**Carnal Man**

(Excerpted from Pathway to Spiritual Maturity by Charles Strong of *BibleOne*)

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. . . *but as to carnal*, *even as to babes in Christ*. (**1 Corinthians 3:1b**)

The Greek word translated “carnal” is sarkinos *sar’-kee-nos*.This is a form of the word *sarx*,which means “flesh.” Sarkinos(fleshly) is the opposite of pneumatikos *new-mat-ik-os’* (spiritual). The carnal Christian is “fleshly” as opposed to “spiritual.” He is one who allows himself to be controlled by his soul rather than by the indwelling Holy Spirit. He, as the soulical man (the unsaved man), follows his personal emotions, feelings, and desires.

He, however, unlike the soulical man, has been born from above and is capable of grasping spiritual truth. But, unlike the spiritual man, this truth is not being received. Thus, the carnal Christian, without an impartation of spiritual truth flowing into his saved human spirit, remains immature and fleshly, following the fleshly impulses of the soul.

(The use of “flesh” or “fleshly” in the preceding respect would be a direct allusion back to that which occurred in Eden at the time of the fall. Man, following his fall, possessed a body that was no longer enswathed in a covering of Glory, with the exposed flesh openly demonstrating this fact. This is what is meant by Christ coming “*in the likeness of sinful flesh*” [**Romans 8:3**]. Christ came to earth in a body not enswathed in the Glory of God.

This was *the crux of the ignominy* (disgrace) *and shame surrounding the events of Calvary.* Not only was Christ’s body of flesh [apart from the covering of Glory] arrayed in a mock regal manner [with a robe and a crown of thorns], but He hung on the cross without even His Own garments to cover His body, for all to behold that which had been wrought by sin 4,000 years earlier — *nakedness*, *and death* [**Matthew 27:27-36**].

There is nothing wrong with “flesh” *per se*. Man was created in a body of flesh, Christ presently has a body of flesh, and both God’s Son and man will live in bodies of flesh forever.

But, though there is nothing wrong with a body of “flesh,” *there is something wrong with a body of flesh that is not enswathed* (wrapped) *in the Glory of God.*)

Within the scope of that which God reveals about the impartation of spiritual truth *to redeemed man alone* lies the great lesson concerning unredeemed man’s relationship to the Word of God. It is utterly futile for unredeemed man to either himself attempt to understand the Word of God or for redeemed man to attempt to teach him the Word of God. Scripture is “*spiritually discerned*,” and *a man must be born from above — be made alive spiritually*, which places him in a position where he can exercise spiritual discernment — before he can understand the things of the Spirit of God. The soulical (unredeemed) man, completely alienated from God — spiritually dead and in no position to exercise spiritual discernment — cannot understand spiritual things, and they appear to him as no more than “*foolishness*” (**1 Corinthians 2:14**).

Herein also lies the reason why the things of the Spirit have been hidden from the “*wise and prudent*,” but revealed to “*babes*” (cf.**Matthew 11:25**). Certain Christian intelligentsia of the present dispensation, even though saved and in a position to understand the Word of God, too often seek spiritual discernment in the light of worldly wisdom rather than through comparing “*scripture with scripture*” and looking to the indwelling Spirit *to lead them* “*into all truth*” (**John 16:13**; **1 Corinthians 2:9-13**).

And, although those Christians who seek spiritual discernment in this manner may often be looked upon as great spiritual leaders, theologians, expositors, etc., they, in the final analysis, cannot understand these things. Such individuals can only be sadly lacking in the very realm where they are held in high esteem.

While at the same time, “*babes*” (Greek: nepios *nay'-pee-os*, *--* those who are still on the milk of the Word and have not grown enough to even partake of solid food), through the leadership of the Spirit of God — as they compare “*scripture with scripture*” and look to the Spirit *to lead them* “*into all truth*” — can invariably be brought into an understanding of these things.

They, through turning to the Word and looking to the Spirit for discernment and leadership, can understand more about these same spiritual truths than the “*wise and prudent*” who turn to places other than the Word and either ignore or reject the Spirit’s discernment and leadership.