

The Beast - Its Roots

by Stella Paterson

There is much awareness today of turmoil on a worldwide scale. No facet of life is untouched by the fast-paced decline that is taking place. Even in secular media we hear descriptive words used, which at one time were almost exclusive to the religious arena. Everyone seems to be speaking of impending doom; sometimes with reference to "the antichrist" or the "mark of the beast" or "apocalypse."

In all that is transpiring, there seems to be no simple solution. But in reality there is. Not only is the solution simple, but the root of the problem itself can be simply stated; maybe not in few words, but in understandable terms. Although the word "simple" is used, it does not necessarily mean "easy." Just as there is simplicity as to the root, (which has at the same time produced much complexity), so also is the simplicity of the solution, yet it is a road less traveled.

What is this root? What is the solution? And who is the "beast?" Come along with me, as we discover some important truths regarding manifestations of the "root." We will learn what God has to say about the "beast." Then there is a very sobering message about the solution and the "road less traveled."

The root

Of course, the root of which we speak is *flesh*. It had its origin in the Garden of Eden, when the serpent deceived man into partaking of the knowledge of good and evil; at which time, mankind came into a new realm of complete self-awareness. Not only was he "like God," as the Scripture tells us, but he discovered he had the capacity to function independent of his Creator. He and every person born after him had the innate tendency to go against God's perfect will for man. And this has been witnessed throughout Scripture in the accounts of man's rebellion against God.

As he had been warned, Adam lost the spiritual Life from God - - he "died." Not only that, a lot of excess baggage came with the knowledge man found so appealing. In 1749 a man by the name of William Law, speaking of man (Adam), said,

He lusted to have the sensibility of that good and evil, which the beasts of this world have. . . No sooner was this sensibility opened in him, but he found it to be a subjection and slavery to all outward nature, to heat and cold, to pains and sickness, horror of mind, disturbed passions, misery, and fears of death.

*-The Soul Rising Out of the Vanity of Time, Into the Riches of Eternity
a.k.a. The Spirit of Prayer*

William Law's reference to *beasts* leads us to examine some Bible references to beasts. First, let's look at one of several Hebrew words translated "beast." The word *chay* is primarily defined as "alive; hence *raw* (flesh)." It is the word used when the Bible speaks of the "beasts of the field," which always meant danger. The same word is used in Leviticus, regarding the Law concerning things unclean, which this *beast* was. Here is the passage: "*And whatsoever goes upon its paws, among all beasts that go on all four, they are unclean unto you: whoso touches their carcase shall be unclean until the even. And he that bears the carcase of them shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: they are unclean unto you.* (Leviticus 11:27-28)"

Uncleanness was a major issue throughout the Law. A Holy God gave to Israel the Law by which to live. In it, He revealed His holiness and man's inability to be holy through the strength of flesh. The degeneracy of man was exposed by a God who is Love, and Who had a plan to regenerate man and restore Life to him.

Rebellious flesh

Now let's take a look at what [Jude](#) had to say about the rebellious, fleshly "ministers." He said, "*But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as **brute beasts**, in those things they corrupt themselves.*" (Jude 10) Another translation calls them "creatures without reason."

We find there a connection between fallen man, beasts and flesh. The Greek word for "flesh" is *sarx*, and is defined primarily as "*flesh (as stripped of the skin).*" The definition also includes "*human nature (with its frailties {physically or morally} and passions).*" The connection can be seen here, in the Greek word "sarx," and in the Hebrew meaning for "beast," which is "alive; hence *raw* (flesh)," as we showed earlier.

It would seem that exposed flesh was looked upon with great disfavor by the Lord. This becomes evident as we examine an affliction in the flesh that reveals even more of God's view as to the evil which came upon man in the Garden of Eden. We are speaking of . . .

Leprosy

To begin with, the definition of the Hebrew word *tsara* is: "to *scourge*, that is, (intransitively and figuratively) to *be stricken with leprosy.*" From that word come the translated words "leper, leprous and leprosy."

To *scourge* is to "inflict severe punishment, suffering or vengeance," according to Webster's dictionary. The Hebrew and Greek definitions of the words translated "scourge" have one meaning, which is "whip" or "flog." With "scourge" being the defined word used as "leprous, etc.," it becomes separate from the other.

We must not linger on, dealing with semantics, but get to the point which leads us to the Source of the *scourging*.

We find the first reference to "leprous" in Exodus 4:6, when the LORD God made Moses' hand "leprous as snow," then healed it, as a sign to the children of Israel that they were to believe that "*the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared unto [Moses].*" (Verse 5)

Moses' sister Miriam was a prophetess, and his brother, Aaron, was a priest. One day, these two siblings of Moses' spoke against him because he had married an Ethiopian woman. In Numbers 12:2, they asked, "*Has the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? Has he not spoken also by us?*" When the LORD heard this, He, like any father might, told the three of them to come out because He wanted to talk to them. The LORD came down in "*the pillar of a cloud*" and addressed Aaron and Miriam, telling them how He would normally speak with a prophet in a vision or dream. But in faithful Moses' case, He would speak directly to him. This was to show how favored the meek Moses was in His eyes. God was greatly angered at Miriam and Aaron's boldness to speak against their brother, His chosen servant. After He departed in the cloud, Miriam discovered she was leprous. The LORD had stricken her with the scourge of leprosy for her presumptuous speaking against Moses. To make a long story short, after Aaron pleaded on his sister's behalf, Moses prayed and asked the Lord to heal Miriam. He did; so after seven days, she was allowed back in the camp and the children of Israel continued on their journey. (Numbers 12)

Miriam got off a lot easier than did King Uzziah. He thought nothing of brazenly going into the temple to offer incense; a duty belonging solely to the priests. As the story goes, he became very angry when the priests dealt with him over his arrogant disobedience, and God struck him with leprosy. Unlike Miriam, God did not heal Uzziah; he died a leper. (2 Chronicles 26)

There was more said about leprosy in Leviticus where the Law detailed what Israel was required to do in that regard. Always, the reference to *leprosy* showed its "uncleanness" when the *raw flesh* was exposed. But when the spot was covered with white, it was considered *clean*. This passage makes it clear:

And the priest shall look on the raw flesh, and pronounce him unclean: the raw flesh is unclean: it is leprosy. Or if the raw flesh turn again, and be changed unto white, then he shall come unto the priest, and the priest shall look on him: and, behold, if the plague be turned into white, then the priest shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: he is clean. (Leviticus 13:15-17)

Leprosy is a serious affliction in the flesh, and as we just read, a person was considered unclean when the raw flesh was exposed. Are we beginning to see the correlation between these things we have discussed so far? First of all,

leprosy comes at the hand of God. We won't go into detail with the account of Naaman the leper, but could this one sentence be a clue as to the presence of leprosy today? "*And the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your seed forever.*" (2 Kings 5:27a)

The symbolism in the uncleanness of raw (exposed) flesh sheds much light on the uncleanness of self (flesh) in the eyes of God. With so much said throughout the Bible about flesh, we know it is no small matter. Even though man had continued to rebel against God, He "so loved the world" that He took upon Himself the form of man and allowed Himself to be cruelly hung upon a tree. He bore the stripes that should have been laid upon the beast in man. His body was broken and His flesh so viciously beaten that it was exposed, and God turned away, causing Jesus to cry out "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46) No sacrificial animal had ever suffered such cruelty. Yet, because He loved us, He died the death flesh deserved. Then He rose from the dead, triumphant over death and the grave, to give Life to all who come to put their trust in Him.

Living Life

It is far too easy to become caught up in everything the world has to offer. Oh, we may not see them as "worldly," but if they take the place in our life that would be better devoted to the One who gave His all, what does it count for eternity? Especially in these times, there are countless things to entrap us in issues, be they political, financial, patriotism, protecting "our stuff," or even "spiritual" things. The enemy of our soul would love for us to focus on trying to fix problems through some of the avenues available. But our trust must not be in politicians, bank accounts, insurance companies, preachers or any other fleshly entity. These are the things of the world. Only Almighty God is worthy of our trust.

