That is, the accounts of the Israelites’ experience in the wilderness provide us, first, with detailed examples of the divine, retributive judgment and, second, serve as timely warnings whether or not the Exodus generation experience (in)directly

---

\(^1\)Käsemann says “the whole trend of the passage is designed to present not mere similarity between, but the identity of, the Old and New saving events” (114). Conzelmann adds that “Paul does not seek a point-for-point correspondence; he is satisfied with the exemplary character of the history of Israel in one specific respect” (\textit{i Corinthians}, 166, n. 19).

\(^2\)Fee, “Εἰδωλολαῦτα Once Again,” 185.

\(^3\)Bandstra, 14. Even the threat of judgment becomes more explicit in 10:1-22 than in 8:1-13 and 10:23-11:1 because adultery and idolatry were pressing dangers.
reflects the situation of the church in Corinth.\(^1\)

Paul mentions five of the wilderness sins in 1 Cor 10:6-10 as negative examples the Corinthians should not imitate. The formulaic μηδε + verb from vs. 7 is immediately balanced by καθώς τινες αὐτῶν to indicate that just as not all Israelites wrongly used their freedom and authority to practice idolatry and fornication, similarly, not all the Corinthian Christians participate in pagan temple meals. Because Paul addresses the Jewish Christian gnostics or the “strong,” he reminds them of the experience of “some [most] of the Exodus generation who “craved evil things (vs. 6), became idolaters (vs. 7), fornicated (vs. 8), tested (vs. 9), grumbled (vs. 10),” and they received God’s judgment.\(^3\) Table 1 shows a list of the vices to which Paul refers, and the possible allusions in the OT passages he probably had in mind.

**TABLE 1**  
**PAUL’S FIVE NEGATIVE EXAMPLES FROM THE OT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Cor 10</th>
<th>Sin</th>
<th>OT Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vs. 6</td>
<td>Craving/Desiring</td>
<td>Num 11:4-34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)Contra Willis who argues that “just as no concrete Old Testament is being used, so too it is probable that no specific occasion at Corinth is being corrected” (*Idol Meat in Corinth*, 153, n. 135).

\(^2\)Paul uses *anaphora* or *epanalepsis*, a rhetorical trait of repetition, to prove that not all the Israelites misuse their freedom and authority by attending pagan temple feasts and, thus, become arrogant to God’s commandments.

\(^3\)Note the judgment language in the expressions such as “οὐκ . . . εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός,” in 1 Cor 10:5a; “κατεστράφησαν” (vs. 5b); “ἐπεισαγ” (vs. 8); “ἀπώλλυτο” (vs. 9); and “ἀπώλλυτο ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρεύτων” (vs. 10, cf. 8:11a).
By introducing into the discussion the examples of behavior in ancient Israel that led to God’s judgment, Paul provides further reasons for warning the Jewish Christian gnostics against the wrong use of freedom, as implied later in the two rhetorical questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30. First, Paul understands that the various sins committed in the wilderness (vs. 6) are the result of the flagrant abuse of freedom in lusting after evil things. Second, although “idolatry” is not implicit but explicit in LXX Exod 32:6, still, he describes in vs. 7 that participation in sacrificial meals is tantamount to “fornication and idolatry” which not only destroys the weak brother (cf. 8:9-11), but also severs the relationship of the believers with Christ. Third, Paul reminds the gnostics in vs. 8 of 23,000 people who fell in one day because of fornication (πορνεία).

1Herman Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: Beck, 1922), 3:410. Fee asks: “Where did Paul have access to such a tradition?” (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 456, n. 29; see also Weiss: “Ob ein Gedächtnisfehler des P. vorliegt oder eine andre Überlieferung?” [Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 253]). Barrett writes that “there is no more probable explanation of Paul’s figure than that it was simply due to a lapse of memory; and it is not a bad guess that the lapse was due to the fact that Paul had in mind not only the story of the Moabite women who led Israel into both fornication and idolatry . . . but also that of the golden calf, in which about 3,000 of the Israelites were killed (Exod. xxxii. 28)” (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 225). Again, Orr and Walther add that “perhaps Paul confused the two numbers [3,000 and 24,000] since he would be writing from memory” (246). For Lenski, “the explanation that Paul’s memory is at fault is too easy since it exempts the commentator from all further research. The other explanation that Paul names only the number that perished ‘in one day,’ and that another 1,000 perished later, is not acceptable” (398). The LXX Num 25:9 gives 24,000 that is consistent with the MT, Philo, the Targums, and the Midrashim. But why would Paul make the change from an established tradition
warns against the bold claim that sexual immorality does not matter to the body (1 Cor 6:12-20; Acts 15:29; Rev 2:14, 15 and 20). Fourth, in 1 Cor 10:9, Paul also understands the “testing” of God\textsuperscript{1} that led to punishment by the serpents in LXX Num 21:4-9 as equivalent to the Corinthians’ insistence on their ‘rights’ to the temple meals and fornication. Fifth, the final warning of 1 Cor 10:10 is on murmuring “because Paul has previously forbidden both εἰδωλολατρεία and πορνεία.”\textsuperscript{2} The implication of this is that Paul wants them to stop murmuring against his restriction of their participation in the

\textsuperscript{1}A significant textual problem occurs on the object of έκπειράζωμεν. Χριστόν is attested by P\textsuperscript{46}, D, E, F, G, K, and the early patristic writers. But then, N, B, and C have τὸν κύριον that reflects τὸν θεόν in the reading of LXX Ps 77:18: καὶ ἐξεπείρασαν τὸν θεόν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν τοῦ αὐτήσαν βρώματα ταῖς ψυχαῖς αὐτῶν. The division among scholars over the manuscript evidence centers on who was put to the test by Israel. Τὸν θεόν may be eliminated because it receives meager manuscript support. It is possible that a scribe may have made the change whereby “an original tetragram was replaced by κύριον or θεόν (George Howard, “The Tetragram and the New Testament,” \textit{JBL} 96 [1977]: 81). But, in addition to UBS 4\textsuperscript{th} ed., which ranks τὸν Χριστόν as “B,” Metzger, Conzelmann, Schrage, Fee, Gardner, to mention a few, tend to argue in support of τὸν Χριστόν, first, because although the idea that Israel tempted Christ makes Χριστόν the \textit{lectio difficilior}, still, it is easy to explain why later copyists changed an original Χριστόν to τὸν κύριον. Second, in 1 Cor 10:9, Paul states that Christ was the rock which followed Israel (10:4). Nestle-Aland (1963 ed.), Westcott and Hort, among others, however, favor τὸν κύριον because this may have been changed to “Christ” as a later scribal interpretation. That is, it is probable that “a scribe would substitute \textit{Christos} for \textit{Kyrios} than vice versa. Even so, it seems altogether probable that Paul understood \textit{Kyrios} to refer to Christ, since he speaks of Christ’s presence with the Israelites in verse 4. In addition, it is quite certain that in 2 Cor. 3:16, where he quotes Ex. 34:34, Paul understands \textit{Kyrios} as meaning Christ” (Bandstra, 18; Robertson and Plummer, 205-206).

\textsuperscript{2}Fee, “Εἰδωλολατρεία Once Again,” 187. Although the verb γογγύζειν “to murmur” is used frequently in the wilderness traditions, still, Paul seems to have in mind the outcome of the rebellion of Korah and his associates in Num 16:49. This is because it is possible for the Jewish Christian gnostics in Corinth also to rebel against the stern warnings concerning participation in pagan idol feasts.
pagan temple feasts lest the "Destroyer" (ὁ λοθρευτὴς, vs. 10b) brings upon them a similar judgment from God.

The logic of Paul's argumentative strategy with the Corinthian Christians is that the historical events in the lives of the Israelites are τύποι or τυπικῶς (literally, "examples" or "exemplary") for the Church in every age (1 Cor 10:6, 11). Thus, the five positive statements in 1 Cor 10:1-4 correspond to the five negative examples of "some of them" in vss. 6-10, that "are both punctuated and linked with the paraenetic conclusion in verses 12-13 by means of an inclusio, verses 6 and 11." Because Paul does not reverse his concern for the weak brother, he intensifies his warnings to the strong, "who thinks he stands lest he falls" (vs. 11). Cheung suggests that it is the reason Paul refuses to call the Corinthians "strong," because "at the heart of Paul's argument, the ultimate danger is not the weak's weakness but the knowers' 'knowledge'."2

However, because of the pressures the Corinthian Christians received from their relations and associates to attend their non-Christians feasts, the majority of which Willis regards as social meals in the Greco-Roman world,3 Paul's seemingly misplaced promise in 1 Cor 10:13 makes sense. In addition to his note of warning in vs. 12 to the

1Meeks, "And Rose Up to Play," 65.

2Cheung, 145, n. 190.

3Willis, Idol Meat in Corinth, 47-64. The need to attend some of the social engagements increases the pressure for the Corinthians to attend non-Christians' feasts. In fact, Cheung notes that "to refuse to eat idol food presented at such meals would mark one as anti-social and invite misunderstanding and hostility. Not only would one miss opportunities for social advancement, one would also risk being ostracized for refusing to eat idol food with friends, relatives, business associates, or other people of importance. Therefore, one's livelihood, and even life itself, would be in jeopardy" (Cheung, 146; see also Delobel, 186-190).
Corinthians who rationalize their participation by appealing to knowledge, authority, and freedom, Fee remarks that Paul finds it hard “to end his argument here on a negative note, or on a note that suggests they were to stand firm in their own strength. Thus he once more reminds them of God’s gracious provision—even in the time of temptation or testing.”

Because their appeal, for instance, to freedom and rights to participate in the sacrificial fellowship meals led to the destruction of both the weak brothers and themselves, as Paul in rhetoric strategy asked in vss. 29b-30, vss. 14-22 account for the incompatibility of their activities with life in Christ.

Specific Application for the Corinthian Church

Paul’s discussion in 1 Cor 10:14-22 links the preceding argument with a strong inferential conjunction; “therefore.” Even though Conzelmann thinks “the train of thought in this section is self-contained,” “it is hardly possible to discern a strict connection of thought with the preceding section, in spite of διότερον.” The imperatival admonition in vs. 14 ‘to flee idolatry’ (εἰδωλολατρείας, cf. 6:18a, πορνεία) pins down his concerns in two ways. First, the “knowing” Corinthians have argued for the right to eat

---

1Fee, “Εἰδωλολάτρεια Once Again,” 193; see also Gardner, 155, n. 257; Robertson and Plummer also state that “there is no πειρασμός without its proper ἔκφασις, for these pairs are arranged by God, who permits no unfairness. He knows the powers with which He has endowed us, and how much pressure they can withstand. He will not leave us to become the victims of circumstances which He has Himself ordered for us, and impossibilis non jubet” (209).

2Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 170. Yeo agrees that the conjunction does make the link even though he had argued for a separation between 1 Cor 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 and 10:1-22 in that in the former Paul uses a rhetoric of knowledge and love, whereas, in the latter he employs midrashic rhetoric (Yeo, 156-211). See also Weiss, Die erste Korintherbrief, 256; Willis, Idol Meat in Corinth, 165.
pagan cult meals based on their knowledge that idols have no real existence and meat sacrificed to an idol posed no threat. In vss. 15-22, Paul appeals to their knowledge to demonstrate the incompatibility of eating pagan cult meals, at least, from the experience of the people of Israel in the OT. Second, although Paul agrees with the Jewish Christian gnostics that idols are nothing when conceived of as possible rivals to the Christian God (vs. 19), because what is sacrificed and shared are to demons,¹ their pagan temple fellowship meals represent idolatry that is dangerous to the weak brothers and the participants themselves.

In anticipation of the two rhetorical questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30, neither Paul’s allusions to the Christian communal meal in vss. 16 and 17 nor his mention of a non-Christian sacrificial meal in vss. 18-20 is the focal point of concern for Paul. In fact, Paul does not discuss the Israelites’ wilderness experience or specifically relate it to the Corinthian church communal meal or use it “to construct a Christian doctrine of a eucharistic meal.”² To be sure, his emphasis is not on the allusions to these meals, rather, it is the prohibition of idolatry that is closely connected to κοινωνία.³ Fee gives

¹Robertson and Plummer understand Paul to mean “they sacrificed to demons (Shêdim) and to a no-god, to gods whom they knew not” (216).

²Yeo, 174, n. 88.

³However, Fee points out that it is not precisely clear what Paul is trying to emphasize: “The problem has to do with whether Paul’s point—or emphasis—is that in sacred meals one has κοινωνία with the deity (in the Christian’s case, with Christ himself), or with fellow participants in the meal as they worship the deity by sacrifice and by eating in his/her honor. Most likely the solution lies somewhere in between. The linguistic and literary evidence indicates that κοινωνία has to do with the worshipers themselves; but the basis and focus of their worship were the deity, who in most cases was considered to be present among them” (Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 466; J. Y. Campbell, “KOINONIA and Its Cognates in the New Testament,” JBL 51 [1932]: 353). For the debate on this issue, see Willis, Idol Meat in Corinth, 167-212; Gardner,
two reasons for Paul’s prohibition. First, he understands Paul to view the “sacred meal as an actual participation in and fellowship with the deity.”¹ Second, Fee considers Paul’s primary concern as the danger of idolatry—the idolatry of participating in a sacred meal within a pagan temple, from the OT perspectives, as “the locus of the demonic” (vss. 20-21).² In other words, eating idol food in the pagan temple is tantamount to idolatry that is detestable in the OT because such fellowship is but to the demons.

Paul is saying that, because the demonic forces are real, it is wrong to eat and fellowship in the idol temples. Eating in pagan temples is not only a wrong use of γνώσεις and ἐξουσία (1 Cor 8:2, 9), it is a means of ‘testing the Lord’ (vss. 9, 22) that severs one’s allegiance to Christ.³ Because a Christian cannot eat in the pagan temple and still maintain loyalty to Christ, Paul’s warning, as indicated in 1 Cor 10:21-22, is severe: οὐ δύνασθε ποιήσειν κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποιήσειν δαιμονίων, οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων. ἡ παραξενοῦσαι τῶν κυρίων, μὴ ἵσχυσέρει οὐτοῦ ἐσμὲν (cf. Deut 32). Songer holds that Paul’s severe warning is based on his conviction that “participation in cult meals in pagan temples was thus

---

¹ Fee, “Εἰδωλόθυτα Once Again,” 193; Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 756-768.


