

# 1 Corinthians 10:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

## Analysis

**But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils**—This verse provides Paul's theological bombshell. While idols themselves are nothing (v. 19), pagan sacrifices are not offered into a spiritual vacuum—they're offered **to devils** (daimoniois, δαιμονίοις, "demons"). Paul likely alludes to Deuteronomy 32:17 (LXX): "They sacrificed to demons, not to God."

Daimonia in Greek culture could mean divine beings or spirits; in biblical usage, they're fallen angels who oppose God and deceive humanity. Pagan worship, however sincere, serves demons who masquerade as gods. This doesn't validate polytheism—there's still only one true God—but it recognizes that demonic powers exploit human religious instincts, receiving worship intended for deity.

Paul's urgent concern: **I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils** (ou thelō hymas koinōnous tōn daimoniōn ginesthai, οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι). The same word koinōnia used for communion with Christ (v. 16) appears here—to eat at idol tables is to enter fellowship with demons. This isn't mere social impropriety; it's spiritual adultery, aligning with God's enemies. Paul's pastoral heart breaks at the prospect of beloved Christians unwittingly partnering with hell.

## Historical Context

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Ancient temples weren't mere cultural centers—they were sites of spiritual transactions. Sacrifices, prayers, and rituals invoked spiritual powers. While participants believed they honored Zeus or Aphrodite, Paul reveals the reality: demons received the worship. Modern parallels include any religious system denying Christ's exclusive lordship—however culturally sophisticated, it ultimately serves demonic deception. Paul warns Christians to recognize and flee such spiritual danger.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What modern religious or spiritual practices might seem culturally neutral but actually involve fellowship with demons?
2. How can you recognize when cultural engagement crosses into spiritual compromise that aligns you with God's enemies?
3. Why is "fellowship with demons" such a serious concern if demons are defeated foes under Christ's authority?

## Interlinear Text

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ἀλλ'	ὅτι	ἃ	θύει	τά	ἔθνη,	δαιμονίων			
But	I say that	the things which	sacrifice	G3588	the Gentiles	to devils			
G235	G3754	G3739	G2380		G1484	G1140			
θύει	καὶ	οὐ	θεῶ	οὐ	θέλω	δὲ	ὑμᾶς	κοινωνοὺς	τῶν
sacrifice	and	not	to God	not	I would	and	that ye	fellowship	G3588
G2380	G2532	G3756	G2316	G3756	G2309	G1161	G5209	G2844	
δαιμονίων	γίνεσθαι								
to devils	should have								
G1140	G1096								

## Additional Cross-References

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**Revelation 9:20** (Evil): And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

**2 Corinthians 4:4** (References God): In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

**2 Chronicles 11:15** (Evil): And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made.

**Leviticus 17:7** (Sacrifice): And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations.