

## The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews XIX How is Your Spiritual Garden?

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Hebrews 6:6: “If they have fallen away, to renew *them* again unto repentance; *seeing that* they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves, and are publicly holding *Him* in contempt.” That’s what happens when they reject Christ. They always do, one way or the other.

Verse 7: “For the ground that soaks up rain coming often upon it, and also produces useful plants for those for whom it is tilled, receives a blessing from God. But *that* which brings forth thorns and thistles *is* rejected and near to being cursed, the end of which *is* for burning” (vs 7-8).

**How is your spiritual garden?** There are many, what you might call, agricultural parables and analogies in the whole Bible. Let’s understand something very important. We can learn a lesson from Gen. 2. We can learn these things physically and spiritually. The reason that they are so important and profound is because they are so simple and they are so true. We go clear back to the beginning, God created Adam and Eve—created man first.

Genesis 2:15: “And the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and keep it.” There is one thing for sure, that in order to have anything in a garden grow, you have to dress it and keep it. Otherwise, it will bring up thorns and thistles and things like that. The more that you dress it and keep it, the more that it’s going to produce and bring forth fruit. John 15—‘Christ is the vine and the Father is the Husbandman.’ He trims and prunes all of those who bring forth fruit so that they may bring forth more fruit. Those that don’t He cuts off.

This is a story of life based upon a garden. Your life, regardless of who you are and where you are is like a garden. How is it? In what condition is it? We will look at the things concerning the weeds, which can be likened unto human nature, and the fruit, which is likened unto the Spirit of God. Also, we’re confronted in our lifetime with the thing that Adam and Eve were confronted with.

Verse 16: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying...” God always commands man, always does because He’s God! We’re going to see that one of the greatest weed producers or poor plant producers, or genetically engineered plants, are those things where men reject the commandments of God and go ahead and graft in their own, or genetically engineer their own. So, we can kind of in advance liken all ‘religion’ to genetically engineered gardens.

You can start out with what God created, but you end up with what you create. You will end up just exactly like Cain. You will bring an offering that you have genetically engineered and it’s going to be rejected. You’re going to say, ‘God, haven’t we done this and that and the other thing?’

He “...commanded the man, saying ‘You may freely eat of every tree in the garden...’” (v 16). God gives us free choice; He gives us plenty of right and good things to do. But because He loves us He doesn’t want us to sin. Therefore, He wants you to understand the difference between the way of life of God *and* the good and evil of the world. These are likened by the two trees:

1. The Tree of Life
2. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Every human being is confronted with the choices of good and evil—from the time of Adam and Eve clear down until now, that’s just the way that it is.

He said, v 17: “But you shall not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for in the day that you eat of it in dying you shall surely die.” Not that you would immediately die in the day that you ate of it, because Adam and Eve lived 900-and some odd years beyond. But if you have the *law of sin and death* in you it doesn’t matter if you live to be a thousand years, as Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes, *when you die, you’re dead!* Just like Rover, you’re dead all over!

As we get older it’s the rusting out that really is the problem. Everyone is confronted with good and evil, whether they’re going to follow God or not. Even in the world, in the letter of the Law, we’re still confronted with that. You know what happened with Adam and Eve; they ate of the fruit. They didn’t genetically engineer it, of course. What did they do? *They took Satan’s command: go ahead and eat it.* In their own lust they modified what God said. *Yes, they did!* What happened? *They brought curses upon themselves rather than blessings!*

Let’s notice here the similarity of the curse of Adam, Genesis 3:17: “And to Adam He said, ‘Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree—of which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat of it!”—

the ground *is* cursed for your sake. In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life. It shall also bring forth thorns and thistles to you..." (vs 17-18).

There is also the analogy of that *spiritually*. In Heb. 6 he says that if it's not taken care of that 'which brings forth thorns and thistles is rejected and near to being cursed, the end of which is for burning.' So, he's going right back to Gen. 3 to show that you cannot build a spiritual life on weeds.

- How is your spiritual garden?
- Are you tilling it?
- Are you taking care of it?
- Are you watching over it?

There are all kinds of analogies and things we can learn from this, which we are going to do. It also talks in Heb. 6 about the rain. Without rain, without water, nothing is going to grow. Spiritually speaking, God's way and God's Holy Spirit is like water. In order to have any kind of garden, even if you grow weeds you've got to have some kind of water.

- Where is your water coming from?
- Is it good water?
- Is it the former or latter rain?
- Is it, as it is now, in some of the drought-stricken areas of America that you have to use re-processed sewer-water?