³ Ibid., 194.
impossible for Christians... because the eating of such food was an act of commitment
to powers hostile to Christ.” Therefore, Paul’s argumentative strategy in chap. 10
culminates with a stern warning and a frightening threat of God’s judgment upon the
“knowing” Corinthians who through their participation in idol meals ran the risk of
idolatry. He wraps up by countering their rationalistic explanation with his own
apocalyptic theology that maintains the reality of evil and its dire consequences over
their denial of it.

So far, in responding to the arguments advanced by the Jewish Christian gnostics
in 1 Cor 8-10, Paul corrects their wrong use of γνώσεως, ἐξουσία, and ἐλευθερία as
reasons for participating in pagan meals. In chap. 10, in particular, he gives his own
arguments against eating idol foods because the issue he confronts is the involvement of
the Corinthians in idolatrous worship centered on pagan temple meals (vs. 20; cf. 8:10).
Paul in vss. 1-13 discusses the relevance of the Israelites’ wilderness experience in
answer to their arguments. In vss. 14-22 he makes the specific application for the church
situation by relating the normal Christian practice with the nature of worship in cultic
meals that was readily understood. This suggests that despite the arguments for a
“sacramental” theory, there is no reason to use the passage to argue for Paul’s doctrine of
the Lord’s Supper. Paul illustrates his response from the negative examples of Israel in
the OT and severely warns the Jewish Christian gnostics or the “strong,” using the

1Sonier, 372; Godet, 518; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 175.

2Hays advises that “when we find ourselves in the face of some dubious invitation or
opportunity saying, ‘No problem, I can handle it; I can be involved in this and still be a good
Christian,’ we should pause and remember Paul’s warnings to the strong at Corinth” (172).
contemporary example from which he can argue his points.

In light of the above, a rhetorical analysis of 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 is examined in chapter 4 in the immediate context of Paul's two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30. This approach is adopted, not because 10:23-11:1 is separate from 8:1-10:22 (as in the UBS text). Rather, as mentioned earlier, the passage is treated as such because the content of 10:29b-30 provides a significant example of the use of the rhetorical feature as utilized in the conventions of the Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks. Attention now turns to the rhetorical impact of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 as a device in argumentation, especially, in connection with the narrower context of 10:23-11:1.
CHAPTER IV

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF 1 COR 10:29B-30 IN THE
NARROWER CONTEXT OF 10:23-11:1

Rhetorical Function of 1 Cor 10:29b-30 in Argumentation

Scholars have argued that Paul’s discussion in 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 is no longer connected with 10:1-22. Smit, for example, suggests that “the theme shifts and the tone of the discourse change strikingly. . . . The warning tone makes way for definite permission. But for a single exception, everything in this field is permitted.”1 Yeo writes “that 1 Cor 8:1-13 and 10:23-11:1 have a different rhetorical genre, topos, and style from those of 1 Cor 10:1-22.” He claims that “Christ retains a central role in Paul’s rhetoric in 1 Cor 8:1-13 and 10:23-11:1,” which is dissimilar to 10:1-22.2 It is as if Paul, as discussed already in chapter 2, in the so-called Epistle B [8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1] or part of C [10:23-11:1] for some, is dealing with adiaphora (non-essentials) in contrast to the so-called Epistle A [10:1-22]. However, the above hypotheses are untenable for two reasons.

1Smit, “1 Cor 8,1-6: A Rhetorical Partitio,” 590. Smit concludes that Paul, in 1 Cor 10:23-11:1, shifts “attention away from the idol offerings proper to an adjacent field” which caused him to transgress “an important rhetorical rule. Although he has good reasons for doing so, he does not go unpunished. His latter interpreters have paid the debt” (Ibid., 591).

2Yeo, 180.
First, the claim that the theme and tone of 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 differ or change from Paul's preceding arguments that begin in 8:1 is difficult to establish from the passage. Neither is there any support for the claim that Paul's rhetorical argument in the so-called Epistles B and C differs from his theology and rhetoric in the so-called Epistle A. Rather, a study of chaps. 8-10 indicates rhetorical unity of the section in 1 Corinthians, and rhetorical analysis demonstrates that "in 10,23-11:1 Paul is gathering together the points he has tried to make beginning in 8,1." Second, because 10:23-11:1 is organically connected with the argument that begins in 8:1, Paul is not tying "loose threads" and dealing with *adiaphora* (non-essentials), as Fee writes. Here, Paul still warns the Corinthians against the wrong use of γνώσις, ἔχονσι, and ἐλευθερος, especially, in light of the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30 that stand in relation to the rhetorical compositional unit of 8:1-11:1. As indicated in chapter 3, the context in which the two rhetorical questions are asked fittingly summarizes Paul's concern for the weak brother because of the strong's wrong use of knowledge, rights, and freedom in the example they set to the weak, particularly in participation of the pagan temple meals.

In 1 Cor 8, Paul not only warns about the Corinthians' misuse of γνώσις (8:7) but also tells them that if the exercise of his right (ἐξουσία) will cause the fall of another

---

1Watson, 312. Mitchell states that "the sub-argument in 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 is an especially significant point in the overall argument of 1 Corinthians. Here Paul redefines τὸ συμφέρον ('the advantageous') from personal to communal advantage, and on that basis he appeals to the Corinthians to seek, not their own individual advantage, but that of the other, and ultimately the many (10:24, 33)" (*Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 142-143).


3One problem Fee notes is that "the rhetoric with which he (Paul) does so is so sudden and apparently non sequitur that it has created a notorious crux for interpreters" (ibid., 486).
brother, he will not exercise it (8:9-13) as noted. His use of examples for imitation as proofs in 9:1-27 and 10:32-11:1 confirms his proposal of self-renunciation suggested in 8:13 and accounts for the two questions asked in 10:29b-30. Thus, the two rhetorical questions asked in the immediate context of 10:23-11:1 not only provide the example of Paul's reasoned argument in dialogue but also make 10:29b-30 the interpretive crux of the pericope.

Since the rhetorical unit in which the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 is deliberative, it is important to understand that both questions constitute one of the proofs Paul used to indicate that he did not reverse his concern for the weak brother. Paul's argumentative device follows the tradition of rhetoric articulated by Aristotle and developed and adapted by Cicero and Quintilian, among others.1 Because the proof section for each of the three species of rhetoric remains the most essential part of the rhetorical structure of a speech, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* aptly states that "the entire hope of victory and the entire method of persuasion rest on proof and refutation, for when we have submitted our arguments and destroyed those of the opposition, we have,  

---

1Paul's two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 seem to follow the use of προκατάληψις (anticipation) of Aristotle and is defined as "the device by which we shall remove ill-feeling that we encounter by anticipating the criticisms of our audience and the arguments of those who are going to speak on the other side. . . . This is how you must employ anticipation about matters that are likely to annoy the audience, by producing reasons that will make them think that you are acting rightly in offering your advice—you must point to the lack of speakers or the magnitude of the dangers, or to considerations of public interest, or to some other plea of that sort which will enable you to dissipate the ill-feeling that you encounter" (Aristotle *Rhet ad Alex* 18.1432b; 2:349-350). Usually, in a deliberative speech, the speaker seeks to persuade or dissuade his audience regarding a future course of action (*Rhet* 1.3.1-3; *Rhet Her* 1.2.2; Cicero *Inv Rhet* 1.5.7; *Top* 23.91; Quintilian *Inst* 2.21.23; 3.3-4; see also Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969], 51-55; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 5-9; John P. Pritchard, *A Literary Approach to the New Testament* [Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972], 10-11).
of course, completely fulfilled the speaker’s function.”  Although Aristotle established two types of “proofs” as variations in support of a thesis (πρόθεσις/propositio), still, each proof contains its own central issue called the στάσις/status that some scholars regard as the “rhetorical situation.”

Keeping in mind the two rhetorical questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30, Paul, in employing the Greco-Roman rhetorical convention, seems to have combined the use of

---

1Rhet ad Her 1.10.18. In Aristotle’s opening statement on rhetoric, he says “this art consists of proofs alone—all else is but accessory” (Aristotle Rhet 1.1.1354a).

2In ancient rhetorical theory, the most important feature of rhetorical proofs is Aristotle’s distinction between the “artificial or artistic proofs” (πρ人事) that is within the rhetor’s persuasive ability of utilizing ethos, pathos, and logos in argumentation; and the “inartificial or inartistic proofs” (πρ人事) that have their sources outside the rhetor. Aristotle and Quintilian list witnesses, documents, oaths, laws, contracts, and evidence brought into the argument by the speaker as the inartistic proofs (Aristotle Rhet 1.2.1355b; Quintilian Inst 5.1.1-3; 5.8.1-14.35). Concerning the two kinds of proofs, Quintilian avers that “the division laid down by Aristotle has met with almost universal approval” (Inst 5.1.1). Several examples of Paul’s use of “artificial proofs” are found in the series of his logical arguments that began in 1 Cor 8:1 in defense of the weak brother. This is especially true in the two questions asked in 10:29b-30. As for “inartificial proofs,” Paul usually refers to traditional materials including the Scripture. For example, in 10:7 he refers to the story of Israel’s rebellion over a golden calf, and the uprising that ensued (LXX Exod 32:1-35). Vs. 8 recalls the account of the death of Israelites in a plague because of their acts of sexual immorality and idolatry with the daughters of Moab (LXX Num 25:9 reports the death of 24,000 but Paul, who intentionally applies the story as “proofs,” incorrectly cites the figure as 23,000).

3Cicero states that if there is “a controversy to be resolved by speech and debate,” the orator is expected first to determine the ‘issue’ or the ‘essential basis’ that constitutes the ground of the disagreement (De Inv 1.8.14; 2.4.14; De Ora 2.24.104-26.113). Quintilian identifies three different forms of status: (1) “conjectural,” when the controversy centers on whether or how something took place, (2) “definitive,” when the controversy between the orator and the audience deals with the meaning of the fact in question; and (3) “qualitative,” when the controversy centers on the moral rectitude because it addresses the question of whether or not an action was performed justly or unjustly, profitably or unprofitably (Inst 3.5.4; 3.6.63-86; 7.4.1-3). Paul’s use of the “qualitative” is replete throughout 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 in view of his argumentative strategy concerning the implications the actions of the strong have on the weak brother in chap. 8 as well as to themselves in chap. 10.

“artistic and inartistic proofs” in argumentation; for example, (1) against the Corinthians’ wrong use of γυνώσις (8:7-13), (2) on the need for Apostles’ ἐξουσία for support (9:3-14), and (3) in reference to the examples of the Israelites’ wilderness experience (10:1-11). Likewise, the narrower context in which Paul asked the two questions in 10:29b-30 serves as an example of Paul’s use of ‘proofs’ in the discussion of 10:23-11:1. Mitchell sees the “proofs” of 10:23-11:1 as that in which

Paul inserts two last concrete examples of how one should go about seeking the advantage of the other and the many in deciding whether or not to consume ἐἰδωλοθυτα (not whether one can practice idolatry, for on that there can be no compromise). The guide is, not coincidentally, another example of Paul’s reconciliatory strategy: he grants the freedom to eat the meat itself (10:25-27), but still argues for the need to compromise one’s own ἐλευθερία when it might offend the other (10:28-29).1

Perhaps, this is one reason Fee suggests that Paul’s use of the ‘proofs’ in 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 has “some loose threads, which must still be tied together. Ἐἰδωλοθυτα are forbidden because it means to participate in the demonic. But marketplace idol food, which apparently Paul has been known to eat and for which he has been judged (κρίνεται, v. 29), is another matter altogether.”2 Hence, the pericope addresses the reality of the situation the Corinthians faced in their daily lives because it consists of Paul’s final appeal to the common advantage of both the “weak” and “strong” Corinthians (whether this is real or imagined). The rhetorical analysis of Paul’s argument in 10:23-11:1 thus indicates that the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-

---

1Mitchell, Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 257; see also Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 479-485; Hays, 171.

2Fee, “Ἐἰδωλοθυτα Once Again,” 194.
30 remain the classic example of Paul’s use of πίστευς to make his points in argumentation.

The rhetoric of 1 Cor 10:29b-30 stands in at least two relationships to its immediate context. First, it belongs to the πίστευς that provides “proofs” for the thesis statement in vs. 24. That is, the two rhetorical questions asked in vss. 29b-30 serve not only as an example of Paul’s use of “artificial” proofs in his passionate concerns for the other person but also amplify the strength of his pathos in the first διηγησίς (vss. 25-27). The way the two questions are introduced patterns a portrayal in diatribe fashion of the objections he anticipates (προκατάληψις) from the Corinthians regarding the restraints on the eating of idol foods. Because Paul does not want to be misunderstood, the two questions are formulated in the first-person singular rather than the second person in vss. 29b-30 to demonstrate an example of his tactical exemplification of himself to the sensitivity of the imaginary interlocutor (cf. 1 Cor 9). For this reason, the conjunction ἵνα in vs. 29b is used by Paul not to ask the question ‘why’ but because his use of ‘proofs’ is to dissuade one from eating pagan temple meals; the conjunction should read ‘for what reason’ in the discussion that begins in 8:1.

Second, Paul’s use of “proofs” in argumentation in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 further points out the Corinthians’ misuse of freedom for eating meals served in pagan temples. This is evident in his appeal to “the need to compromise one’s own ἐλευθερία when it

---

[1] For a list of the use of such devices, see Stowers, 85-118.

might offend the other (10:28-29)." As the second διηγησίς of vss. 28-29a stands, Paul is asking the two questions in vss. 29b-30 in the form of an appeal to awaken the sensitivities of the strong so as not to set examples that are harmful to the weak brother. Hence, all eating and drinking activities must be that which bring glory to God (10:31-11:1).

The deliberative πίστις in 1 Cor 10:29b-30, if rightly understood, accounts for Paul’s concern for the weak brother’s conscience. It suggests that the context in which the two questions are asked functions neither as a reversal of concerns for the weak brother nor as a support to the freedom that the strong claim. Evident throughout 8:1-11:1 is Paul’s use of the two rhetorical questions, which calls for what benefits (συμφέρεω) the community rather than for a personal interest. The logic of the two rhetorical questions asked in argumentation is intended to appeal to the strong to understand his reason for abstention, first, from the vantage point of love as against a wrong use of right/freedom and, second, the advantage (συμφέρουσα/utilitas) such abstention has for the weak brother in the Church.