There is only one way to live in the power of Christ's Life. That way comes solely through death to self. Those words may flow so easily from our lips, but do we really understand what they mean? Or are we hell-bent on living according to the lust of the flesh? Now, I'm not talking about the common assumption as to the meaning of "lust." I'm talking about following our own instincts that come with the knowledge of good and evil. It is even possible to follow Biblical guidelines, using our inherited knowledge to live "righteously." We may even believe we are exercising "discernment" as we make judgments, when, in reality, we are merely wallowing in flesh and self.

The only way to Life is through death, as we said earlier. And it is not something we can do. It can be accomplished only by the Risen Savior who sent His Spirit to be our Life. We are in darkness until the Light of Life comes in. When He comes in, the darkness is gone. But if we choose to hold on to the *darkness* of flesh and the knowledge of good and evil, we prevent the regenerating Power

from doing His work. "*God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,*" we are told in 1 John 1:5. Verses 6 and 7 tell us,

If we claim that we have fellowship with Him, and we are walking in the darkness, we are lying, and are not practicing the truth. But if we are walking in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (EMTV)

The phrase "*we have fellowship with one another*" is there for a reason. Consider this: Because the Lord's presence is so wonderful, it would be tempting to simply stay in His presence night and day, to the exclusion of all others. If that was God's desire, He would have taken us to be with Him the moment He became our Life. Instead, He keeps us on this earth as a vessel through whom He can work. We may even become caught up in "perfecting" our holiness because we have come to detest the sinfulness of all that is of the flesh. But our Lord desires more for us. Oswald Chambers said, "*When a man says he must develop a holy life alone with God, he is of no more use to his fellow men: he puts himself on a pedestal, away from the common run of men. . . . If we are abandoned to Jesus, we have no ends of our own to serve.*" As Chambers also said, "*When we are abandoned to God, He works through us all the time.*" His presence goes with us because He lives in us!

The beast

The ever-present, exposed flesh of self-sufficient and rebellious man thrives on the life of this world and all that appeals to his senses. William Law put it this way: "*The life of this world is the life of the beast, the scarlet whore, the old serpent and the fiery dragon.*"

The *ultimate manifestation* of fleshly, self-centered man is preparing to make his presence felt. William Law gave a description we would do well to very seriously consider. This is what he said:

Much learned pains has been often taken to prove Rome, or Constantinople, to be the seat of the beast, the anti-Christ, the scarlet whore, etc. But, alas! they are not at such a distance from us, they are the properties of fallen human nature, and are all of them alive in our own selves, till we are dead or dying to all the spirit and tempers of this world. They are everywhere, in every soul, where the heavenly nature, and Spirit of the holy Jesus is not. But when the human soul turns from itself, and turns to God, dies to itself, and lives to God in the Spirit, tempers, and inclinations of the holy Jesus, loving, pitying, suffering, and praying for all its enemies, and overcoming all evil with good, as this Christ of God did; then, but not till then, are these monsters separate from it. For covetousness and sensuality of all kinds, are the very devouring beast;

religion governed by a worldly, trading spirit, and gratifying the partial interest of flesh and blood, is nothing else but the scarlet whore; guile, and craft, and cunning, are the very essence of the old serpent; self-interest and self-exaltation are the whole nature of anti-Christ. Pride, persecution, wrath, hatred and envy, are the very essence of the fiery dragon.

It is difficult to fully describe the inherent evil of our flesh and our use of the knowledge of good and evil. It was evil enough for man to be evicted from the Garden of Eden, lest he partake of the Tree of Life and live forever in his fallen state. And it was evil enough that God came in man's likeness to suffer unthinkable torture, as He willingly submitted to crucifixion on our behalf. Yet man finds it so easy to live after the flesh. That is why real Life in Christ is found on . . .

The road less traveled

It seems that a lot of people who name the Name of Christ, believing they are His, are on a broad path. As Jesus said, "*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and **few there be that find it.***" (Matthew 7:13-14)

A Sister sent me an email which describes pretty much the modern-day, *broad* way. I'll share it here, and maybe the cry of her heart will come through as witness to what we've done with the Lord's body.