Psa. 1 tells us why we need water. And here is another spiritual analogy of our *spiritual garden*. A *spiritual garden* does not necessarily mean that all of the fruits that are there are to be eaten. You can have some for just beauty and pleasure like special trees or special flowers.

Psalm 1:1: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful." All of these are the weeds and thistles that get in the way.

Verse 2: "But his delight is in the Law of the LORD... [he's going to obey His voice, obey His commands] ...and in His Law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not wither, and all that he does shall prosper" (vs 1-3). This is what Paul is hoping they would have, that they would bring forth fruit (Heb. 6).

Verse 4: "The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away." You're going to see plenty of that. We've had a dry summer, the hills are dry. We can say concerning taking care of not only a garden, but taking care of the whole earth, God has given man dominion of the whole

earth. (Look what happens when they get kooky ideas and don't take care of the forest. The forest likewise should be dressed and kept, because what happens? *It all burns up!* Every bit of it!

Today with the 'eco-gestapos' they don't want to cut anything down. At least George W. Bush is getting it right concerning the forests. You must log them! Trees were made to be logged! They grow, they get old, and if you don't harvest them at the right time they're going to fall on you when you're driving by them along the road.

That happened right up here close to where we meet. A person was driving down where there was a eucalyptus growing right alongside the highway and guess what? On a windy day BANG! a tree fell right down on the car and killed them. It was old and should have been harvested. Like all of these millions and millions of acres of forest that have burned up, not only because it was dry, but because all of the trash and everything that is there, the undergrowth, and it gets built up. Some of these places they have gone into, they haven't done anything for 30 years! When it gets tinder dry, it's just all burned up.

It's exactly the same thing with the ungodly! What is the ultimate fate of the ungodly? *The Lake of Fire!* These things are very simple, plain analogies that you can see in daily living.

Verse 4: "The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away." Remember what we covered about building on the foundation of Christ: gold, silver and precious stone *or* chaff: wood, hay or stubble. Chaff is stubble.

Verse 5: "Therefore, the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish" (vs 5-6).

Let's see the analogy of how it is with those who stay close to God with water and growth and taking care of the garden. Taking care of gardens is a lot of work. You have to keep at it. Let's get the comparison here. Since thistles and thorns is compared unto sin:

Jeremiah 17:1: "The sin of Judah *is* engraved with a pen of iron, with the point of a diamond; *it is* carved upon the tablet of their heart and upon the horns of your altars." This is another way of saying that they had actually let evil be written into their hearts.

Verse 2: "While their children remember their altars and their Asherim beside every green tree on the high hills. O My mountain in the field, I will give your wealth *and* all your treasures for spoil, and

your high places because of sin, throughout all your borders” (vs 2-3).

In other words, if you build a garden, or in this case a garden likened unto ‘religion’ that is contrary to the laws of God—and most religion is a genetically engineered version—it’s not going to stand. God is going to take it away from you.

Verse 4: “And you, even of yourself, have let go of the inheritance which I gave you... [you’re not even going to have any land to plant a garden] ...and I will cause you to serve your enemies in a land which you do not know. For you have kindled a fire in My anger, *which* shall burn forever.”

In other words, God *waxed hot* as it were. All the way through we’ll see this analogy of fire. He talks about the ungodly being burned up (Heb. 10:26).

Verse 5: “Thus says the LORD, ‘Cursed *is* the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the LORD. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes. But he shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land that is not inhabited... [look at the comparison]: ...Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the LORD and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters... [Psa. 1] ...*it* sends out its roots by the river, and *it* shall not fear when the heat comes, but its foliage shall be green; and he is not worried in the year of drought, nor will it cease from yielding fruit’” (vs 5-8).

When I come home from my water therapy every once and a while I come the back way into Hollister and it reminds me very much of a spot that I would drive by when I was up in Idaho in the middle 60s. In Idaho there was a rancher that specialized in Black Angus cattle. He lived in a dry area, but they had irrigation water. He had a nice gentle sloping pasture right alongside the highway that he divided down into about eight different sections. He took good care of it and managed it really well. He never ruined the pasture by overgrazing, because he would irrigate it and let the grass grow, give good feed for the cattle and then he would run the cattle in that one after growing to a certain height and let them feed for so many days. Then he would irrigate all of these eight sections and he would alternate where he put the cattle so they never ran out of green grass.

As I come back from my water therapy, there’s this one place where they have cattle and they have so many cattle, and in there’s no water and they don’t irrigate it. All that’s left is straw, skinny cattle and manure everywhere. In this small area—about an acre—they have about 12 cattle.