Therefore, it is important to analyze how Paul structures and accounts for the two rhetorical questions asked in the narrower context of 1 Cor 10:23-11:1. Since Paul’s two rhetorical questions are asked within the immediate context of 10:23-11:1, I propose

---


2Watson, 310-318.
a rhetorical/structural unit of the pericope that connects to the discussion of 8:1-10:22 in the preceding chapter. In addition, I discuss Paul’s deliberative argument following the example in the Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks to account for the contextual function and meaning of the two questions asked in 10:29b-30.

My Proposed Arrangement of 1 Cor 10:23-11:1

1. Introduction (προοίμιον/Exordium) 10:23
   The Corinthians’ ‘Slogan’ and Paul’s Response Stated

2. Thesis (πρόθεσις/Propositio) 10:24
   Unity Seek the Interest of the Other Rather than Self

   Two Practical Examples of Freedom ‘to Eat’ and ‘Not to Eat’ Meats Associated with Idols

   First διήγησις
   Meats Sold in the Markets and Served by a Host May Be Eaten

   Second διήγησις
   Meats Identified as ἱερόθυτα Should Not be Eaten

4. Proof Section (πίστεις/Probatio) 10:29b-33
   Paul’s Three Reasons (Arguments) for a Reservation in Eating

   First πίστεις
   Because Personal Freedom Is Subject to Love for Others

   Second πίστεις
   Because Eating Meats Associated with Idols

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
142

Dishonors God

Third πίστις 10:32-33
Because Eating Meats
Associated with Idols
Destroys Others’ Salvation

5. Conclusion (ἐπίλογος/Peroratio) 11:1
The Challenge to Emulate Paul

The perspective of my proposed rhetorical arrangement of 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 is based on the understanding that the twelve verses were connected organically with the discussion that began in 8:1. However, my division of the passage is an open-ended arrangement, as in the preceding chapter, because any effort that subdivides the ancient document is still subject to modifications and criticisms. Nevertheless, my attempt remains worthwhile in that it paves another way to come to grips with the meaning of Paul’s two questions asked in 10:29b-30. This context is discussed in a typical deliberative rhetoric, and is explained as follows.

Rhetorical Analysis of Paul’s Argument in 1 Cor 10:23-11:1

1. Introduction (προοίμιον/Exordium) 10:23

The way Paul introduces 1 Cor 10:23 into the discussion on εἰδωλόθυτα in 8:1-11:1 is striking for two reasons. First, unlike 8:1, Paul prefaces his explanations by opposing the Corinthian slogan in order to indicate the incompatibility of their position with his. In 10:23 (cf. 6:12), he uses a twofold qualification as an amplificatio to modify the libertine gnostic claims by adding a responsibility clause in the strong adversative: ἀλλ’ οὐ πάντα συμφέρει ... ἀλλ’ οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ (“but not everything is good for..."
but not everything builds up the community” [REB]). This suggests that the
differences in the instances of 8:1 and 10:23 are not coincidental but intentional on
Paul’s part. Paul’s chief concern in his appeal in vs. 23 is embodied in the verb,
oikoșomeo, that explains the corporate building up of the body of Christ, the Church.2
Thus, in 1 Cor 10:23 Paul identifies the central motif to be developed in 10:23-11:1.3
Quintilian, in using the words of Aristotle and Cicero, describes the purpose of
introduction, exordium (προοίμιον), as that which is meant “to prepare our audience in
such a way that they will be disposed to lend a ready ear to the rest of our speech. The
majority of authors agree that this is best effected in three ways, by making the audience

1 Héring states that “the Apostle, who is replying by the two statements which commence
with ‘all’ ou’, makes the point that not all is profitable for the Christian life, and, on the other
hand, this liberty must not lead to enslavement by the flesh. In germ these two assertions contain
a complete Christian ethic, which would be antiliberine without being legalistic” (46). Watson
writes that in 1 Cor 10:23, Paul “employs synonymous parallelism, for both halves of the sentence
say basically the same thing. This parallelism is achieved using the Gorgianic figures of
parisosis, antithesis, and paromoeosis (here homoeoteleuton), as well as other figures” (303; see also
Martin, Antike Rhetorik, 310-311).

2 For instance, the frequent use of the verb oikoșomeo in 1 Cor 14 helps to show the
manner Paul modifies the gnostic libertine claims on spiritual gifts, especially, the speaking in
tongues. Conzelmann writes that “oikoșomeo denotes first and foremost the building up of
the community, not the edification of the individual. This becomes clear from its usage in chapters 12
and 14” (1 Corinthians, 176; see also Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 239). Willis
notes that “the criterion of oikoșome shows then how rightly to interpret οίκοσωμεῖν. It is not what
benefits the one who acts, but those who are affected by his actions, especially the church” (Idol
Meat in Corinth, 227). See also a discussion of this verb in Gardner, 29-31 and 173.

3 Fee and Smit hold that beginning with 10:23 Paul envisages a different situation in the
discussion concerning idol food’ (Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 359-363; idem,
eiðωλόδυτα: Once Again,” 178-187; Smit, “The Function of First Corinthians 10,23-30,” 381-
388). Their position is based on the claim that Paul in 8:1-10:22 discusses sacrificial meals held
in pagan temples, and that in 10:23-11:1 he deals with meals held in private homes. Note also
Fisk, 56-70. However, it needs pointing out that in chap. 8 Paul’s concern is on the weak brother
with mention of temple meals, but his concern in chap. 10 is over temple meals with mention of a
weak brother.
well-disposed, attentive and ready to receive instruction."

Second, the Corinthian maxim of excessive freedom, introduced by Paul in 1 Cor 10:23, and which Conzelmann notes as "the unified background of the situation in Corinth," quickly reminds us that the issue of the believer's freedom to eat sacrificial meals belongs to the larger problem of 1 Corinthians. Paul's deliberative strategy in 10:23 informs at a glance his position that a Christian is not expected to exercise his rights over that which either causes harm or puts the other person to disadvantage (ἀσύμφορα). He is to be mindful of the need of the weak brother as he exercises his 'rights and freedom.' Hence, unqualified freedom in Paul's thinking is no freedom at all because it is neither beneficial nor does it build up the Church. In short, for Paul, an action is not right to a believer simply because it is permissible or legal. Such action also

1Quintilian *Inst* 4.1.5; Aristotle *Rhet* 3.14.1, 7; Cicero *Inv Rhet* 1.15.20. Because the *exordium* is the place to arouse emotion, Cicero further adds that it is to be serious and dignified, not common, tedious, unconnected, out of place, contrary to fundamental principles (Cicero *Inv Rhet* 1.18.25).

2Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 182.

3Willis, for example, paraphrases what Dio Chrysostom said of Diogenes that "it was not permissible (οὐκ ἔξετι) to do that which was mean and unseemly and unprofitable (ἀσύμφορα) but rather that the things which are just and profitable and good (δίκαια καὶ συμφέροντα καὶ ἀγαθά) are both proper and permissible to do (προσήκει καὶ ἔστιν)" (*Idol Meat in Corinth*, 226). Also, Robertson and Plummer describe the principle of the word σύμφορον, as "the keynote" concerning the ethics of 1 Corinthians (xxxviii-xxxix; cf. Lev 19:18; Sir 37:28; Jub 36:4).

needs to be weighed as to whether or not it benefits others, or at least does not do harm in
the building of the community relationships. For the same reason, his critique of the
Corinthian slogan in 8:1 states that love rather than knowledge builds up the community.

2. Thesis (πρόθεσις /propositio) 10:24

In 1 Cor 10:24 Paul paraphrases the golden rule with the following general
parenthesis: μὴ δὲ ζῇ ζήλος ἡμῶν ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ἄλλου (“Let no one seek his or her
own good [advantage], but the advantage of the other person”).1 The golden rule which
stands as the thesis (πρόθεσις /Proposito) not only affirms the principle of
accommodation that is central to the pericope but also consists of the refinements made
in the preceding verse.2 Aristotle regards this aspect of speech arrangement as essential
element because it states a course of action the rhetor wishes the audience to adopt since,
as he believes, it will be to their advantage.3

---

1 Cf. Phil 2:4; Rom 15:2. Johannes Weiss points out that the principle of accommodation
expressed in 1 Cor 10:24 is essentially reminiscent of chapter 8, evidently defined in 13:5, and is
repeated in Phil 2:4 even though in negative terms (Der erste Korintherbrief, 263).

2 Randolph O. Yeager thinks “the connection with the foregoing is this: When a Christian
indulges in something which, though lawful (verse 23) is not constructive, he may be seeking a
short-run advantage for himself (the thrill of the moment) but he is contributing to the downfall of
others, and in the long-run analysis he is also destroying himself. The selfish motive then, as well
as the social motive, should cause us to sort out from all lawful things those things which are and
are not constructive and developmental to our highest good in the light of eternity—which is a very
12:576).

3 Aristotle Rhet 1.3.5; 3.13.2, 4. Cf. Ad Herennium which defines πρόθεσις in the
arrangement of the parts of speech as when “we set forth summarily what we intend to prove”
(2.28.28; 4.43.56). According to Quintilian, a πρόθεσις must be (1) clear and lucid, (2) brief
and succinct, that is, not wordy, and (3) free from omissions and redundance (Quintilian Inst
4.5.26).
It is also striking that the rhetorical command in 1 Cor 10:24 is elliptical; it supposes “let each one seek” in the antithetical clause.\(^1\) Paul had used the definite article \(τι\) as the direct object of \(ζητεῖ\) to mean what is good or beneficial to the other person. Hence, the imperative present, \(ζητεῖ\), in the first clause is also assumed for the second. Robertson and Plummer, however, state that “the prohibition is, of course, relative: seeking one’s own good is not always wrong, but it is less important than seeking the good of others; and when the two conflict it is one’s own good that must give way.”\(^2\) Paul’s admonition in 10:24 (cf. vs. 29a), therefore, remains the criterion for consideration in Christian ethics. In fact, the admonition provides the general principle for all Christian ethical demands, as this applies to the issue of concern for the weak brother’s conscience.


In 1 Cor 10:25-29a Paul provides instruction for two possible situations that involve meat believed to have been dedicated to idols.\(^3\) This instruction calls for the application of his rhetorical appeal in vs. 24. In ancient times, one helpful way of getting the attention of the audience in a discourse was to appeal to the reality of the concrete

---

\(^1\)BDF, 479.1.

\(^2\)Robertson and Plummer, 220. Smit also notes that when the permission to seeking one’s own benefit has side-effects that are detrimental to others, and concludes that “in such cases the obligation to strive for the other’s benefit prevails over the said permission” (“The Function of First Corinthians 10,23-30,” 382).

\(^3\)Tomson, 207-208; Willis, Idol Meat in Corinth, 244. Robertson and Plummer, however, write that there are three classes of situations [instead of two] in regard to meat sacrificed to idols (219; also see Gooch, Dangerous Food, 78-79).
situation in which the audience was found. Paul’s strategy in vss. 25-29a follows the real-life circumstances in the daily life of Roman Corinth because the two situations described as an *inclusio* in 10:23-11:1 narrate the events that support his observations.¹

In the first διήγησις which deals with meat either purchased at the market place or presented at the private dinner of the unbelievers who invites, Paul exhorts the Corinthians in each case: ἐσθίετε μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν (vss. 25 and 27). But, in the second διήγησις which deals with the scrupulosity of the person who draws attention to the meat dedicated to idols, Paul warns: μη ἐσθίετε δι’ ἐκείνου τῶν μημύσσωτα καὶ τὴν συνείδησιν (vs. 28).² In my view, the main issue in the two statements of fact is not so much whether the sacrificial meats are right or wrong to eat. Rather, in line with Paul’s πρόθεσις in vs. 24, as well as his own ethical reservations in every situation, the major concern is for the Christian not to seek his own advantage but that of another brother. Barrett states the this other brother “is the man—for example, the man who disagrees with me about food sacrificed to idols—whose interests I must consider rather than my own.”³

By the two διήγησις in 1 Cor 10:25-29a, Paul presents what benefits and builds

¹On the use of διήγησις, Cicero writes that “the narrative [narratio] will be plausible if it seems to embody characteristics which are accustomed to appear in real life” (Cicero *De Inv* 1.19.29).


³Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 240; see also Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 226.
up the Corinthian church with different responses for each of the two situations described. In the first situation, he states that one can eat idol meat sold in the market place, but in the second situation, one cannot eat the same meat if attention is drawn to its idolatrous origin, which could harm the informer, one of the weak. The problem is whether this form of deliberative argumentation is prescribed in the classical rhetorical handbooks. For instance, Aristotle holds that if the audience is already familiar with the issue at hand, then a deliberative rhetoric is less likely to incorporate a statement of fact as in the forensic and epideitic rhetoric.\(^1\) But, Quintilian disagrees in part with Aristotle’s claim because this part of speech is so important for the rhetor to develop his own *ethos* and to arouse the audience’s *pathos*. For Quintilian, the speeches given on private subjects and those delivered to public assemblies are to be differentiated. Though he agrees with Aristotle that deliberative rhetoric given in private does not require a statement of fact, Quintilian contends that the deliberative speeches addressed to public assemblies demand the *narratio* because “its contents help make a decision about future events.”\(^2\) Quintilian’s suggestion stands out in the case of Paul’s two διηγομαι in 10:25-29a.

**First διηγομαι, 1 Cor 10:25-27**

Paul's deliberative appeal in the first διηγομαι is specifically meant to educate

\(^1\) Aristotle *Rhet* 3.13.2; 3.16.11; *Ad Her* 3.4.7. Because the *narratio* is not always used, Cicero discusses the issues of when to use or not to use it (*De Ora* 2.81.330; *idem, Inv Rhet* 1.19.27). Cf. Quintilian *Inst* 4.2.3; Martin, *Antike Rhetorik*, 75-89.

the “weak” in Corinth, even though he begins with the gnostic slogan in 1 Cor 10:23. This is indicated in the directives he gives in the two parts of 10:25-27 with the permission to eat. The first part reads: πᾶν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον ἐσθίετε μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν, τοῦ κυρίου γὰρ ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλῆρωμα αὐτῆς (vss. 25-26). The phrase, ἐν μακέλλῳ, “at the meat-market [place],” is the Hellenized form of the Latin macellum. J. Schneider describes μακέλλον as “a rectangular court of pillars with a fountain in the middle and over it, supported by the pillars, a dome-shaped roof ... the booths on the sides; before them porticos.”