I was thinking, that God redeems people. . . not things. We are so into accommodating our flesh that we end up "christianizing" the things that we don't want to let go of from our life in the world.

I've heard people call christian rock'n'roll *redeemed* music. I've heard Christmas being called a *redeemed* holiday. But I don't believe God redeems such things. Certain things belong to the world and were fathered by the enemy. Yet you can find any given church filled with worldly and even pagan things that have supposedly been *made clean* so that we christians can still enjoy them. Something about this reeks!

We have christian rap, christian heavy metal, christian country music, christian romance novels, christian coffee shops, christian arcades, christian motorcycle gangs, christian holidays, christian martial arts, christian tattoos, christian soap operas, christian amusement parks, christian music videos, christian sports, christian modeling, christian yoga, now I've read we'll even have christian reality tv shows. These are just what I could think of off the top of my head, I'm sure there are plenty more of these oxymorons that can be found in the church today. It's so bad that some, though not as far spread, say there's such a thing as christian

witchcraft! There is a christian version of just about everything for the church nowadays. Is all this to serve Christ, or to keep our flesh entertained and interested?

The truth is we have been called out of darkness. We are called to come out and be separate, not to be imitators of the world! How is it that we bring the worldliness with us and believe God will clean it up as He cleans us??!! We're told to leave it all behind, to forsake it all, to love it no more! But we love it too much to leave it behind, so we polish it up or change the words and call it christian. We call it *redeemed*.

The bible says God redeems people, not the things of this world. The only wicked, worldly thing God will redeem is you and me!

Jesus said, "*Without me you can do nothing.*" Do we really believe He would be in all those things Gina listed above? The passage where Jesus' words are found is in John 15:4-5. "*Abide in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit on its own, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing.*" If we are His body, that means His Spirit is in us. He is our Life, constantly at work to transform us into His image.

We, Christ's body, are to worship the Father in Spirit and truth. When we are *branches* of Him, His Life flows like the sap of a tree, nourishing us with that which can only come from Him. Rather than ask Him to heal us, why not worship and praise the Healer who dwells in us? Rather than ask for provision, why not worship and praise Jehovah Jireh (Provider) who dwells in us? Rather than ask for guidance, why not worship and praise the Shepherd who dwells in us? Healing will be ours, provision will be ours, and He will guide us moment by moment.

The Apostle Peter used these words that bring greater understanding to the truth about our having the *divine nature*.

As His divine power has **granted to us all things pertaining to life and godliness**, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, through which have been given to us precious and exceedingly great promises, so that through these we may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2 Peter 1:3-4 EMTV

How often do we ask the Lord for "things?" We want something we think we *need*, so, out of our knowledge of good and evil and the lust of our flesh, we expect Him to give us what we want. He already knows what we need, as Jesus said, in Matthew 6, where He speaks of the lilies of the field and the grass which

He clothes. Jesus asks why we would be concerned over what to eat, or what to drink, or what to wear. Then He points out that the "Gentiles" (or the worldly) ask for such things, but "*your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*" (Matthew 6:32-33 EMTV) To seek the *kingdom of God* is to seek His reign in us.

We need to get these truths deep into our spirits if we are going to survive in the days ahead. How can we trust God to supply our physical needs if we are not completely connected to the Life-giving Vine? The spiritual relationship must come first, if we are going to be able to hear His voice when He speaks to us to lead us during tough times.

Andrew Murray said in *The Deeper Christian Life*,

"The Divine life within us comes from God, and is entirely dependent upon Him. As I need every moment afresh the air to breathe, as the sun every moment afresh sends down its light, so it is only in direct living communication with God that my soul can be strong. The manna of one day was corrupt when the next day came. I must every day have fresh grace from heaven, and I obtain it only in direct waiting upon God Himself. Begin each day by tarrying before God, and letting Him touch you. Take time to meet God."

He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6b) The Apostle Paul asked the Galatians, "*Are you so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?*" Please read Andrew Murray's message, "*Having Begun in the Spirit*" at this link: http://ekklesia4him.net/having_begun_in_the_spirit.html

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