Just up the road from it on the other side there’s a man who does the same thing as the man in Idaho. He’s got a bigger pasture and he’s got it laid out in four different sections and he’s always irrigating the sections the cows are not on and his cattle are fat and look good, are well-fed and the ground is healthy. It’s exactly the same way spiritually!

Verse 9—here’s the one we’re familiar with concerning the human heart: “The heart *is* deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

- only God can change the heart
- only God can judge the heart
- only God can change the mind

And in order for us to bring forth good fruit, we need the grace of God to do it because we have to overcome *the law of sin and death* that is in us.

Verse 10: “I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.... [What do you produce in you?] ...As the quail that hatches eggs it has not laid; in the same way he who gets riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the middle of his days, and in his end he shall be a fool” (vs 10-11).

You see how these things are real in life today? When you don’t have irrigation, you’ve got to depend on rain. If you don’t have rain, you’re not going to get your crop. This is talking about the covenant they were to keep:

Deuteronomy 29:9: “Therefore, keep the words of this covenant and do them so that you may prosper in all that you do. You stand today, all of you, before the LORD your God: your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and your stranger that *is* in your camp, from the cutter of your wood to the drawer of your water; so that you should enter into covenant with the LORD your God and into His oath which the LORD your God makes with you today” (vs 9-12). Today we do that at baptism. You enter into a covenant with God.

Verse 13: “That He may establish you today for a people to Himself, and *that* He may be your God as He has said to you and as He has sworn to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Nor do I make this covenant and this oath with you only, but with *him* who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not here with us today.... [that is out into the future] ... (For you know how we have lived in the land of Egypt and how we came through the nations which you passed. And you have seen their abominations

and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which *were* among them)” (vs 13-17).

Now then, He gives a warning here and all the way through, because if you do what comes naturally, it’s going to be a weed patch. If you just let it grow of itself, you will never have anything to eat. Today, we’re spoiled. We go down to the supermarket and there’s so much there you really don’t know what to get. But if you had to go out and work to produce it—plant the seed—and if you didn’t get the crop and it didn’t grow, or if you didn’t take care of it, you wouldn’t have any food. We need to be careful. Moses gives this warning here; this is why they had this final meeting:

Verse 18: “Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God to go serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that bears gall and wormwood, and it shall come to pass when he hears the words of this curse that he shall bless himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart,’ to *the* sweeping away of the watered and the parched” (vs 18-19).

That’s what a lot of people do. They take the garden of their life and they say, ‘God, I’m going to grow what I want.’ They take the Word of God and *they genetically engineer it into their religions and bless themselves after the imagination of their own heart.* There are many analogies you can get from this. You can watch the news and look at all the cloning and everything that they are doing, and how they say that this is great. But it’s the imagination of their hearts. One thing we need to understand: ***Christ is not coming for our convenience so that we can be right. He is coming to save the world!*** Not only to save His people, but to save the physical world from destruction. That’s how bad it’s going to get before the end comes. The whole world is doing verses 18-20 in everything that they do.

Verse 20: “Then the LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but the anger of the LORD and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.” That’s talking about the *unpardonable sin.*

Then Moses shows that God is going to render judgment; v 21: “the LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but the anger of the LORD and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according

to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law; so that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say (when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the LORD has laid on it) ‘The whole land shall be burned *with* brimstone and salt...’” (vs 20-23).

I want you to think of what God did to the area of Palestine from 30<sub>A.D.</sub> until 135<sub>A.D.</sub> They had famines and droughts. In 42<sub>A.D.</sub> they had a tremendous drought begin. We find in Acts 11 that Paul and Barnabas brought up relief supplies from Antioch. We read in the book of *Josephus* it was really a terrible famine that was taking place at that particular time. You see what God did to Jerusalem—because they rebelled against God, they rejected Jesus Christ—He destroyed the city, He destroyed the temple and scattered them into all the world. Then the Jews decided that they had a new messiah. In 130<sub>A.D.</sub> Rabbi Akiva declared that Bar Kokhba was the messiah. They came and attacked the Romans and drove them out. Everyone was saying, ‘Look, we’re going to rebuild Jerusalem. Then the Romans came and they scraped Palestine to the ground. It was so terrible what they did to the land that it became just exactly what it says here:

Verse 23: “The whole land shall be burned *with* brimstone and salt...” They burned everything; they tore down everything! They chased the Jews to Masada and they were so absolutely set on getting the Jews who rebelled that there would never again be a Jewish rebellion against the Romans. You’ve probably seen the movie *Masada* where the Romans built the rampart—which went clear up to the top of where Ft. Masada was that Herod built during his reign—to get them.