A meat marketplace was common in Corinth that it may be difficult to distinguish between a sacrificial and non-sacrificial meat-market, especially, where the belief in the gods is well entrenched. As Fee observes, “the reason for addressing this issue is that

---

1Jewett had noted that because “Paul is operating on the principle that ‘what you don’t know won’t hurt you,’” his “plan is for those with a weak conscience to practice the principle πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν by not inquiring the origin of what they eat; but the moment they discover it is sacrificial meat, they are to desist so as not to contaminate or bruise their conscience” (Paul’s Anthropological Terms, 428; see also Yeo, 199. Note also Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 480, n. 18).


3J. Schneider, μακέλλον, TDNT, 4:371. The μακέλλον is a hapax in the NT.

4Dennis Smith attests that most of the meat sold ἐν μακέλλῳ would have originated as food already offered in sacrifice to a pagan cult (“Social Obligation in the Context of Communal Meals: A Study of the Christian Meal in 1 Corinthians in Comparison with Greco-Roman Communal Meals” [Th.D. diss., Harvard University, 1980], 12; see also Murphy-O’Connor, St. Paul’s Corinth, 32-33; Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 782-783). I can also relate to the Corinthian sitz im leben in the sense that it is almost difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between sacrificial and non-sacrificial meat-markets in Nigeria, West Africa, because every meat market is already offered in sacrifice to a god.
what was sold in the *macellum* often contained meat butchered by the priests, much of it having been part of the pagan sacrifices.\footnote{Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 481. Note also Barrett, “Things Sacrificed to Idols,” 145.} Because the idol meat is purchased in the marketplace, Paul does not discourage a Christian from buying it as food. That is, on the strength of his rhetorical *pathos*, he allows the Corinthian Christians to eat idol meat as meat because, as he established in 1 Cor 8, there are no gods behind idols.\footnote{In an attempt to present a Paul who cannot be identified with the permission to eat sacrificial meat, Clement of Alexandria seems to have misread Paul’s instruction in 1 Cor 10:25. He starts to exonerate Paul by interpreting his instruction in light of the Apostolic Decree of Acts 15:19-20, 29 (cf. Lev 17-18). Thus, Clement qualifies the directive by saying that this cannot include food offered to idols because it was forbidden by all the apostles (Clement *Strom* 4:16). However, Brunt suggests that Clement’s remark “may well be that a very important reason for the early church’s misunderstanding of Paul’s approach was the level of principled, ethical thought in Paul’s discussion, where the specific question of idol meat is transcended by the consideration of love’s responsibility. When one considers the degree to which most early Christian discussions of this and other ethical questions focus merely on whether the act itself is right or wrong, it is not hard to grasp why Paul’s level of thinking would be misunderstood” (Brunt, “Rejected, Ignored, or Misunderstood?” 121).}

Ps 24:1 (LXX Ps 23:1): τοῦ κυρίου γὰρ ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλῆρωμα αὐτῆς (1 Cor 10:26), immediately provides Paul with great authority to the enthymeme\footnote{Aristotle *Prior Analytics* 2.27; idem, *Rhet* 1.2.1357a.13-14; 2.22.26; 3.17.1418a.6-1418b.17; Martin, *Antike Rhetorik*, 101-107; Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 59-66; Paul A. Holloway, “The Enthymeme as an Element of Style in Paul,” *JBL* 120 (2001): 329-339, esp. 335-339.} of his quasi-syllogistic reasoning. That is, if God owns the world, including all the food that is in it, then by implication everything in it belongs only to Him, not to any other god(s), and thus is to be eaten.\footnote{See also Ps 50:12 (LXX 49:12); Mark 7:15, 18-23; Acts 10:15; Rom 14:14; 1 Tim 4:4.} This suggests that in Paul’s thinking the meat sold in the

---

\footnote{Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 481. Note also Barrett, “Things Sacrificed to Idols,” 145.}

\footnote{In an attempt to present a Paul who cannot be identified with the permission to eat sacrificial meat, Clement of Alexandria seems to have misread Paul’s instruction in 1 Cor 10:25. He starts to exonerate Paul by interpreting his instruction in light of the Apostolic Decree of Acts 15:19-20, 29 (cf. Lev 17-18). Thus, Clement qualifies the directive by saying that this cannot include food offered to idols because it was forbidden by all the apostles (Clement *Strom* 4:16). However, Brunt suggests that Clement’s remark “may well be that a very important reason for the early church’s misunderstanding of Paul’s approach was the level of principled, ethical thought in Paul’s discussion, where the specific question of idol meat is transcended by the consideration of love’s responsibility. When one considers the degree to which most early Christian discussions of this and other ethical questions focus merely on whether the act itself is right or wrong, it is not hard to grasp why Paul’s level of thinking would be misunderstood” (Brunt, “Rejected, Ignored, or Misunderstood?” 121).}


\footnote{See also Ps 50:12 (LXX 49:12); Mark 7:15, 18-23; Acts 10:15; Rom 14:14; 1 Tim 4:4. Thus, it appears Paul is guided by the principle that because material things are not inherently evil by themselves, they are “to be accepted with gratitude as Lord’s gift. Nothing exists that is not lent or given by the Lord” (Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 786). It needs pointing out that Paul’s use of Ps 24:1 is not to endorse the gnostics’ interpretation of the material world.}
marketplace and believed to have been offered in sacrifice should never be a matter of concern for the conscience because God is Lord of creation. Thus, right from 1 Cor 8:1, what Paul opposes is not meat offered in sacrifice per se, and later bought ἐν μακέλλῳ. Rather, it is the harm such eating ἐν εἰδωλεῖΩ can cause for the other person’s conscience (συνείδησις), who may be eating the meat as in idolatry (cf. 1 Cor 8:7-13, esp. vs. 10; 10:27-28).¹

On the second part of the first διήγησις, Paul adds: εἰ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἀπίστων καὶ θέλετε παρεῖσθαι, πᾶν τὸ παραπτώμενον ὑμῖν ἐσθίετε μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν (1 Cor 10:27). The conditional clause, εἰ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς, again underscores the reality of the situation in which the Christians at Corinth found themselves, and which Paul is addressing. Witherington holds that “in v. 27 Paul deals with a real situation, as εἰ (‘if’) which the indicative verb indicates. When an unbeliever invites Christians to dinner in his home and they decide to go, they are simply to eat what is set before them.”² But, “by contrast in v. 28,” he continues, “we have ean (‘if perhaps’) with a subjunctive verb: ‘But if perhaps anyone may say . . .’ Here Paul is dealing with a hypothetical possibility, one that his audience has not asked about.”³

Rather, he is using the passage to correct their position as he does in 1 Cor 10:29b-30.

¹Otherwise, it may look as if Paul is endorsing the approach of the “strong” in Corinth who already saw the eating of idol food even ἐν εἰδωλεῖω (1 Cor 8:10) as evidence of their claims to γνώσις.

²Witherington, Conflict & Community in Corinth, 227.

³Ibid. See also Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 483, n. 39.
Because the condition stated in the protasis is a reality\(^1\) in 1 Cor 10:27, Paul concludes that if one’s relation or association is with ἀπίστους “unbelievers” (1 Cor 6:6; 7:12, 15; 14:22-24; 2 Cor 4:4; 6:15), the Christian would desire to be there. This is because the family and other socio-economic engagements were so common in the Greco-Roman world\(^2\) that these brought people together to feast because it was considered odd to reject the invitations. Because it is difficult (if not impossible) to live life in a Christian ghetto, Paul addresses a real situation by his instruction in vs. 27. Barrett observes that “in these circumstances, as in the market, it could not be assumed that all the food, or even any of it, would necessarily have been offered to an idol, but the possibility was always present that some of it might have been so offered. Paul’s advice implies therefore that a Christian may eat such food without either doing or suffering harm.”\(^3\) Hence, Paul instructs that the Christian ought not to inquire about the source of the food but should feel free to eat whatever the pagan host serves.

In 1 Cor 10:25-27, Paul regards the situation of the meat marketplace (μακέλλον)

---

\(^{1}\)The condition of reality is also called the “fulfilled.” The other kinds of condition are, namely, the impossible, possible or probable, and remotely possible, often referred to as the second, third, and fourth.

\(^{2}\)Willis notes that “dinning invitations were a common feature of Hellenistic life, held for all major occasions of life: birth, adolescence, political advancement, marriage, death, as well as good entertainment. Taking part in such meals was simply a part of family and community life for the early Christians, abstention from which would virtually require ‘going out of the world,’ something Paul opposes in 1 Cor 5:10” (Willis, *Idol Meal in Corinth*, 236, n. 64). And, in order to differentiate the situation Paul addresses, Conzelmann asks: “What is the relationship of this [case in 1 Cor 10:27] to vv 20f?” His answer is that “apparently Paul is thinking there of direct cultic proceedings, here of social occasions which can acquire a cultic tendency, but do not have to do so” (*1 Corinthians*, 177).

\(^{3}\)Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 241.
and the eating at the home of one of the ἐπιστοι as substantively the same. For instance, the phrase, πᾶν τὸ παρετιθέμενυ ὑμῖν ἐσθίετε (vs. 27b), runs parallel in tense and construct with πᾶν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλοῦμενον ἐσθίετε (vs. 25a). Again, because each of vss. 27 and 28 ends with the phrase, μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν, this probably indicates a similarity of the situation in his appeal to consider the other person.1

So far, what is clear in the first διηγήσαις is that following Paul’s directives the Christian is free to eat meat presumably offered in sacrifice and bought either ἐν μακέλλῳ or served at the dinner table of an “unbelieving” host2 as long as the weak is not harmed. For Smit, “these two examples of food bought by believers in the market-hall or put before them by unbelievers, are wholly intended to demonstrate that apart from participation in sacrificial meals believers are permitted to eat any food, even if this presumably comes from pagan cult.”3 What remains unclear, however, is the repeated phrase, μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν, in 1 Cor 10:25b and 27c. If Paul takes

1In the classical handbooks, a similar reduplication or conduplicatio is a useful rhetorical device in repetition and “for the purpose of Amplification or Appeal to Pity” ([Aristotle] Ad Herennium 4.28.38; Cicero Part Ora 15.54; Lausberg, Handbuch der literarischen Rhetoric, 1:314-315; Martin, Antike Rhetorik, 301-302).

2Notwithstanding the argument of Massingberd Ford that ἀπίστων refers to a Christian equivalent of the Jewish am haaretz (“Hast Thou Tithed Thy Meal?” And Is Thy Child Kosher?” JTS 17[1966], 157). There is no doubt that the ἀπίστως refers to an “unbeliever” or a “non-Christian” friend or relation.

3Smit, “The Function of First Corinthians 10,23-30,” 384, italics mine. F. W. Grosheide even concludes that “should it appear later that they had eaten sacrificial meat, they still would not have committed any sin” (A Commentary on the First Epistle, NICNT 7 [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955], 241). However, Tomson, who, following the position of St. Augustine, concludes that “eating food of unspecified origin [i.e., on doubtful cases] is not blameworthy, but to eat food known to have been consecrated is a capital sin” (185). Both St. Augustine and Tomson, however, miss Paul’s point in 1 Cor 10:25-27.
the problems of συνείδησις seriously, how does his concern for the weak brother’s conscience in 8:10 differ from the scrupulosity that is unnecessary in the circumstances addressed in 10:25 and 27?

The participle ἀνακρίνοντες, “making inquiry into or raising question” in 1 Cor 10:25 and 27, is formed from ἀνάκρισις, “investigation,” as in Greek jurisprudence.¹ This word, however, is rarely used in both the LXX and NT. According to Friedrich Büchsel, its use is “mostly to the judicial interrogation of the accused,” as found in “Lk. 23:14; Ac. 4:9; 12:19; (17:11); 24:8; 28:18; 25:26,” while the Pauline occurrences are only in 1 Cor 2:14, 15; 4:3, 4; 9:3; and 14:24.² Still it is not clear if Paul’s repeated instruction, μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες, is given in this technical, legal sense since a “careful investigation” of food is required of an observant Jew.³ If he does, then Barrett seems right in saying that “Paul is nowhere more un-Jewish than in this μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες. His whole life as a Pharisee had been essentially one of ἀνάκρισις, not least into foods.”⁴

Scholars have wrestled with the way διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν in 1 Cor 10:25 and 27 should be understood as an argument for Paul’s appeal on the meat either bought in the marketplace or served at a dinner table of an unbeliever. Two interpretations are

²Ibid., 943-944.
³Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 176, n. 14. Fee remarks that “it was possible in some cases, indeed it was required of the Jews, to investigate whether the meat in the macellum had been previously sacrificed” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 481).
⁴Barrett, “Things Sacrificed to Idols,” 146. Elsewhere, Barrett goes so far as to say that “Paul had in fact ceased to be a practising Jew” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 240).
possible: (1) the conscience is not affected if one eats idol food, and (2) the conscience is affected if one eats idol food when it has a detrimental impact on someone. The first, suggested by Conzelmann, implies that the meat “offered is a matter of indifference, since the principle of freedom is upheld. The conscience is not involved at all. . . . It should not be imagined that conscience calls for further inquiries.” This interpretation already developed by von Soden is also favored in Barrett’s translation, which makes “no inquiries based on conscientious scruples.” Thus, one may conclude that Paul allows the eating of idol meat because it does not affect the conscience of the one who eats it.

One of the strengths of the first interpretation is that since it is assumed that conscience “is not involved at all, so an investigation is irrelevant . . . because this matter lies outside the concerns of conscience altogether.” Another is that because conscience is a matter of consideration of the other brother, as von Soden argued, Paul “in 10:25 is not thinking of a part of man that may be troubled later, but man’s consciousness of his actions.” The chief weakness of this position, however, lies with the inability to

---

1Conzelmann, *I Corinthians*, 176-177. Conzelmann objects saying that: “If διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν is taken to mean ‘so as to give conscience no cause for complaint,’ then we have precisely the Jewish, legalistically oriented attitude” (ibid., 177, n. 15).


3Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 240.

4Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 482; see also Horsley, “Consciousness and Freedom,” 587.

5von Soden, 14.

6Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth*, 234.
account for the reason why Paul would have raised the issue of conscience in the first place.

