

## **Questions I get asked: Covid vaccine: The shot felt 'round the world - 20210710**

Hi all,

They say if you do it you have fallen away from the Lord.

They say if you do it you open yourself to demons (and their control).

They say if you do it they can no longer fellowship with you.

They say if you do it you are doctrinally wrong.

They say if you do it you are being foolish, irresponsible, even dangerous.

People on both sides of the issue are convinced they are right.

Many are arrogant in their stance, and refuse to hear information from 'the other side'.

Many think they have higher knowledge than others have.

Many criticize those who don't believe like they do.

And all this took place in the first century.

### **In Paul's day...**

If you were a Greek or Roman and came to the Lord, you had been an idolater. Your life before Christ was to regularly make sacrifice to a god or goddess so that you may be blessed. If there was a pagan holiday, you offered a sacrifice. If you wanted to close a business contract, you offered a sacrifice. If a crop was planted and when harvested you offered a sacrifice, if a baby was born, if someone got married, if someone died, you offered a sacrifice for each life event.

Sacrifices in Greek and Roman cultures could include animals, grain, fruit, or wine, just like in Judaism. Unlike Judaism, after making their offering to the god or goddess, the worshipper often had sex with a temple prostitute (male or female) - the act of sex was to entice the god or goddess to join the contract or the event and bless it.

Out of that culture and practice came many to the Lord. There was great cultural pressure from the (Roman) federal government, local (city) governments, local businesses, to follow the pattern described above. How could a Christian be an upright business person in such a culture?

When you became a Christian back then you stepped out of the local culture and found yourself on the outside of society, on the fringes and causing great confusion for unbelievers. We know the Romans were confused about Christians because they wrote that Christians were atheists because they did not have any idols or shrines in their homes like a 'normal' Roman household would have. They thought Christians were sex crazed, always having these things they called 'love feasts'. And they were cannibals because they ate and drank in type the body and blood of this man Jesus.

Christians were weird to them, disloyal to the government because they didn't agree with the national culture, dangerous, suspect for anything that went wrong in Roman society.

### **Within that culture came the discussion about meat and drink offered to idols**

Christians were on the outside of the pagan culture, so didn't eating meat or drinking wine that had earlier been used in the pagan temple open memories of their past, and maybe open doors for demons to be in their life?

In Judaism after an animal, grain, or wine was offered to the Lord, the priests or Levites took part of it for their needs, and in 4 of the 6 types of tithes, the giver of the tithe was given back their remaining tithe so they could give it to those in need they knew about.

But in the pagan world the excess meat, grain, wine and such was sold to restaurants, meat markets, and shops that surrounded the temple square. As I mentioned a few weeks ago when I dealt with Christians and alcohol, I've been to Corinth and have seen the ruins of the temple and those shops. It would have been very easy for the temple staff to walk the meat, grain, or wine over to the back door of the shops so they could sell it.

The temple based economy of the pagan world was very inter-woven with everything else in each city. It was the culture and expectation that every citizen and slave would participate in these things. Just look at the riot caused by the idol maker Demetrius in Ephesus in Acts 19:24-28 when sales of the idols fell because so many were becoming Christians!

### **Christians rarely suffer from 'opinion deficit disorders'**

And so Christians in Corinth and Rome in particular were divided about the national culture and the pressure to eat meat and drink wine that had earlier been sacrifice to an idol.

To the Corinthians Paul addressed it first on a spiritual level, that a god is nothing for there is one God whose we are and who we serve. And then on a practical level, telling them in 10:25 to eat 'whatever they sell in the shambles (shops) not asking where it came from for conscience sake'. And also that if they are eating alone and want to eat meat that had earlier been sacrificed to an idol, and it doesn't bother you, do so. But if a friend is with you that you know is bothered by it, then don't eat the meat, eat something else.

But in Romans 14 he got personal, calling those believers who believed one day was more holy than others, and those who didn't eat meat or drink wine from the temple, 'weak in the faith'. "One believes he may eat all things, another being weak, eats only vegetables." The key is found in verses 5 & 6:

"One man considers all days the same, another considers one day more holy than the rest. Let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regards a day does so unto the Lord. He that doesn't regard a day as special does so unto the Lord. He that eats all things to the Lord gives thanks, and he that doesn't eat all things, to the Lord he gives thanks."

Before and after those words Paul says not to judge 'another man's (the Lord) servant' for what each does they do so unto the Lord, who accepts both those who regard a day or not, and those who eat/drink or not. So if He accepts us all, then we should too.

To update this to the question of the shot (some prefer not to call it a vaccine), grow up body of Christ! Stop judging each other on this. Stop fighting among yourselves like children packed into the back seat of the family car with one spiritual child saying 'he touched me' and the other spiritual child exclaiming, 'he touched me first', lest our 'Parent' be forced to chastise you both for your childish behavior!

Paul made it clear no one was supposed to be an evangelist for their opinion. It was a personal matter. He said don't judge one another, settle the issue in your own heart unto the Lord, make allowances for those who believe differently than you.

And oh, I don't think anyone was offended that he called some weak in the faith. So no offense allowed. Deal with it. Deal with your emotions and don't let the spirits in the world that look for offense to influence you. Walk in love, for the Lord accepts both those who get the shot and those that don't. Why not follow that example?

New subject next week, until then, blessings,  
John Fenn

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