

# Carnal or Spiritual?

Joe Slater

God has always wanted the allegiance of people's hearts, not mere rote obedience. Some have erroneously said that under the Old Testament, one's heart did not have to be devoted to God as long as he outwardly kept the commandments. However, the Old Testament itself said that loyalty of heart was indispensable: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Still, the Old Testament dealt much more with material and carnal things, while the New Testament has a greater emphasis on spiritual matters. For example, under the Old Testament, God's people often engaged in carnal warfare to advance the Lord's cause. But under the New Testament, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Corinthians 10:4). Rather, our sword is a spiritual one, the word of God. The rest of our armor is also spiritual (see Ephesians 6:13-17). We strive not to physically kill others, but to put to death the old man of sin (Colossians 3:3-10) so that a new man in Christ may come forth.

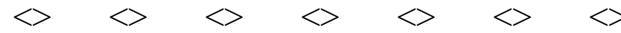
An earthly, political kingdom characterized much of the Old Testament era. Beginning with King Saul, dozens of kings reigned over God's chosen people. Jesus is our King today, but He Himself said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). His throne is in Heaven, not on the earth. And His kingdom knows no geographical boundaries, for He reigns within the hearts of His subjects.

Worship in the Old Testament centered around the temple in Jerusalem. Today, God's spiritual temple is built not of literal stones, but of people, "living stones" (1 Peter 2:4). Similarly, in contrast to the various sacrifices of the Old Testament, we "offer up spiritual sacrifices" (1

Peter 2:4) such as "the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

The singing of God's praises was accompanied in the Old Testament by numerous instruments: trumpet, harp, lute, timbrel, flute, cymbal, etc. (Psalm 150:3-5). Under the New Covenant, however, we pluck not the carnal harp strings, but the spiritual heart strings (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). To return to playing musical instruments in worship today would be no more fitting than going back to sacrificing animals.

Let us be thankful for the emphasis that the New Testament places on spiritual matters. And let us worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24)



## Phrases with Biblical Origins

A drop in the bucket (Isaiah 40:15).

A thorn in the side (2 Corinthians 12:7)

Forbidden fruit (Genesis 2:17)

Eat, drink, and be merry (Luke 12:19)

The powers that be (Romans 13:1)

The hand writing on the wall (Daniel 5)

Holier than thou (Isaiah 65:5)

Woe is me! (Isaiah 6:5)

Like a lamb to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:7)

Don't cast your pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6)

Fire and brimstone (Genesis 19:24; Revelation 21:8)

Can a leopard change its spots? (Jeremiah 13:23)

The skin of my teeth (Job 19:20)

A land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8)

Feet of clay (Daniel 2:33-34)

Fly in the ointment (Ecclesiastes 10:1)

Salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13)

By the sweat of your face (Genesis 3:19)

Better to give than to receive (Acts 20:35)

Nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9)

# Repurposing

What do you do with those old clothes that you no longer want? Most of us discard them via giving them to someone, taking them to a resale facility, or discarding them in a trash bin. Fortunately, not much goes into a trash bin; approximately 2.5 billion pounds of clothing ends up in a resale shop each year. (Most resale shops now sell "vintage wear" rather than second hand clothing).

Tires have made their way to the reusable market as well. More than 290 million tires are discarded annually. One company turns those discarded tires into covers for playgrounds and athletic fields.

The name for all this? Creative repurposing. It is turning trash to cash. Did someone say "garage sale"?

As is so often the case, we can realize that this has been going on for years. God has been doing this through His son Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul is a perfect example of being repurposed.

Paul grew up believing himself to be right with God. He certainly had the right pedigree, education and affluence. But Paul considered all the advantages he had to be nothing more than rubbish compared to knowing Jesus Christ (Philippians 3).

A good education is a very important commodity. It will take you places that you would be able to go if you did not have one. Money is an asset that is essential to our existence. It is hard to exist without some kind of monetary asset. A good husband/wife makes this world so much easier. But if one of these items (or any other) is placed first in your life, and God is second, your goose is cooked.

Fortunately God is in the business of repurposing. All the things you may have tried are nothing but old tires, clothes and yard sale items that God needs to repurpose. God changes them into faith in Jesus Christ.

--Dennis Russell (Santa Maria, CA)