The second interpretation assumes that Paul admonishes the “weak” not to make inquiries διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν. For instance, Pierce argues that Paul’s warning is meant to free the “weak” from unnecessary self-inflicted pain as a result of an oversensitive conscience and, therefore, “because of conscience avoid asking questions.”¹ According to Pierce, one suffers pain simply because, were you “to discover that it was idol-meat, after you had eaten it, then you would suffer conscience.”² Robertson and Plummer concur: “‘For the sake of your conscience making no inquiry,’ asking no questions which might trouble conscience. It is not wise to seek difficulties.”³ On the strength of this position, Wendland holds that by the phrase, “because of conscience,” Paul seeks to reject not only the arrogance of the strong that affects the weak brother’s conscience but also the anxiousness of the weak that causes troubles with the strong.⁴ As far as Jewett is concerned, διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν makes sense only when directed to the “weak,” because Paul “places a radical obligation upon the “weak” Christians to overcome their [conscientious] scruples.”⁵

The strength of the second position is that it helps to caution the over-scrupulous

¹Pierce, 75, italics his; see also C. Maurer, Σύνολο, TDNT, 7:915.
²Pierce, 76.
³Robertson and Plummer, 220.
⁴Wendland, 83.
⁵Jewett, Paul’s Anthropological Terms, 428; see also Murphy-O’Connor, “Freedom or the Ghetto,” 568-571.
Corinthians, as stated above. That is, Paul not only objects to the arrogance of the “strong” Corinthians who brag about themselves in their wrong use of γυνῶσις for eating idol meat with impunity, but also that the warning simultaneously points to the anxiousness of the “weak” Corinthians who because of their scrupulosity make other persons suffer self-awareness. However, one of the main drawbacks to this interpretation is that, for example, Pierce’s view makes συνείδησις deal only with past actions. Another weakness is in Jewett’s conclusion in which Paul “places a radical obligation upon the ‘weak’ Christians to overcome their scruples.” Willis also remarks that Jewett’s conclusion “deserves credit for this courageous, if unconvincing, proposal. It is unconvincing because the weak are not being addressed.”

Since neither interpretation satisfactorily accounts for what Paul intends to accomplish by the phrase διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν in 1 Cor 10:25 and 27, then, how does one come to grips with the meaning of the phrase? One suggestion is to consider the question of “conscience” in 8:7-13 and 10:25-29a as the same thing. There is no basis on which to assume that in the former passage Paul deals with the issue of conscience in relation to idolatry but, in the latter, conscience in relation to food would not be involved at all. One needs to guard against the tendency to interpret conscience in both passages as derived from a personal experience because Paul himself never defines or describes its function throughout 8:1-11:1. And, if he never explains μὴ δὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν in the passage, what precisely is the meaning of the restriction in the second

---

1Wendland, 83.

2Willis, Idol Meat in Corinth, 232, n. 44.
Second διήγησις, 1 Cor 10:28-29a

Paul’s deliberative appeal in the second διήγησις is a general admonition that reads as follows: ἐὰν δὲ τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ, Τούτῳ ἱερόθυτον ἔστιν, μὴ ἐσθίете δὲ ἐκεῖνον τὸν μηνύσαντα καὶ τὴν συνείδησιν. συνείδησιν δὲ λέγω οὐχὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἄλλα τὴν τοῦ ἑτέρου (1 Cor 10:28-29a). Because of the sketchy information given in the passage, the appeal is saddled with at least four major problems:

1. Assuming that the subjunctive clause, ἐὰν δὲ τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ, “if, however, someone should say to you,” suggests a hypothetical qualification of a situation, who exactly is the μηνύσας of 1 Cor 10:28? Is this individual the pagan host or another pagan guest or “weak” believer who is either present at the dinner table or knew about the ‘idol origin’ of the meal presented?

2. If Paul already forbids eating at the τραπέζης δαιμονίων so as not to become κοινωνοῦς δαιμονίων (10:14-21), then what other occasion makes the situation in vs. 28 possible? Or, does Paul’s warning here elaborate further on the meat bought in a marketplace (vs. 25) or at a dinner invitation (vs. 27), or at other special occasions not mentioned in the text?

3. Assuming that one takes either the unbelieving host of 10:27 or another fellow believer as the informant (μηνύσας), the question is: What will be the likely motive for drawing attention to the meal as ἱερόθυτον in vs. 28b?

4. Who is the ἑτέρος of vs. 29a (cf. 10:24)?
The suggestion is that because of the word \( \text{ιερόθυτον} \) in 1 Cor 10:28b, the informer (\( \text{μηνύως} \)) must be a non-Christian. Thus, Chrysostom claims that the informer is a pagan or an unbelieving Gentile who seems to be acting in a hostile manner so as to embarrass the invited Christian believer at the meal. Lietzmann argues that \( \text{μηνύως} \) refers to another pagan guest who has used the regular pagan word, \( \text{ιερόθυτον} \), because the elaborate explanation of 10:29a would be unnecessary if Paul were referring to a weak Christian.

Following Bultmann's suggestion that the informer may refer to the heathen host, Fee holds that the instance proposed in 10:28 is an example of "a Pauline creation, not a report of an actual event. Since Paul himself composed it so that the person speaking uses pagan terminology, it seems unlikely that he would thereby have understood the interlocutor to be a believer." The basis of Fee's position is that since

\[ \text{\( \text{ιερόθυτον} \) is the regular heathen word for "what is offered in sacrifice" instead of the derogatory term, \( \text{είδωλοθυτόν} \), which Paul and other Jews/Christians (cf. 1 Cor 8-10; Acts 15:29; Rev 2:14) often take to mean "food that has been sacrificed to idols." However, \( \text{ιερόθυτον} \) is Paul's \textit{hapax} in the NT. Origen calls \( \text{είδωλοθύτα} \) or \( \text{δαμασκινόθυτα} \) what Celsus calls \( \text{ιερόθύτον} \) (Origen \textit{Contra Celsum} 8:21).} \]

\[ ^2 \text{Witherington, "Not So Idle Thoughts about EIDOLOTHUTON," 237-254.} \]

\[ ^3 \text{Chrysostom \textit{1 Cor Hom} 25:2.} \]

\[ ^4 \text{Lietzmann, 1:53. See also von Soden, 250-251; J. J. Lias, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians in Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges} (Cambridge: University Press, 1897), 103; H. Osburn, "\textit{Συνείδης}," \textit{JTS} 32 (1931): 178.} \]

\[ ^3 \text{Bultmann, \textit{The Theology of the New Testament}, 1:219; Christophe Senft, \textit{La Premiere Epitre de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens} (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1990), 138.} \]

\[ ^6 \text{Fee, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, 484. Hurd adds, as before, that the informant of 10:28 is another unreal person, like the weaker brother of chap. 8 introduced hypothetically by Paul (\textit{The Origin of 1 Corinthians}, 125).} \]
the meaning of "conscience," which, as he argues, "is not to be understood as 'a moral arbiter' but as 'moral consciousness,' therefore, "the one (μηνύωςας) who has pointed out the sacrificial origins of this meat to a Christian has done so out of a sense of moral obligation to the Christian, believing that Christians, like Jews, would not eat such food." According to Fee, the believer must take no offense at such an attitude "so as not to offend that person, nor his/her moral expectations of Christians, and precisely because it is not a matter of Christian moral consciousness, one should forbear under these circumstances."2

One suggestion is that the indefinite pronoun, τις, in 1 Cor 10:28, must be a pagan because the word ἵππος is difficult to accept. For instance, Weiss holds that a Christian would understandably use ἵππος in the context of 1 Cor 10:27-28 to express a warning in a friendly manner to his fellow believer whereas a pagan would not speak so to a Christian.3 And, if that is so, how can the statement benefit a pagan host or guest at the dinner table with a Christian guest in the first place? How would the Christian’s eating adversely affect the pagan’s ‘self-awareness’?4 Granted that the search for the informer is a difficult task, the pagan hypothesis is not only hard to accept, but "in the entire section Paul says nothing whatever about the exercise of our Christian liberty

---

1Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 485, emphasis mine.

2Ibid.

3He writes "dies fischer nicht, weil dies τις nicht mit dem in v. 27 identisch fein tann" (Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, 264).

4Robertson and Plummer note "that a heathen would do it out of malice, or amusement, or good-nature ('I dare say, you would rather not eat that'), is possible, but his conscience would hardly come into consideration" (221; see also Willis, Idol Meat at Corinth, 241; Gardner, 177).
Thus, Barrett identifies the informant (τις) of 1 Cor 10:28 as "a second Christian guest, whose weak conscience, though it permitted him to attend the meal, has led him to make inquiries (cf. verses 25, 27) of his host or in the kitchen, and who, using the most courteous word available, now passes on the fruit of his researches to his stronger Christian brother." Barrett's suggestion, similar to that of Robertson and Plummer, is based on the conclusion that "the meal is evidently a private one; if it were a cult banquet there would be no need to inquire, or to pass on self-evident information; nor would a weak Christian be present." Murphy-O'Connor also adds that:

The hypothetical informant was certainly a weak Christian. Whatever the motive that inspired his statement, the Christian must "make a practice of abstaining from eating." Paul does not give a reason, and so we must assume that he intends to evoke the point made in ch. viii, i.e., the danger of creating a situation in which a weak brother would be subjected to pressure to act in a way which would result in his suffering the pangs of conscience. To confront such a person with a situation in which he is likely to make the wrong choice is the antithesis of the charity that Christians owe to one another.

Willis, however, doubts that the μήνυομαι in 1 Cor 10:28 is a protesting "weak" brother because it is difficult to explain why he had accepted the invitation in the first place. Besides, "why is this not spelled out as it was in 8:7, which one might expect if it

---

1Lenski, 421. Again, Fee claims that "in contemporary settings the ‘offended’ are not unbelievers or new Christians, but those who tend to confuse their own regulations with the eternal will of God" (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 491).


3Ibid.; see also Robertson and Plummer, 221.

4Murphy-O’Connor, “Freedom or the Ghetto,” 570.
is precisely the weak brother who is troubled?"\(^1\) Willis thinks that "if the occasion of
eating in 10:27 is other than in a private home, one finds it difficult to believe ‘weak’
Christians would have been present."\(^2\) For this reason Conzelmann argues that vs. 28 is
"a hypothetical case which is subsumed under the case of 10:27."\(^3\) But, what then would
be the motive for the invitation and the attention drawn to the meal as ιερόθυτος in vs.
28b?

Despite the above observations by Willis and Conzelmann, the position of
Barrett, Robertson and Plummer, and Murphy-O’Connor, as indicated earlier, makes the
point regarding the identity of the μηνύσας in 1 Cor 10:28 as the shocked “weak”
Christian. This is because the exegetical problem is best resolved when the μηνύσας is
viewed either as the “weak” or another fellow Christian present even at an unspecified
occasion.\(^4\) Gardner also suggests that “it does seem likely that τις refers to another
Christian [‘weak’ brother] commenting on the food to the ‘strong’ brother present at the
meal.”\(^5\) Therefore, the identity of μηνύσας is most likely the “weak” brother for whom

\(^1\) Willis, *Idol Meat at Corinth*, 242.

\(^2\) Ibid., 243, n. 100.

\(^3\) Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 177.

\(^4\) Schrage, 469-470. Hays writes that “without entering into all the minute exegetical
details, the following explanation seems to make the best sense of this obscure passage. The
informant—either another dinner guest or perhaps a household slave of the host—is a Christian
who is among the ‘weak’ faction of the church” (177). See also Fee, “2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1,”
148, n. 2, in spite of the fact that later in his 1987 commentary on 1 Corinthians, he describes the
identity of the informer as a pagan. The fact that Paul did not give a specific occasion in 1 Cor
10:28 as in vss. 25 and 27, neither makes his report an unreal event (Fee) nor regards the
informant of 10:28 as another unreal person (Hurd).

\(^5\) Gardner, 177, n. 395, emphasis added.
Paul never reversed his concern. The suggestion of the ‘informant’ as the “weak” brother seems plausible because it provides the basis for Paul’s reconciliatory strategy as he warns the “strong” Corinthians on many ranging issues throughout 8:1-11:1. Otherwise, as Willis states, “the search for ‘someone’ (τις) who objects to the eating of ἱερόθυτον becomes fruitless and unnecessary.”

Because the ἰκνύως of 1 Cor 10:28c stands for the “weak” Christian individual, Paul’s appeals to a fellow “strong” Christian guest “not to eat” food offered to an idol makes sense, first, because of this ‘other’ Christian individual’s weak conscience and, second, for the sake of conscience (10:28c-29a). Thus, the reason for self-denial of the meal by the Christian guest is not for the sake of his own conscience. Rather, as Paul clarifies, it is “for the sake of the conscience of others, especially, of the ἰκνύως and the fellow Christians” who may also be present at a dinner table (vs. 29a).

Paul’s use of conduplicatio similar to that of 1 Cor 10:25b and 27c on the warning concerning conscience is worthy of note even though it is stated in the opposite: μη ἐσθίετε διὰ . . . τὴν συνείδησιν (10:28b-29a). Watson, after Quintilian, notes that “this switch is explained by Paul with the use of the figure of speech called interpositio

---

1 Yeo writes that “Paul seems to side with the ‘weak’ by telling the gnostics [‘strong’] not to eat the idol meat for the sake of the conscience” (201). Perhaps, the “weak” brother draws the attention of his fellow believer to the ‘other food’ which he thinks must have been previously offered in sacrifice to a god as it is served at the dinner table. Under this circumstance, Paul seems to enjoin the fellow Christian ‘not to eat,’ because of the scruples of the informant, and for the sake of conscience (1 Cor 10:25-29a; 8:10-11; cf. 9:19-23). See also Lenski, 422; Margaret Thrall, “The Pauline Use of συνείδησις,” NTS 14 (1967): 122; Gooch, Dangerous Food, 88-92.

2 Willis, Idol Meat at Corinth, 243.
or parenthesis, 'the interruption of the continuous flow of our language by the insertion of some remark' (Quintilian Inst 9.3.23). While this may not be seen by others as an interruption, but rather a qualification of Paul’s reasons for the restriction in 10:28a, still, the “use of parenthesis clarifies the ambiguity left by the preceding phrase, which has used conscience without a clear referent and emphasizes the exception that Paul is making.”

The context dictates that Paul is concerned with the Christian whose “painful, self-awareness” or conscience is “weak” because of the past transgressions in dealing with idols (8:10-13; 10:28-29a).

