

FLESH

I. New Testament usage of the word "flesh"

- A. Greek word, *sarx*, is translated "flesh"
- B. The word is used approximately 150 times in the New Testament
- C. Varying meanings
 - 1. Physicality, creaturliness - I Cor. 15:39
 - 2. Physical, human body - Matt. 26:41; Jn. 1:14; II Cor. 12:7; Gal.2:20
Metaphorical - Jn. 6:51-53
 - 3. Humanity, mankind - Lk. 3:6; Acts 2:17; Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16
 - 4. Physical heritage, descendancy - Jn. 3:6; Rom. 4:1; 9:3,8; Gal. 3:7
 - 5. Temptability - Rom. 8:3
 - a. sensory
 - b. desires
 - 6. Marital union - Matt. 19:5; Eph. 5:29,30; Col. 2:1
 - 7. Behavioral, contrary to character of God - Gal. 5:16,17
 - a. satanically developed and energized
 - b. sinful and selfish - Rom. 7:18,25; Gal. 5:19-21
 - c. patterns of - Rom. 7:18,25; Eph. 2:3
 - d. propensity to, proclivity, inclination - Rom. 13:14
 - e. enslaved state of - Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:24

(It is this latter behavioral category that will be the subject of this study.)

II. "Flesh" and one's spiritual condition

- A. "Flesh" is no equivalent to spiritual depravity.
- B. "Flesh" does not refer to spiritual condition.
- C. "Flesh" is not inherent, intrinsic, or innate within man.
- D. "Flesh" is not nascent. We are not born with the "flesh."
- E. "Flesh" is not a generative source of evil within the individual.
- F. "Flesh" is not to be equated with satan.
- G. "Flesh" does not negate the completeness of spiritual regeneration.
- H. "Flesh" is not substantive or partitive; "hunk of evil; dirty old man."

III. "Flesh" and desires.

- A. God-given desires of man, amoral.
- B. Greek words
 - 1. *epithumioi* - "to urge upon"
 - 2. *epipotheo* - "to yearn upon"
- C. "Flesh" related to desires.
 - 1. Rom. 13:14
 - 2. Gal. 5:24
 - 3. Eph. 2:3
 - 4. I Pet. 2:11
- D. Desires become warped, twisted.
- E. Personalized patterns of indulgent desires.
- F. Tempted under those desires - James 1:13
- G. Compulsive, obsessive ruts of behavior - cf. addiction.
Besetting sins - Heb. 12:1,2

IV. "Flesh" and the Christian.

- A. Spiritual regeneration is complete - Col. 2:10
- B. Behavioral "flesh" patterns remain in the soul - Gal. 5:16,17
 - 1. Not eradicated at conversion (perfectionism)
 - 2. Not eradicated in Christian life (progressive perfectionism)
 - 3. Remain throughout earthly life - Gal. 5:17
- C. "Flesh" does not become better, good or reformed.
- D. "Flesh" is not to be identified or equated with such terms as
 - 1. human nature
 - 2. old nature
 - 3. self-nature
 - 4. sin-nature
 - 5. Adam-nature
 - 6. old man
 - 7. old self
 - 8. depravity
 - 9. law of sin
 - 10. sin-principle
 - 11. inherent sin
- E. "Flesh" expressions can be overcome
 - 1. Not by
 - a. self-effort
 - b. suppressionism
 - c. "dying to self", masochism
 - 2. Only by the activity of the Spirit of Christ
 - a. Gal. 5:16
 - b. I John 4:4
 - c. II Pet. 1:3

V. Illustrations or analogies of the "flesh"

- A. Ruts, cow-paths
- B. Stains, taint
- C. Grooves on record
- D. Cholesterol in behavioral arteries
- E. Psychological A.I.D.S.
- F. Scars on landscape of soul
- G. Bunkers and trenches
- H. Magnetic field