

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

June 10, 2018

Feeding the Beast

During the 1980's the United States encouraged, armed, trained, and supported Mujahedeen fighters in Afghanistan against Soviet Union troops who occupied the country. We were more than willing to make use of them against our Cold War adversary. Emboldened by their victories in Afghanistan, however, some of these Mujahedeen fighters began to wage jihad worldwide against those they believed to be the enemies of their God. We fed the beast, and on September 11, 2001 the beast attacked us!

Paul's letter to the Galatians is written to warn of the deadly consequences that awaited believers who turned to a religious covenant that was *"after the flesh."* He was speaking of the Mosaic Law. He asked, *"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?"* Galatians 4:21. Paul compared the Law and the New Covenant to Ishmael and Isaac. Galatians 4:22. One was *"born after the flesh"* and the other *"born after the Spirit."* Galatians 4:29. Throughout this epistle, he uses the word *"flesh"* to describe a person's attempt to serve God by the Law of Moses. On the other hand, he referred to those who walked in the *"grace of Christ"* Galatians 1:6 as those who *"walk in the Spirit."* Galatians 5:16.

Carnal religion is exemplified by the Law of Moses in that its source of strength is *"flesh."* Its strength is based on your ability to do what it

says. Paul tells us, *“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.”*

Romans 10:5. Keep the commandments! Be circumcised! Bring the animal sacrifices! Keep the feast days! If you would do these things the Law allowed you to keep your life in this world, but it could never give you the life of God. Paul said *“if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.”* Galatians 3:21.

The strength of carnal religion is also its weakness. The Bible says the Law was *“weak through the flesh.”* Romans 8:3. Because it depends on your strength to keep it, when your strength fails, your carnal religion fails. The only way to make carnal religion “strong” is to strengthen *“flesh.”* But beware the strength of flesh!!!

As the Galatians rushed to embrace the Law, the apostle Paul asked them, *“Are ye so foolish? having **begun in the Spirit**, are ye now made perfect **by the flesh**?”* Galatians 3:3. These had been *“delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.”* Colossians 1:13. *“**The flesh with the affections and lusts**”* had been *“crucified”* Galatians 5:24 by *“the cross of Christ”* Galatians 6:14 when they were *“born again”* in this New Covenant of Spirit. In the *“Spirit”* was where they began, and if they would simply *“walk in the Spirit”* they would *“not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.”* Galatians 5:16. In fact it is not possible for the one who walks in the *“Spirit”* to do what a person does who walks in the *“flesh”* because every desire of their heart is different and contrary to the *“flesh.”* Galatians 5:17. None of this is based upon

the strength or ability of flesh. It is all the amazing grace of God.

The "*flesh*" is like a serpent with a head on both ends. One head can be very religious. It revels in its commandment keeping abilities. The more religious things it does the more spiritual it feels. Just as Saul of Tarsus trusted in fleshly things such as his lineage, circumcision, zeal, the rituals and commandments of the Law, and his religious affiliation Philippians 3:3-7, even so people today trust in confessions, baptisms, denomination, hair length, holy days, fleshly tongues, religious principles, and much more. This head of the serpent looks so wonderful to many, but it is still part of the serpent because it is just religious flesh. Remember, Jesus said "...*the flesh profits nothing.*" John 6:63. The only thing a child of God has to trust in is "*Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*" 1 Corinthians 2:2

Paul's great warning to the Galatians can be summed up in these words: "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For **he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption**; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*" Galatians 6:7-8. They were embracing a covenant of flesh, but Paul knew they would reap from the other head of that serpent. He describes the second head of the serpent in these terms: "*Now **the works of the flesh** are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that*

they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:19-21. In describing the "*works of the flesh*," Paul is showing the Galatians where the path they have chosen will take them. If they embrace fleshly religion (for them the Law of Moses) they will reap the harvest of the "*works of the flesh*" in their hearts and lives. Paul brings the same warning in the book of Romans, saying "*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die...*" Romans 8:13. There are two foremost reasons sincere "Christian" people war with "*the works of the flesh*" in their heart. One is that many have never been born of God's Spirit. The other is they have been led to walk in fleshly religion and are simply reaping its harvest.