In light of the two διήγησις in 1 Cor 10:25-29a, Paul provides the necessary guidelines on the two different situations Christians may face on the issue of eating food believed to have been offered in sacrifice to an idol. As indicated earlier, his appeal to the strong not to eat this food is not because the idol food per se is harmful for having been offered in sacrifice. Rather, Paul’s concern is that the weak brother must be kept in mind. This person is the μηνύως of vs. 28 who is worried, fearing that his fellow

---


2Ibid.

3Notice that the phrase, διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν, is thrice repeated in 1 Cor 10:25, 27, and 28 without the adjective “weak,” unlike those in 8:7, 10, and 12. Yeo suggests that “this absolute use of ‘conscience’ by the ‘weak’ may imply that the ‘weak’ are attempting to make their conscience a judging principle for the behavior of others, as is evidenced later in verse 29 where the gnostics’ freedom and behavior being conditioned by the ‘weak’s’ conscience is a real possibility” (202). Yeo’s speculation, however, cannot hold in this context.

4David Black writes that “Paul is not concerned whether the conscience of a weak man is going to hurt or bother him, but he does worry that he will be tempted to return to paganism through the faulty example of a more sophisticated Christian” (Paul, Apostle of Weakness, 115, emphasis his).
believer is unaware of what he is about to do. Hence, he offers advice to his brother, perhaps, even whispers, “This has been offered in sacrifice” (vs. 28a). Paul’s counsel is that the informed brother should listen, sympathetically, to his weak brother’s advice. Otherwise, such eating amounts to the wrong use of knowledge, authority/freedom which he persuades the strong not to flaunt. In short, the justification for Paul’s warning on idol food is summarily spelled out: (1) to avoid idolatry, and (2) to avoid harming the weak brother. In addition to the two διήγησις, his series of rhetorical proofs (πίστεις/probatio) in vss. 29b-33 further demonstrates the basis of his warning the Corinthians against pagan sacred meals.

4. Proofs (πίστεις/Probatio) 10:29b-33

Three rhetorical proofs or πίστεις appear in vss. 29b-33, according to the following analysis. The first is the two rhetorical questions that stand out in vss. 29b-30. The second is the maxim of vs. 31 which is paradigmatic for all behavior. In the first two πίστεις, Paul justifies the basis of his directives or instructions in 10:25-27. In the third proof, he repeats his own personal examples by stating the reason he chooses not to exercise his rights for the interest of others (vss. 32-33).

First πίστεις

Because 1 Cor 10:29b-30 is integral to a long discussion on idol food rather than parenthetical or a gloss inserted by a later scribe,¹ Paul’s two rhetorical questions make

¹Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, 265-266.
the point of the proper use of freedom. The two rhetorical questions read: ἵνατι γὰρ ἡ ἔλευθερία μου κρίνεται ὑπὸ ἄλλης συνείδησεως; εἰ ἐγὼ χάριτι μετέχω, τί βλασφημοῦμαι ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εὐχαριστῶ;¹ Paul has asked the two rhetorical questions in anticipation (προκατάληψις/anticipatio, praesumptio) that the freedom-seeking Corinthians may not accept his instruction in vss. 28-29a. Because he anticipates their criticism of the way he curtails his own freedom (cf. 8:13; 9), he poses the two rhetorical questions in vss. 29b-30 in harmony with the rhetorical practice in antiquity. For example, as indicated earlier, Aristotle describes anticipation (προκατάληψις) as a rhetorical device by which the speaker/writer removes in advance possible objections against his arguments.² But, of what use are the two questions asked in vss. 29b-30 in light of their rhetorical proofs?

Watson’s understanding of the role of the rhetorical questions in Greco-Roman texts indicates that the lack of a direct answer to the two rhetorical questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 need not be a problem. His reason is that the questions “are figures of thought because they are not asked to gain information, but to emphasize Paul’s point that Christian freedom must be exercised with the conscience of others in mind.”³

¹Paul uses in 1 Cor 10:29b three catchwords, namely, ἔλευθερος (9:1, 19), κρίνω (10:15, 29), and συνείδησις (8:7-12; 10:25, 27-28) that connect the sentence to the rhetorical unit of 8:1-11:1.

²Aristotle Rhet ad Alex 18.1432b-1433b; 33.1439b. Although anticipation as a figure of speech is best suited to the introduction, it is used also in other parts of a classic rhetorical layout (Cicero Ora 3.53.205; Quintilian Inst 9.2.16-18; 4.1.49; Lausberg, 855; Martin, Antike Rhetorik, 277-279).

³Watson, “1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1,” 315. Quintilian notes that “a question involves a figure, whenever it is employed not to get information, but to emphasize our point” (Quintilian Inst 9.2.7), that is, to aid the “proof” in argumentation.
According to Watson, two types of rhetorical questions use stylistic figures of thought “in argumentation: (1) a question which the rhetor poses either to himself, or to the judge, the audience, and/or the opposition and does not provide with a response, and (2) a question which the rhetor poses to the same and provides with a response.”1 Because Paul’s rhetorical device used in vss. 29b-30 appears to follow the first type of rhetorical question, the two questions asked in the passage are posed in dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor, which does not necessarily require a direct answer.2 The manner in which Paul introduced the two rhetorical questions in argumentation in the text appears helpful in two ways.

First, because the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 do not necessarily require a direct answer, but are a warning to the strong, it is possible for Paul to make “a sudden shift from the second to the first person singular. This shift of person (akin to personification of the strong) gives the rhetorical questions added vigor, imagination, and


2Ibid., and 316-318. Quintilian states that this type of question makes quite a pleasing effect on others (Inst 9.2.14). Because Paul creatively asks the questions as a rhetoric of advantage it is apropos for the text to retain the γὰρ instead of introducing another connective like ἀλλὰ or δὲ. Hence, Fee is correct to note that the force of the interrogative conjunction, ἢνα (τι) γὰρ, naturally translates as “for what reason or purpose” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 486-487). Because of the rhetorical intent of the two questions introduced in 1 Cor 10:29b-30, it is necessary to repeat γὰρ “for,” in translation, to read “for, for what reason.” And, as a coordinative and successive conjunction to ἢνατι, Thiselton correctly remarks that “with γὰρ: the questions answer themselves because ... they sum up the thrust of the three chapters, namely, that while believers are ‘free,’ concern for the well-being of the other has priority over everything else” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 791, italics his). Yeo concludes that the two rhetorical questions in the passage are answered in vss. 31-32 because of the conjunction οὖν and because “Paul’s way of posing the question to himself (ratiocinatio) in this dialogue reflects his concern for the thinking of the audience” (203). Note also that Barrett and others had complained that a direct answer is expected if Paul indeed uses the diatribe style in the text (Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 243; Jewett, Paul’s Anthropological Terms, 429; Willis, Idol Meat at Corinth, 247).
emotional impact." The strategy enables Paul to craft the two questions as if in favor of the strong since that may make them become attentive and well disposed because, already, the knowledgeable were pointing to his actions on behalf of the weak as another evidence that he was not free. Because, for Paul, freedom is to have concern on matters that trouble the conscience of others, such as the weak brother, the two rhetorical questions in the passage are introduced not only in anticipation of the objection of the strong, but also to warn against the wrong use of freedom or rights in the interest of the weak brother.

Second, the manner in which Paul introduced the two questions asked in argumentation in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 indicates further that he neither concedes to the position of the strong nor reverses his concern for the weak brother. Rather, it seems, as

---

1Watson, “1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1,” 318. Even though Magee is not directly discussing the issue of the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30, in principle, his statement holds that “Paul had a tactical reason for using the Corinthians’ viewpoints; he wanted the Corinthians to give him a favorable hearing. If he simply denied their position, they would tend to become entrenched. Instead, Paul tried to show the Corinthians that their own viewpoints properly understood would lead them to follow his recommendations. If Paul used Corinthian beliefs, they would be more likely to understand his argument and respond to it” (133 and 215; see also Smit, “The Function of First Corinthians 10,23-30,” 388).

2Even A. T. Robertson indicates that Paul’s use of the first-person singular in vs. 30 represents his defense for the strong in that it is unfair to be criticized and denounced because of the scruples of another person’s conscience (A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931], 678; Robertson and Plummer, 222-223). Perhaps, it is also one reason why the RSV translators place vs. 28-29a in parentheses, so that vs. 29b-30 directly follow Paul’s advice in vs. 25-27—that Christians are free to eat foods offered in sacrifice to idols. For example, see Weiss, De erste Korintherbriefe, 265-266; von Soden, 252; Zuntz, 17; Orr and Walther, 257; John Calvin, The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, trans. J. W. Fraser (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), 224; Lenski, 424.

3Martin, Slavery as Salvation, 117-124; Horrell, The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence, 199-235; Leedy, 45-46.
Paul asked earlier in 8:10b, that his use of the rhetorical proof in 10:29b-30 allows us to identify the center of his argumentative strategy that aims at a resolution in the discussion that reaches its climax in 10:23-11:1. He poses the two questions in 10:29b-30 because he cannot subscribe to the speculative reasoning of the strong to partake in pagan temple meals. Hence, the self-centered viewpoint of the two questions asked in the form of a dialogue (\textit{ratiocinatio}) is exactly the position he wants the strong to abhor because of the weak brother.\footnote{Soards, 217. Murphy-O'Connor also writes that “the Strong had Paul’s support on the level of objective truth, but it stopped there. He could not accept the cold speculative reasoning which dominated their approach. Stripped to its essentials, his objection was that their strictly rational logic failed to take into account the complexity of real life” (“Freedom or the Ghetto [1 Cor. viii, 1-13; x,23-xii]),” 558. See also Gooch, \textit{Dangerous Food}, 92; Barrett, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, 243; Cheung, 161. Cf. Rom 14:16 “μη βλασφημείσθω οὐν ὑμῶν τι ἁγαθὸν.”} Therefore, Paul’s rhetorical strategy, paralleled in antiquity, is used not only because he wants to correct the wrong claims to freedom by the strong, but because he wants the exercise of the freedom of one person not to become a stumbling block for the salvation of others (cf. vs. 33).

With the above perspective, Paul could not have agreed with the liberty-seeking Corinthians in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 that as long as the meal is received with thanksgiving,\footnote{Most modern translations take the dative in the expression, χάριτι μετέχω in 10:30a, as an instrumental of means rather than of manner to read, “I partake with thanksgiving or thankfulness” (RSV, ANT, NKJV, REB). This reading is to be preferred because of the way in which ἐγὼ εὐχαριστῶ, “for which I give thanks” in vs. 30b explains the phrase, ἐγὼ χάριτι μετέχω, in the protasis (10:30a).} one is free to eat regardless the concern of the other person. For Paul, food served and eaten as a sacred meal of pagans denies the very freedom experienced in the gospel, and

\begin{center}
169
\end{center}
Thus, this forms the basis of his appeal “to eat and drink to the glory of God” as the second proof in vs. 31.

**Second πίστις**

The central issue (στάσις) of the second proof is stated in the maxim, ἐὰν τι ποιεῖτε (1 Cor 10:31a). In this proof Paul reverts to the Corinthians’ slogan of vs. 23: πάντα ἔξεστιν, because “this time the glory of God rather than the edification of the community is supplied as the standard by which to circumscribe this freedom.” As Paul positively put it: ἐὰν οὖν ἐσθίετε ἐὰν πίνετε ἐὰν ποιεῖτε, πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε (vs. 31) is expected to become the *modus operandi* for all Christian ethical decisions. This proof suggests that Paul is not just addressing the issue of eating idol food alone but, with the use of the resumptive conjunction, οὖν, he “gathers up the results of the long discussion, and introduces a comprehensive principle which covers this question and a great many other things.”

The rhetorical proof introduced in 1 Cor 10:31 is technical in many ways. One is

---

1 Fee points out that the verb κρίνεται in the conditional clause of 1 Cor 10:29b is an indicative, not subjunctive because it suggests the reality of the condition (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 487). Also, it makes Paul’s language consistent with the argument of his own prestige (ethos), especially, in 1 Cor 8:13 and 9.

2 Watson, “1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1,” 306. Cheung concludes that “in this way v. 31 summarizes the argument of ch. 10, which is primarily vertical, just as vv. 32-33 summarize the argument of chs. 8 and 9, which is basically horizontal” (162).

3 Robertson and Plummer, 223. The elliptical ἄλλο is conspicuous in Paul’s use of the phrase, ἐὰν τι ποιεῖτε (1 Cor 10:31a), as in the classical Greek construction that translates “whatever else you do” (BDF, 480), and as this reminds one of his appeals in other concerns for the sake of the weak person (cf. 8:11-13).
that the connective particle, εἰςε, is excessively repeated as in *polysyndeton*¹ that translates "whether you eat, whether you drink, whether whatever else you do." Another is the repetition of the last word in successive phrases called *epiphora* or *conversio*, which stand out as each member of the sentence ends with the verb, ποιεῖσθε.² Again, it is amazing how Paul rhymes seven words that end in -τε which forms a *homoioiteleuton* as well as the four words that begin with the letter π- which forms a *homoiookatakton* in the sentence.³ All this goes to show the importance Paul attaches to the plea he makes with the Corinthians: πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖσθε (10:31b).⁴

Even though Paul grants the concession to eat whatever is purchased in the marketplace or presented at the dinner table (1 Cor 10:25-27), still, all eating is to be done within the context of that which "brings or gives glory to God." This coincides precisely with Paul’s sentiments in 1 Cor 6 regarding admonitions to act for the benefit of the weak person. Thus, he defines the believers’ existence only in terms of what glorifies God by their actions, that is, in consideration shown to others (cf. 10:24). In addition to the references in Pauline doxologies, the notion of "glorifying God" is present in each of his letters.⁵ For example, he reminds us in 1 Cor 6:20 that because

---

¹Demetrius Eloc 2.54.63; Quietian Inst 9.3.50-54.

²Rhet ad Her 4.13.19; Cicero De Ora 3.54.206; Quintilian Inst 9.3.30.


⁴Weiss describes it as “dass durch solches Tun für Gott geworben wird” (Der erste Korintherbrief, 266).