- the Jews were going to hold their way
- they were going to hold their religion
- they were going to keep their days
- they rejected Christ
- they rejected the Church
- they rejected to apostles

True enough that came upon them! Now then, as we have seen as Paul says, ‘if you think that under the hand of Moses they died at the mouth of two or three witnesses, how do you suppose he that rejects the Son of man, who counts the blood of the covenant whereby he was sanctified, was an unholy thing?’

We need to examine *how is our spiritual garden.* Do we have weeds? One thing about weeds. You need to get out and get rid of them as soon as you can. What’s one way to ensure that you will have thistles forever? *Do nothing about it and let them grow!* Then they go to seed. What happens

when they go to seed? *The wind comes and takes the seed and plants it somewhere else! That's just like the way that evil affects you. When you let it grow and grow, then it goes to seed and the seeds go out and contaminate everything.*

In Hollister, alongside the highway, I wondered for years why they didn't send the highway crew to burn down these thistles. Why do they let them grow every year and let them go to seed? Well, that's what we're dealing with.

Verse 25: "Then *men* shall say, 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they did not know and that He had not allotted to them. And **the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land** to bring on it all the curses that are written in this book. And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger and wrath...'” (vs 25-28).

This sounds like a little bit of editing. This sounds a little bit like some Ezra editing when he canonize the Old Testament. He's writing it here in past tense as though it already happened.

"...and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* today” (v 28). Ezra did write that. Where were most of the Jews when he wrote this? *In Babylon!* Just a very few came back.

Verse 29: "The secret things *belong* to the LORD our God, but the things *which are* revealed *belong* to us and to our children forever so that we may do all the words of this law.” Then in Deut. 30, God says He 'sets before you life and death—choose life so that you may live.' Let's see what happens when you just let it grow of it's own accord.

At home we have a couple of grapevines that we want to make into a grape arbor. What we have done, we have a little lattice roof over it—an area about 6x8—and we have the grape plants growing up on it and the grapevines grow over the top. We don't prune it, we don't trim it, so every year we get all these little green grapes all over it, but we hardly ever get any grapes that can be harvested, because we're not growing this to have grapes. If you want to grow grapes you have to have a cultivated, tilled, pruned, controlled, well taken care of vineyard. If you do, about this time of year you can look and see all the clusters of the grapes just hanging waiting for the right time to be picked so they can be made into wine. So, if you just let it grow you're going to be in trouble.

Isaiah 1:5: "Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more; the whole

head is sick, and the whole heart faint.... [we're getting close to that in America] ...From the sole of the foot even to the *top of the head there is* no soundness in it; *only* wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, nor bound up, nor soothed with ointment. Your country *is* a desolation, your cities *are* burned with fire....” (vs 5-7).

Of course, that's going to happen. Every time we have a riot, what do they do? *They burn the cities!*

"...Strangers devour your land right in your *very* presence, and *it is* wasted, as overthrown by strangers” (v 7). Isn't that happening? *Yes!*

I had to go to San Jose this week and I stopped by Costco. The closest one I could get to is on what is called Senter Ave. When I went in there I felt like I was in Hong Kong. I really did! You look around, especially in the cities, strangers are taking over. *Yes, they are!* It says that they're going to get very 'high above us.' I guess we can say we haven't seen anything, yet.

Verse 8: "And the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, like a hut in a garden of cucumbers, like a besieged city.”

That is saying a vineyard untaken care of and a cucumber garden untaken care of—just let it grow and grow—will produce nothing. You'll have vines everywhere, but you'll have no fruit and it's a horrible mess.

I remember when we were up in Idaho, we decided to go into partners with some brethren. They had some land available to them and it was right near an irrigation canal, so we had lots of water. What we did, we planted a garden there. He lived in Boise away from the garden, and we lived in Meridian, 12 miles away from the garden. It happened that we both left for a couple of weeks at the same time and no one took care of the garden. When we got back there, guess what happened to it? Morning glories had covered the whole garden. We had a big garden, at least half-acre garden. We got virtually nothing out of it. Every time I read this verse I think of that. You might ask yourself:

- How is your vineyard?
- How is your garden?
- Is it full of thorns and thistles?
- Is it full of weeds?
- Is it just growing unkempt?
- How is it?

There's something else you're going to need. In order to take care of it, you've got to have water.

