

## GRAPES OF THORNS?

In the process of warning about false prophets, Jesus said, “By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” (Mat. 7:15–16). Jesus made a spiritual application of a general, axiomatic principle, effective from the creation: Each form of life reproduces its own kind and only its own kind. Paul stated it succinctly: “For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7), again applying the principle to a spiritual issue. Just as briars do not produce grapes, nor thistles figs, monkeys do not come from snake “seeds,” and men do not come from monkey “seeds.” God placed the power of life in the seed of each kind and species.

As plant, animal, and human seeds reproduce only after their kind, so do “seeds” in religion. Jesus identified the “seed” of His kingdom, the church, as “the word of God” (Luke 8:11). This seed (variously called in the New Testament “the faith,” “the truth,” “the doctrine of Christ,” “the law of Christ,” et al.) contains the power to reproduce the spiritual life and the characteristics that reside in it—and **only** those same spiritual traits.

Each religious order and system of men has its own “seed” of doctrine. These seeds contain the distinctive qualities peculiar to their respective systems, which will reproduce only after their own kind. The Law-of-Moses “seed” produces only Judaism, never Islam. The Koran “seed” produces only Muslims, never Buddhists or Jews. Hindu “seeds” cannot produce Confucianists. Surely, the foregoing statements are incontrovertible.

Likewise, it is not possible for one to become a Christian by obeying the Law of Moses. It is part of the Bible and points toward the Christ and Christianity in hundreds of prophecies and types, but its “seed” is distinct from the New Testament. Only the New Testament “seed” produces Christians— and that is all it produces.

The “seed principle” explains the innumerable divisions in “Christendom.” Baptist “seed” does not produce Roman Catholics or Episcopalians. Presbyterian “seed” does not produce Nazarenes, Methodists, or Disciples of Christ.

Should we be surprised at the relentless emphasis in the Word of God on keeping the “seed” (i.e., doctrine) pure (e.g., John 14:15; Gal. 1:6–9; 2 Tim. 2:2; 4:1–4; Rev. 22:18–19)?

—Dub McClish

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