⁵For a good summary of the motif of δόξα in Pauline epistles, see George H. Boobyer, “Thanksgiving” and the “Glory of God” in Paul (Leipzig: Robert Noske, 1929). Paul’s use of
believers are redeemed by God, they are urged to glorify God in their bodies. Rom 4:20 notes that Abraham glorified God by not being weak in his faith amidst what appeared impossible to man (Rom 4:20). Paul’s prayer is that the Philippians may “be blameless (ἀπρόκοπος, cf. 1 Cor 10:32) for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness that come through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God εἰς δόξαν καὶ έπαλινον θεοί (Phil 1:10-11).” Again, 1 Cor 10:24 reminds us of the parallel of the passage with Phil 2:4 by expressing concern for the welfare of others (μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἐκατότης οἰκοποιώντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἐτέρων ἐκατότων), for such an attitude brings δόξαν θεού πατρός.¹

Also, in 1 Cor 8-10, Paul is concerned about what does and does not glorify God. For example, even though he agrees with the gnostics that food will not commend one to God in 8:8a (cf. Rom 14:17), in 8:9 he warns against the wrong use of freedom to dine at pagan temple meals because it dishonors instead of giving glory to God. Also, chap. 9 reminds us that to relinquish one’s right, freedom, and the like in the interest of others is not only giving glory to God but is also safeguarding one’s salvation (vss. 24-27). Again, as Paul rehearses the story of ancient Israel, he means to admonish the Corinthian Christians in 10:9a that to give God the glory is not to “put Christ to the test

¹Phil 2:11; Willis, Idol Food at Corinth, 253-254; Gardner, 179-180.
Neither is it to "have fellowship [κοινωνία] with demons" (vs. 20b) nor is it to "provoke the Lord to jealousy [παραζηλέω]." Barrett concludes on the maxim in 10:31 that the "verse put positively what has hitherto been put negatively. I do not act to the glory of God if I give to an idol some of the honour due to God alone; nor if I cause scandal or ill-feeling in the church, or cause a fellow-Christian to fall from his faith."¹ The importance of this is further explained in the last proof of vss. 32-33.

**Third πίστις**

The third deliberative proof for the argument of abstention Paul made in 1 Cor 10:28-29a is in vss. 32-33. Because vs. 32 is both an appositional sentence (even though without a connective particle) and a refinement of the preceding verse, it begins to explain how one is to do all things to the glory of God. That is, vss. 31 and 32 reflect statements in tandem as "an example of the figure of thought called refining or expolitio, 'which consists of dwelling on the same topic and yet seeming to say something ever new' (Ad Her 4.42.54). It is the type of refining in which the words and treatment are varied."² In the third proof Paul recapitulates by saying that a Christian acts to the glory of God by being "without offense (ἀπόρροια) to Jews, Greeks, and the church of God" (v. 32). That is, to give God the glory is to be unoffensive, or "‘not cause someone to [ἐκπειράζω].’"

¹Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 244; Willis, *Idol Meat at Corinth*, 254, n. 147.

stumble’ (NIV), including the Jews, Greeks, and the church of God.”

It is significant that in 1 Cor 10:32a Paul again draws attention to the theme of πρόόκοπος that features in chaps. 8-10. In 8:9 he warns the Corinthians not to let the exercise of their rights become an offense to the weak in conscience. Similar warnings stand out in Rom 14:13, 20, 21 but, especially, in vs. 21: καλὸν τὸ μὴ φαγεῖν κρέα μηδὲ πιεῖν οἶνον μηδὲ ἐν χρυσόν αἶδος σου προσκόπτει (cf. 1 Cor 10:31). As a corollary to his rhetorical proof in 1 Cor 10:32-33, Paul tells the Corinthians that his own conduct was guided by the principle of “giving no offense,” μηδεμίαν ἐν μηδενὶ διδόντες προσκοπήν (2 Cor 6:3). In this way his actions were carried out so as not to cause an offense for others.

Again, in seeking to persuade the Corinthian church to become concerned about the salvation of others, Paul reverts to the use of examples for imitation in the proof from his own prestige (rhetorical ethos) in 1 Cor 10:33. That is, instead of citing the negative examples from the Israelites’ wilderness experience, he presents his own positive example of the proper use of freedom for the good or advantage of others. He does so, as

---

1 Both translations agree with Paul’s personal decision as stated in 1 Cor 8:1. However, he uses ἀπρόόκοπος in 10:32 instead of σκανδαλίζω, as it is rendered in the NIV.

2 The phrase, Ἑλληνοῖν καὶ βαρβάροις, is fairly common in Paul (Rom 1:14, 16; 2:9, 10; 3:9; 10:12; Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 1:22, 24; 12:13), and the idea of the “church of God” [τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ] is usually a part of his opening statements of his letters. Therefore, it seems that the expression, “Jews, Gentiles, and the church of God” in 1 Cor 10:32 would be a tripartite enumeration by which Paul with the connective καὶ emphatically spells out the inclusiveness of all people (Yeo, 203; Lenski, 426-427). However, Robertson and Plummer unduly conclude that “these are three separate bodies; the third does not include the other two. Therefore unconverted Jews and unconverted Greeks are meant” (224; see also Willis, Idol Meat at Corinth, 255, n. 149).

3 1 Cor 8:9, 13; 9:12; 10:32.
in chap. 9, mainly by means of his positive examples (παράδειγμα/exemplum) on the proper use of freedom. His persuasion through a logical argumentation (logos) of using the example of himself\(^1\) as a proof of giving glory to God is indicated in two ways.

First, with the emphatic comparison in 1 Cor 10:33a, Paul says, “just as I please or accommodate all people in all things” (καθὼς κἀγὼ πᾶντα πᾶσιν ἄρεσκω).\(^2\) Fee translates this as “I try to please everybody in every way,” including the three categories of people mentioned in vs. 32 (cf. 9:20-22) and, because of the purpose clause, “in order that they may be saved.”\(^3\) Several verbal similarities stand out between vs. 33 and vss. 23-33 to make Paul’s appeal in 11:1 worthy of imitation. For instance, in order to give God the glory he reminds the Corinthians not to seek individual needs but those of others in the way he himself has not sought his own needs but to “please everybody in every way” (vs. 32).\(^4\)

---

\(^1\)Speaking in support of the prestige argument, Aristotle states that “we feel confidence in a greater degree and more readily in persons of worth in regard to everything in general, but where there is no certainty and there is room for doubt, our confidence is absolute” (Rhet 1.2.4; Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The Realm of Rhetoric, trans. William Kluback [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1982], 504-306).

\(^2\)On 1 Cor 10:33a, D. M. Stanley concludes that “the phrase πᾶντα πᾶσιν ἄρεσκω is the epitome of his whole apostolic career” (“‘Become Imitators of Me:’ The Pauline Conception of Apostolic Tradition,” Bib 40 [1959]: 874). Again, vs. 33a identically begins with two conspicuous pairs of words called homoiokatarkton: καθὼς κἀγὼ πᾶντα πᾶσιν.

\(^3\)Barrett, however, takes the present tense of the verb ἄρεσκω as conative because “Paul could hardly claim that he succeeded in his attempt!” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 489).

\(^4\)But how can Paul here appeal to the Corinthians to try to please men so that they may be saved, and elsewhere with the injunction not to do so (1 Thess 4:2-4; Gal 1:10)? Robertson and Plummer argue that “the rendering ‘please’ for ἄρεσκω is somewhat misleading, for it seems to mean that the Apostle habitually curried favour with every one and tried to be liked by all (1 Corinthians, 224). It is either that by his actions he seeks to please men so as to win people to Christ (cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23) or to warn people as a means of giving glory to God (10:6-11). Hence,
Second, in 1 Cor 10:33b Paul emphatically adds: “not seeking my own advantage but that of many” (μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἐμαυτοῦ σύμφορον ἀλλὰ τὸ τῶν πολλῶν). With the participial clause, he again offers himself as an example of advantage (σύμφορον) for others based on the motif of advantage already mentioned in vs. 23. Conzelmann understands Paul to mean that to seek the advantage of many “is not a case of opportunism, but of devotion and service in terms of his apostleship. The content of what is ‘advantageous’ is defined by the ἐνεργεῖα-clause: salvation.”

Robertson and Plummer hold that “it is a commonplace among philosophers that the man who seeks his own happiness does not find it; it is in seeking the happiness of others that each man finds his own.”

Therefore, in vs. 32b Paul’s deliberative proof “shows what kind of σύμφορον is meant, viz., spiritual profit. The saving of his own soul is not his main object in life; that would be a refined kind of selfishness. He seeks his own salvation through the salvation of others.”

Finally, Paul states in the purpose clause of 1 Cor 10:33c the main goal of what he has discussed so far, namely, “that they may be saved” (ἐνεργεῖα σωθῆσαι). That is, among other things, his restrictive argument in vss. 28-29a is designed not to be unoffensive to all people, not to seek his own advantage but that of many, in order that

Barrett suggests that because in other passages Paul “speaks of pleasing men as an evil thing,” therefore, “there is no contradiction” (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 245).

1 Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 179.

2 Robertson and Plummer, 225.

3 Ibid.; Hays, 179; Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 795-796.

4 1 Cor 9:22b reads: τοῖς πάσιν γέγονα πάντε, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω.
many may be saved. Also, in 9:22 the implicit meaning of \( \sigma\omega\zeta\omega \) underscores the fact that his “ultimate purpose in accommodating himself to others is the preaching of the gospel and consequent conversion of non-believers.”\(^1\) Thus, Paul provides a deliberative proof of himself as an exemplar throughout his arguments in chaps. 8-10. In fact, the offering of himself as an example (\( \pi\varphi\alpha\delta\epsilon\gamma\mu\alpha \)) to the Corinthians remains the most constant proof of his rhetorical arsenal because “what he [Paul] is asking of the Corinthians he is willing to do himself.”\(^2\) Hence, the section ends and leads to the conclusion in 11:1 because what follows thereafter is an entirely new section of the letter by the introductory formula, “\( \epsilon\pi\alpha\nu\nu\omega \ \delta\varepsilon \)” (11:2).

5. Conclusion (\( \epsilon\pi\iota\lambda\varphi\gamma\omicron\sigma\omicron\varphi\omicron\rho\omicron\alpha\omicron\iota\omicron\iota\omicron/\varphi\omicron\rho\omicron\alpha\omicron\iota \) 11:1

According to Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, \( \epsilon\pi\iota\lambda\varphi\gamma\omicron\sigma\omicron\varphi\omicron\rho\omicron\alpha\omicron\iota\omicron\iota\omicron/\varphi\omicron\rho\omicron\alpha\omicron\iota \) is the term used to define the conclusion to the development of an argument.\(^3\) For Aristotle, the epilogue has a four fold purpose: “(1) You must render the audience well-disposed to yourself, and ill-disposed to your opponent; (2) you must magnify and deprecate; (3) you must put the audience into the right state of emotion; and (4) you must refresh their memories.”\(^4\) Cicero, however, advocates a threefold goal of an epilogue: “(1) summing up; (2) \textit{indignatio} (exciting ill-will versus opponents); and (3) \textit{conquestio} (arousing pity

\(^1\) Black, \textit{Paul, Apostle of Weakness}, 118-119.

\(^2\) Willis, \textit{Idol Meat at Corinth}, 256.

\(^3\) Aristotle \textit{Rhet} 3.13.4; Cicero \textit{De Inv} 1.52.98; \textit{Rhet Ad Her} 1.3.4; Quintilian. \textit{Inst} 6.1.1.

\(^4\) Aristotle \textit{Rhet} 3.19.1419b.
and sympathy)."\(^1\) What Quintilian presents is not new but a slightly different labeling: "(1) summing up; (2) amplification; and (3) appeal to pity."\(^2\) The fact is, in the ancient rhetoric, the epitēlogoc seeks to dispose the audience favorably towards oneself and unfavorably towards the opponent, as it amplifies and depreciates, recapitulates and appeals to the emotions of the audience.

Although each classical handbook shows a variety of roles that the epilogue serves in a discourse, still, an effective epilogue should be concise, brief, not wordy but with significant elements of pathos. Hence, Aristotle favors brief conclusions in a discourse offering only a four-word formula of his own, namely: εἴρηκα, ἀκτησάτε, ἔχετε, κρίνατε (I have spoken; you have heard; you have [the facts]; now decide).\(^3\) As a matter of fact, both προοίμιον and epitēlogoc are usually brief as they remain the most appropriate places for the appeal to emotions.\(^4\)

Following Paul’s series of arguments with the Corinthians over the long issue of food offered to idols in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1, the epitēlogoc in the narrower context of 10:23-11:1 is stated in 11:1: μεταί μου γίνεσθε καθώς κάγω Χριστοῦ (“Be imitators of me, as also I am of Christ”). Two reasons seem to support this conclusion. First, Paul’s call to the Corinthians to imitate or follow his own example as he does that of Christ is so

---

\(^1\)Cicero De Inv 1.52.98, [idem], Rhet ad Her 1.3.4.

\(^2\)Quintilian Inst 6.1.1.

\(^3\)Aristotle Rhet 3.19.6.

\(^4\)Ibid., 3.19.1-3; Cicero De Inv 1.53-56; Top 26.98; Quintilian Inst 6.1.1, 6.1.9-55; Lausberg, 431-432; Martin, Antike Rhetorik, 147-166.
important that it cuts across the entire issue discussed in chaps. 8-10. For instance, it is explicit in 11:1 and implicit in 8:13. Likewise, the same conclusion is vigorously demonstrated throughout chap. 9, especially in vss. 19-23. Again, in chap. 10, it is the basis for his use of the examples, illustrations, warnings, and encouragement, along with his other appeals to the Corinthians to restrain their participation in pagan cultic meals. The reason for Paul’s appeal to imitate him is tersely stated in 10:32-33. That is, it is to act in the best interest of others.

Second, the brevity of Paul’s statement in 1 Cor 11:1 is significant in that it is in keeping with the literary style of his time. For example, the six words used are in two equal parts, each with three words (isocolon), three of which already show up in 10:32-33. In short, the verse summarily accentuates Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians, in a single sentence, to follow his own example of self-renunciation of rights and freedom for the sake of other. Therefore, the statement enables him to amplify the preceding argument with added vigor that should both constitute an appeal and a challenge to the Corinthians to do likewise.

The key word that stands out in 1 Cor 11:1 is μιμέωμαι.¹ Paul urges the Corinthians to become imitators of himself² as he is also of Christ, but the exact content of the imitation urged remains an issue among the scholars explaining the passage. The

¹The word means to “imitate, follow another example.” It is a loanword “used in philosophical, ethical, and rhetorical disciplines to mean an organic and lively appropriation of the παράδειγμα” (Yeo, 204, n. 102).

