

The Case Against the Flesh

Examining the achievements and the honor given men and woman since the beginning of time, we can't help but wonder how it is that problems and difficulties are always present. As we look around the world today, we find astounding progress and at the same time huge problems with no solutions. There is always the hope that men will find a cure for all the ills that plague mankind, but will they? Is there a case to be made that the utopia that men desire will evade them? There is one authority that many believe in and it is the Holy Bible.

Before getting into the word of God, I think it would be worthwhile to note a reasonable consideration. A manufacturer who produces a product is no different than our great God. When one purchases a car or a washing machine etc; there is always an instruction manual that is included in the product. Is our Heavenly Father any different? Is the Bible our instruction manual that reveals that there is a purpose to life and a reason for the creation of men and women? Does any man have more authority to facts with reasonable conclusions? .

There is a statement made in Genesis that needs to be considered concerning man and his wisdom.

Genesis 6: 3, And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he is also flesh". Verse 6, "it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth and it grieved Him in His heart".

Father has feelings and emotion just as we do. Most would just cruise over these scriptures and never stop to consider what is being said. Why would God have a change of heart for making man on the earth? The seemingly insignificant statements that are revealed in the early chapters of the Bible are the foundation on which we can build a better understanding throughout God's word.

We read in Genesis 1:27 that God created man male and female to have dominion over every living thing on the earth (verse 28). In Genesis 2:7, we read that God not only created the man but He wanted to form the man by breathing into him the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul. Adam in Genesis the second chapter was created for a different function than those in the first chapter. He was to be a tiller of the ground, preparing

the ground for the planting of seed. He placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, and instructed him not to eat of the tree of good and evil or he would die. Because of Adams disobedience, he was put out of the Garden of Eden and all humanity was put under the curse of death. All men and women are made from the ground, therefore we are all like *little earths*. Adam's job as a tiller of the ground was to soften the ground, a type and shadow of the others who were created in chapter one, to make them receptive to the planting of a seed. Jesus uses this parable in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. The parable of the sower of the seed. The Apostle Paul tells of the results of Adam's failure.

1st Corinthians 15:21, "For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22, For as in Adam all die, even so, in Christ will all be made alive.

Jesus Christ, the 2nd Adam, was going to do the job that the 1st Adam didn't do. So why did it repent the Lord that He had made man on the face of the earth?

Genesis 6:3, And the Lord said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh.

God uses the word also in verse three. Because Adam did not take of the tree of life he would be no different than those men (male and female) as created in Genesis 1:27. He was given the opportunity to take of the tree of life so he would be an example of God's presence in him as an example to others. But Adam failed. God tells us of why His spirit shall not dwell with man.

Genesis 6:12, And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his flesh upon the earth.

The tree of life represented Jesus Christ and with the help of God's spirit would have molded a different character in him. But now because of Adams disobedience, the Tree of Life was closed to him and God would work out His purpose by another way. That other way is the reason why Jesus Christ is called the 2nd Adam. He would set the example for the rest of us and teach us how to overcome the deeds of the flesh, something the 1st Adam didn't do.

This same subject, concerning the flesh, is described in many ways in

the word of God.

Corinthians 15:50, “ Now I say this that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God”.

All mankind is composed of flesh and blood so what is the Apostle Paul telling us here. God is working out His purpose little by little and over a long period of time. And in the meantime gives us types and shadows throughout His word. Some of these types are called ordinances that lead us to the aim of His law. One ordinance is the ordinance of circumcision.

Exodus 4:24, And it came to pass by the way in the inn that the Lord met him (Moses) and sought to kill him. 25, then zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at his feet, “ surely, a bloody husband are thou to me”.

Circumcision which was once a command, pictures the removal of the flesh, but now, circumcision is of the heart.

Romans 2:29, “ but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God.

It's important to know the differences between laws, ordinances, statutes and commands. An ordinance is only in effect until the real thing comes along as in Moses case. We can see what happens to the flesh when it is compared to grass.

Isaiah 40,6, And the voice said, “Cry”, And he said, “what shall I cry”? All flesh is grass and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: 7, The grass withered, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

Grass is pictured here as flesh. God is telling us what will happen to flesh or rather the deeds of the flesh as He eliminates that part of man which is not compatible to His purpose. Men put this practice to work in many ways. A refinery is a place for purifying such raw materials as oil, metal, sugar etc. They then skim off the sludge representing the part of the product that would not be useful. As God's potential children, we need refinement.

The case against the flesh continues in the New Testament. Consider

what the Apostle Paul tells us

Romans 8:13, “For if you live after the flesh, you shall die, but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body (flesh) ye shall live”.

When Jesus Christ was in the garden of Gethsemane with His disciples He said to them.

Mark 14:38 “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak”.

And in the Gospel of John, we read,

John 17:2, “As thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him”.

But what of Jesus statement to His disciples in the book of Luke after His resurrection?

Luke 19:39, “ Behold my hands and My feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

This is the change that the Apostle Paul tells us about.

1 Corinthians 15:51, “ Behold I show you a mystery,; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. 52, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

2nd Corinthians 3:18, But we all, with an open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.

The word Change is the Greek word number 3339 in Strong’s concordance: metamorphosis, to change as transfiguration. We see an example of this change in nature with a caterpillar changing into a butterfly. Jesus flesh was different after the resurrection. His new flesh enabled Him to appear in a room with closed doors, or transport Himself at will.

Rev 19:13, And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood and his name is called the word of God”.

These verses are talking about Jesus Christ. He is symbolically the Tree of Life that the first Adam should have taken of. His word, the Bible, our instruction manual, teaches us how to defeat the deeds of the flesh and how to have success in our families as well as our community.

Conclusion

The case against the flesh is made throughout the word of God. Starting from Genesis to the writings of Paul, a span of 4 thousand years. The writings and examples in the old Testament as well as the new, point out the deeds of the flesh which we wouldn't want to follow. Many of the Apostles and Prophets were saying the same thing, that the deeds of the flesh get men and women in trouble. Some would tell you that the Bible was only the writings of men. Peter answers them better than I ever could.

2nd Peter 1:20, "Knowing this first, that no prophesy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation". Verse 21, "for the prophesy came not in old time by the will of man: but Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit".