

## The root of bitterness

Hebrews 12:15 watching diligently, lest any lacking the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing on high trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

What is the "root of bitterness" which is mentioned here in Hebrews 12:. Most often it has been the "laity" who has been warned against becoming bitter against the "clergy" and the "government of God". Indeed, many "lay" people have become bitter against the "clergy", and that is a fact.

But what is the root of bitterness that's mentioned in the Bible? What do those words refer to?

We saw that this is some "root" which is springing up and can cause many to be defiled. What is to be done to avoid this? The Greek word translated root means to watch. Like an elder) is a watchman of the assembly, against the wolves and other troublemakers, just in the same way we are all to watch, for any wanting to "spring on high", for such through whom many could be defiled - and all watchers (we all) have to warn others, otherwise there is no meaning to the word watching.

What are we to watch for? The only lead we have here is that this "root of bitterness" is someone "lacking the grace of God" as Hebrews 12:15 in the Greek says. What could that grace be, do you think? The Greek is *charis*. Jesus was full of "the grace of God" (Luke 2:40, *charis*). Timothy had received the Holy Spirit at his baptism, called "gift", *charis*. Paul wrote to Philemon: "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit"; I think that means God's Spirit with Philemon's human spirit. Whether the "grace of God" in Hebrews 12:15 refers to the Holy Spirit (Paul talks there about some lacking that grace) or whether Paul (here assumed to be the author of Hebrews) just means that some might not be in some other way right with God is not the point here really. In either case you can understand there is something badly wrong with such a person, here called a "root of bitterness" who (I do mean who and not "which") could trouble and defile many.

That word for "trouble" refers to demon influence, and is used in Luke 6:18 and Acts 5:16, translated as "vexed". So it seems obvious that these who lack in the "grace of God" (seemingly referring to the Spirit of God) and who "trouble" are a

threat which can defile many in the spiritual way (not taking over but defiling). The word "defile" in Hebrew 12:15 is *miaino*, which is used about ceremonial defiling, like as concerning the House of God or concerning religious meetings, as in John 18:28, or sometimes in connection with demon presence, as in Jude 8 - that also referring to the (Spiritual) House of God being defiled.

Now, there is a type person who seemingly can be used as an example of this kind of trouble and defilement: Simon the Sorcerer (Simon Magus) who is said to be the "root" (founder) of the Roman Catholic Church. Peter referred to him:

Acts 8:20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. (unrighteousness.)

Simon the Sorcerer was not angered here - no, he seems to have been awed - this is obviously referring to some other kind of bitterness.

I think Simon is our example of the kind of "root of bitterness" Paul warned about in Hebrews 12:15. Peter used the word; that can mean bitterness or a bitter root; we learn from Isaiah 5:20 that bitterness in the Bible symbolizes lies, darkness and deception and evil.

it is obvious that "bitterness" in Acts 8 and Hebrews 12 does not refer to anger of such bitterness but to a "root of bitterness" which refers to deception and causing people to depart from the truth and the true God, .

Simon Magus is the man from whose name the term simony comes from - that word means connecting spiritual duties and money. Peter said about him: "thy money perish with thee", did he not? So this was something serious, and if it is as some say that Simon was the one who started the false and illegitimate Roman Church then we see the kind of trouble he caused - and the type of trouble Paul

warned about. However, the Catholic Church is not the only fulfillment of that warning, rather, this is a clear and major problem in our times and circles.

Let us look yet more closely at this famous "root of bitterness" in Hebrews:

Hebrew 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

Esau is a key figure here to explain this passage. Do we know that he was a "fornicator"? No indication of that in the Old Testament so that it would be connected with what Paul was saying here; Paul must be referring to something else. And we see that the Greek word is pornos, and that means a male prostitute, literally a man selling himself. (Pornos comes *from pernemi*, to sell; a female harlot is porne and a male prostitute is pornos.)

Israel when coming out of Egypt turned away from the leader God had appointed.

What was that if not turning away, (rejecting the Leader) the Lord had appointed that Deuteronomy 29:18 talks about, referring to that attitude as "a root that bears gall and wormwood". They were rejecting God as their leader and replacing Him by a human "leader" they themselves would appoint! Going back to Egypt was at time the same as going back to false religion and government, and today it is symbolic for the same; all too often not just symbolic but even very literal. None of those people who wanted to go back to Egypt got into the Promised Land, All died in the wilderness.

So the root of bitterness is not a thing but a person that leads people astray.