²Cf. 4:16. In 1 Thess 1:6; 2:3; 7, 9; Phil 3:17 Paul explicitly refers to his own conduct as something that commands the believers’ imitation.
issue seems to center on whether Paul’s injunction to imitate him amounts to a power bid as or pointing away from self to Christ.¹ Castelli’s argument is that μιμέομαι in Greco-Roman antiquity is copying or a hierarchical mirroring, “sameness” which “undergirds the entire mimetic relationship” in Paul.² She claims that “the language of imitation, with its concomitant tension between the drive toward sameness and the inherent hierarchy of the mimetic relationship, masks the will to power which one finds in Pauline discourse.”³ But, Castelli’s conclusion is not wholly convincing in that it is based on the notion of a paternal image of hierarchy perceived to dominate the Scriptures, and informs also her reading of 4:16 and other Pauline mimesis.⁴

Willis P. de Boer, however, interprets the mimesis language in Paul in the other direction. According to de Boer, the features of μιμέομαι, as used by Paul, are not to be perceived as a power bid. Rather, they evoke “humility, self-denial, self-giving, self-sacrifice for the sake of Christ and the salvation of others.”⁵ Focusing on the special relationship Paul establishes with the Corinthians, de Boer sees Paul as a “father” to the members of the Corinthian church (cf. 1 Cor 9:1b-2). Hence, “in calling for imitation

¹Another debate is reviewed by Willis as to “whether this imitation is only general, that is, ‘be Christian,’ or has more specific content” (Idol Meat at Corinth, 287-288).

²Castelli, 86.

³Ibid., 86-87.

⁴Ibid., 97-103, cf. 89-117.

⁵Willis P. de Boer, The Imitation of Paul: An Exegetical Study (Kampen: Kock, 1962), 207. Robertson and Plummer also add that it is “unlikely that he is thinking of anything but the subject at hand—sacrificing one’s own rights and pleasures for the good of others” (226).
Paul is nurturing his children in Christ.”¹ Stanley adds that Paul summons the Corinthians to imitate him because “a special relationship exists between himself and those who accepted his kerygma.”²

It is difficult to take Paul’s conclusion in 1 Cor 11:1 as a power bid, especially in light of 8:13 and 10:33. Paul’s appeal to the Corinthians to imitate him and Christ serves as the best conclusion insofar as his preceding admonitions give support. Castelli’s argument of a “sameness” (perhaps due to an over-stressing of the emphatic comparison, καθώς) between the Corinthians and Paul, as that which corresponds to Paul and Christ as “an act of mediation” and “also a presumptuous move on Paul’s part,”³ fails to appreciate the logic of his ἐπίλογος in 11:1.⁴ Therefore, de Boer is right to point out that Paul’s appeal is for the imitation of himself and Christ. That is, Paul considers his special relationship with the Corinthians as their apostle/father not as a “hierarchical power bid” but in terms of humility, self-giving, and selfless-sacrifice for the sake of others. The imitatio Paulis is rooted and grounded in the imitatio Christi.

To summarize, Paul’s use of the deliberative rhetoric in 10:23-11:1, in particular, meets his needs in argumentation and thereby increases the Corinthians’ adherence to his values. Paul begins the pericope with the introduction (προοίμιον) of the Corinthians’

¹de Boer, 214.

²Stanley, “‘Become Imitators of Me,’” 860.

³Castelli, 113.

cliché and his modifications of it in 10:23. Then, he immediately states his thesis
(πρόθεσις) in vs. 24. What follows are two statement of facts (διήγησις) in vss. 25-29a
that address two different situations in which Christians may encounter sacrificial food.
The two specific cases are the circumstantial reality that confronts the Corinthian
Christians to show concern for each other’s advantage as against what promotes
factionalism.

Because the proof (πίστις) is the most essential part of the rhetorical structure of
a speech, Paul advances three proofs in 1 Cor 10:29b-33. Each proof supports the thesis
of vs. 24. The first deliberative proof is the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30
to strengthen the argument that he does not reverse his concern for the weak brother.
The two rhetorical questions are tactically asked to provide the reason for his concern for
the conscience of the weak brother. That is, Paul’s two rhetorical questions asked in the
passage as proof in argumentation are not asked to side with the claims of the Jewish
Christian gnostics or the “strong” but to emphasize his concern for the weak brother
whose conscience is too weak to eat idol food. This becomes evident in what precedes
and follows over the long discussion on idol food in 8:1-11:1.

Therefore, 1 Cor 10:29b-30, in the narrower context of 10:23-11:1, stands as one
of the three proofs (πίστις) Paul used to persuade the strong to consider the weak
brother. The context of the passage reveals an example of his unalloyed concern for the
other person’s advantage as exemplary in his life of selfless giving, modeled after Christ,
and informs his conclusion (ἐπιλογος) on the questions of eating idol food.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to investigate whether or not Paul reversed his concern for the weak brother (or sister) by the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30. The two questions asked in the passage seem to contradict all that had been said beginning with 8:1 in the interest of the weak brother’s conscience. Does Paul mean to say by the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 that there is a limit to how far another person’s conscience can dictate one’s own actions? Is there a point at which we would have to disregard a person with an overly sensitive conscience? Paul made it clear that actions are to be guided by concern for the weak person whose conscience does not allow him to eat food sacrificed to an idol. Unfortunately, he does not address the question about who may have an oversensitive conscience.

Chapter 1 introduces the background to the problem and establishes a justification for the research. It defines the limits of the investigation and the method used to defend my thesis. Chapter 2 points out four broader issues that significantly impact the different explanations scholars offer on the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30. For instance, scholars who defend the partition theories of 1 Corinthians have argued in Issue 2 that Paul’s response to the Corinthians on the questions of eating idol
food in 8:1-11:1 is of two different concerns. It is argued that there is a relationship between 8:1-13 + 10:23-11:1 that is different from his concern in 10:1-22 in the sense that, in the former, Paul allows the eating of idol food whereas, in the latter, he denounced such eating. Although each scholar gives different explanation for the argument, still, the major reason is informed by the two questions asked in 10:29b-30 where Paul seems to reverse his statement that begins in 8:1. Because Paul's coherence, for example in 8:1-11:1, was established and sustained in the process by the two questions asked in 10:29b-30, the apparent divisions are more imagined than real as these scholars do to other parts of the Corinthian correspondence.

Chapter 3 examines the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 in the larger context of chaps. 8-10 in light of Greco-Roman rhetoric because preliminary evidence indicates that Paul was influenced by the theories and practice of classical rhetoric of his time. A rhetorical analysis of 8:1-11:1 is characterized by the unified deliberative argumentation of 1 Corinthians for the following reasons: (1) Because Paul asked the two rhetorical questions in 10:29b-30 to persuade the strong to respect the conscience of the weak brother in the course of future action, (2) Because Paul intends to convince the strong to consider the weak brother in the course of their future action, he provides a set of appeals to the advantage (συμφέρον) that builds the Corinthian community (8:13; 9:20-22; 10:23-24), and (3) Because Paul tries to persuade the Corinthians to follow his own behavioral patterns (παράδειγμα), he uses examples for imitation in the proofs (πίστεις) as reasons to appeal to the strong to consider the weak (10:29b-30).

Thus, the discussion in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 establishes that 1 Corinthians is
deliberative rhetoric against those who chose to assign the passage to the other rhetorical speeches (forensic or epideictic) or ascribe chaps. 8-10 to loosely arranged instructions without adherence to any logical or rhetorical coherence. The passage demonstrates that Paul’s argument throughout the letter exhibits thematic, rhetorical, and compositional unity when viewed as a deliberative rhetoric that appeals to what benefits the interest of the community. Therefore, there is no need to ascribe different letters to the seeming parts of chaps. 8-10, since the so-called contradictions can be resolved by a deliberative rhetoric of Paul’s arguments.

In 1 Cor 8, Paul challenges the Corinthians for allowing γνώσις to function in the way he believes ἀγάπη should function. He develops his point by the link of γνώσις to the subject of εἴδωλοθυτα, since the claim to γνώσις is the underlying reason of the strong to eat ἐν εἴδωλείῳ (8:10). With deliberative rhetorical force, Paul warns the strong regarding their wrong use of γνώσις. As expected, in a deliberative rhetoric, he identifies himself with the strong because what he finds wrong is not the γνώσις per se. Rather, it is the wrong use of knowledge that made the strong become puffed up for eating idol food because they argue βρῶμα δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐ παραστήσει τῷ θεῷ (vs. 8a). Because the strong made the weak to adopt their viewpoint, Paul demonstrates that such building up not only destroys the weak but, by implication; it also causes the participants to sin against Christ (vs. 12; 10:12).

Because 1 Cor 9 is the explanation of Paul’s statement in 8:13, the chapter is organically connected to what precedes and follows for three reasons. First, because Paul’s apostolic status and authority are usually met with opposition, the chapter is
replete with several arguments to counter any objections or criticisms. For instance, Paul discusses the rights of an apostle in the context of a possible objection to the principle of self-renunciation he set forth in chap. 8 (vss. 9-13; cf. 10:29b-30). This suggests that a discussion of the rights of the apostle in chap. 9 is introduced to respond to any possible objection concerning his statement in 8:13. As Thiselton correctly avers, “to construe this chapter [1 Cor 9] as a ‘defense of Paul’s apostleship’ as if this were the central issue in its own right is to miss the point of Paul’s theology, ethics, and rhetoric in these verses.”¹

Second, Paul responds from the arguments of the Corinthians because he finds that they wrongly use “knowledge,” “rights,” and “freedom” to eat food sacrificed to an idol that harm the weak brother. Thus, 1 Cor 9 establishes that although Paul is no less free than the Corinthians but, in contrast to the Corinthians’ expectation, he chooses to renounce his rights as an apostle because “realism dictates that . . . what is required for concord is a redefinition of freedom from an individualistic to a corporative perspective.”² Third, because 8:13 declares his position on the questions over idol foods, in chap. 9, Paul exemplifies the proper use of Christian freedom from his own personal example as imitation for the strong to see the lengths to which he is prepared to go for the sake of the weak brother (8:11; 10:29b-30).

¹Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 666. Because 1 Cor 9 is not meant to account for Paul’s rights as an apostle, the chapter rather represents a rhetorical convention and skillful arrangement of Paul’s argumentation in his appeal to the strong to consider the weak on the question over idol food in 8:1-11:1 (Wuellner, “Greek Rhetoric,” 177-188).

²Mitchell, Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 131.
In 1 Cor 10, Paul presents three arguments against participation in pagan temple feasts. First, on the basis of Scripture, he views the Israelites' wilderness experience as analogous to that of the believing community in Corinth. His argumentative strategy in vss. 1-13 helps to relate the Corinthian Christians' experience to the example of ancient Israel in that “both Israel’s flirtation with pagan cults and their punishment for doing so have exemplary importance for the Corinthians, because they also are tempted to such involvement with pagan deities (10:6-13).” Second, because Paul finds similar allegiance in the pagan meals, in vss. 14-22, he makes specific application for the Corinthian situation arguing that even though idols are “nothing” (10:19; cf. 8:4), still, their “involvement” or “participation” with other gods is incompatible commonalities (κοινωνία) to the Christian commitments. Third, in 10:23-11:1, Paul finally appeals to the Corinthians to evaluate all eating and conduct based on its effects on others, especially the weak in conscience. He made his point in light of the two deliberative rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30, in the narrower context of 10:23-11:1, that I analyzed in chapter 4.

Even the two specific occasions mentioned in 1 Cor 10:25-27, where Paul gives the explicit permission to eat idol food, also remind us that one must not overlook the effect of what one does on the other person, especially, the weak in conscience. He finds two kinds of eating unacceptable. One is the eating that breaks the covenant relationship with God (cf. 10:1-22), and the other is the eating that harms a brother or sister (cf. 8:7-13; 10:28). Thus, he is both positive in his permission to eat all food in two specific

---

3Willis, Idol Meat in Corinth, 271.
occasions and *negative* in his refusal to grant the permission to two kinds of eating. These are refined and confirmed by a deliberative rhetorical analysis of chaps. 8-10 in general, and the example of a detailed deliberative rhetorical interpretation of 10:23-11:1 in particular.

To answer the question: Do Paul's two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 mean a reversal of concern for the weak brother in the discussion of idol food that begins in 8:1? The answer is no. The result of my finding shows that Paul does not ask the two questions in 10:29b-30 to reverse his concern for the weak brother, both in the larger context of chaps. 8-10, and in the narrower context of 10:23-11:1, in light of Greco-Roman rhetoric. He did not reverse himself because the two questions asked in the passage were introduced as in a deliberative rhetorical argument to indicate his reasons for not eating idol food even though he knows he has the right to freely eat. In addition, Paul's two rhetorical questions were asked to disarm the strong who argue in the name of knowledge (chap. 8), right (chap. 9), and freedom (chap. 10) to eat idol food without regard to the conscience of the other person.

Because none of the two questions asked in 1 Cor 10:29b-30 expects an answer as in a deliberative argument, what precedes and follows these questions further indicate that Paul did not reverse his concern for the weak brother of 8:11. As a matter of fact, the two questions asked in the passage are not asked in support of the claims of the strong Corinthians. Rather, they have been asked in argumentation to question their wrong use of knowledge, right, and freedom. So far, the two questions asked in vss. 29b-30 help to account for why Paul is mindful both of the disadvantage (ανυμφέρον) and the
harm that eating idol food have on the conscience of the weak brother, as in chap. 8, and the destruction it brings upon the strong themselves, as in chap. 10.

Therefore, the use of Greco-Roman rhetoric in the interpretation of 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 provides insights, especially, in the understanding of the two rhetorical questions asked in 10:29b-30. Because of the purpose and limitation of my investigation, it was not possible in this study to provide a thorough summary on the current debate of Paul and rhetorical theory. Nevertheless, I have used, in particular, “rhetorical analyses” of Paul’s deliberative rhetoric ably pioneered by scholars such as Betz, Kennedy, Watson, and Mitchell, in the quest to understand one of the most difficult passages in 1 Corinthians. Therefore, research on the application of Pauline rhetoric in New Testament is expected to be carried further in the discussion of other issues inadvertently omitted in this dissertation.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Cone, Orello. *Paul, the Man, the Missionary, and the Teacher.* New York: Macmillan, 1898.


Godet, F. *Commentary on St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Translated by A. Cusin. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1890.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


________. “Food and Spiritual Gifts in 1 Cor 8:8.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41 (1979): 292-298.

________. “Freedom or the Ghetto (1 Cor., viii, 1-13; x, 23-xi,1).” *Revue biblique* 85 (1978): 543-574.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


