

Galatians 5:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

Analysis

Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Paul continues the vice list. Second category: religious sins. "Idolatry" (eidōlolatria, εἰδωλολατρία)—worship of false gods, idols. "Witchcraft" (pharmakeia, φαρμακεία)—sorcery, magic, drug-related occult practices. Pharmakeia involved potions, spells, occult manipulation. Third category: relational sins. "Hatred" (echthrai, ἔχθραι)—hostilities, enmities. "Variance" (eris, ἔρις)—strife, quarreling, discord.

"Emulations" (zēlos, ζῆλος)—jealousies, envying. "Wrath" (thymoi, θυμοί)—outbursts of anger, rage. "Strife" (eritheiai, ἔριθειαι)—selfish ambitions, factionalism. "Seditions" (dichostasiai, διχοστασίαι)—divisions, dissensions. "Heresies" (haireseis, αἵρεσεις)—sects, factions, divisive opinions. Notice how many are relational: the flesh produces community-destroying behaviors. Churches torn by anger, jealousy, factions, divisions manifest the flesh, not the Spirit. The Galatians' biting and devouring (5:15) evidenced fleshly control.

Historical Context

Paul's list combines sexual, religious, and social sins—showing the flesh corrupts all life areas. Ancient world was plagued by these: pagan religion (idolatry), occult practices (witchcraft), social conflict (the remaining vices). Early church struggled with these carryovers from pagan culture. Paul warns: walking in the flesh produces these destructive behaviors. Contemporary application: Western post-

Christian culture manifests similar works of the flesh—secularism's false gods, New Age occultism, toxic social media conflicts, political tribalism, church divisions.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. Which works of the flesh from this list are most prevalent in your life or church community?
2. How do you recognize when conflict, division, and faction in churches stem from the flesh rather than legitimate doctrinal concern?
3. What contemporary idols and witchcraft (occult practices, astrology, New Age) parallel ancient paganism?

Interlinear Text

εἰδωλολατρεία φαρμακεία ἔχθραι ἔρεις, ζῆλοι, θυμοί
Idolatry **witchcraft** **hatred** **variance** **emulations** **wrath**
G1495 G5331 G2189 G2054 G2205 G2372

ἐριθείαι διχοστασίαι αἵρεσεις
strife **seditions** **heresies**
G2052 G1370 G139

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 21:8 (Parallel theme): But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

1 Corinthians 11:19 (Parallel theme): For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Titus 3:10 (Parallel theme): A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

2 Corinthians 11:19 (Parallel theme): For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.

Deuteronomy 18:10 (Parallel theme): There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

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