Isaiah 5:1: "Now I will sing to my Beloved a

song of my Beloved concerning His vineyard. My Beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. And He dug it up, and cleared it of stones... [showing he took care of it] ...and planted it *with* choice vines, and built a tower in its midst, and hewed out a wine vat in it... [we're going to see a parable that Jesus speaks of which talks about this] ...and He looked *for it* to produce grapes. But it produced worthless fruits.... [God says]: ...'And now, O people of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, I ask you to judge between Me and My vineyard. What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Who knows? I looked *for it* to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. And now I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard; I will take away its hedge, and it shall be consumed...'” (vs 1-5).

- I want you to think about Israel
- I want you to think about what happened to the Church
- I want you to think about what has happened to people's lives

We can apply this all the way down the line. God can do His part. God can give us of the best. But unless we do our part—and our part is to keep the weeds out, to bring forth good fruit. If you don't, He says:

Verse 5: “And now I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard; I will take away its hedge, and it shall be consumed; *and* break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down; and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor dug; but briars and thorns shall come up. And I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it” (vs 5-6).

We can also have the analogy of the former and the latter rain. God casts His bread upon the water and it won't come back in empty. All of those things apply. Also, the rain is likened unto the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is like 'rivers of living water.' In order to have *spiritual fruit* you have to have the Holy Spirit. In order to have *physical fruit* you have to have water.

Verse 7: “For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant; and He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress! Woe to those who join house to house, *that* lay field to field, until *there is* no place left, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land!” (vs 7-8).

In other words, the same kind of urbanization that we are seeing today. Then it ends up that they're casting the Law of God behind them.

We need to understand that we can learn a lot of things from what we have in the Old

Testament, but we apply that *spiritually* in the New Testament.

Deuteronomy 11:13: “And it will be, if you will hearken diligently to My commandments...” If you listen to the commands of God for your spiritual life—you shall dress it and keep it.

“...which I command you today, to love the LORD your God...” (v 13). Isn't it interesting, because when we get through with the *fruits of the Spirit* we're going to see that the most important fruit that we are to have is *the love of God!* Here He starts out with showing how they were to maintain and keep their relationship with God.

“...and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul... [that's exactly what God wants us to do in the New Testament] ...then I will give the rain of your land in its due season...” (vs 13-14). We have the same thing *spiritually*. God will bless us! We will grow in grace and knowledge! “...in its due season...”

- What are the seasons?
- What are the spiritual things that as it were water us?
- Like the former and the latter rain?
  - ✓ *the Holy Days*
  - ✓ *the spring harvest*
  - ✓ *the fall harvest*

Those are the things that water us and sure enough, when you stop keeping the Holy Days and then you begin to slack up on the Sabbath, what happens? *You've got a lot of weeds in your spiritual garden that you have to go get rid of!*

Let me tell you, if the ground is hard and dry, and you've got a great big thistle plant there and it's roots go down about two or three feet, you're going to have a hard time getting rid of it. That's why if you cut down the plant and you burn the thistle plant—*get rid of that sin in your life*—then you're going to have to work of getting rid of the lust that caused it, because the lust is just like that root down in the dry, hard ground.

Whereas, if the weeks are starting to come up and there is rain—likened unto God's Holy Spirit, *you can go out and pull the weeds and you can get the root and all!* If you're tending your garden and if the rain of God's Spirit is coming upon your garden, you can go out and pluck out those weeds before they grow into becoming thorns and thistles and get rid of them. You can pluck them out by the root and they're not going to grow back.

Verse 14: “Then I will give the rain of your land in its due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil.”

When we take the Passover, what is it? *The wine! The bread!* Symbolizing that we are to eat God's way. That is the fruit of what we are to eat. Again, when He mentions things being produced, He mentions corn and wine, not like Iowa corn, this means grain.

Verse 15: "And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock so that you may eat and be full."

What is important is this: God wants us to eat. He wants us to have the best. It's just like with the Word of God, you don't get the understanding of the Word of God:

- unless you work at it
- unless you dig into it
- unless you study and apply yourself to it

If you do like the Psalm says—taste and eat; taste and see that the Lord is good—then the Word of God will constantly be feeding you the good things and the rich things. But what is important that when you have those blessings and God has given it, that you don't say 'I'm rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.'

That's why God wants us to depend on His Holy Spirit as rain, rather than irrigation. **Rain takes faith!** Irrigation: you can irrigate for a long, long time without rain. Then one day all the dams are going to run dry. Then you have a total disaster!

Verse 15: "And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock so that you may eat and be full.... [then He gives a warning]: ...'Take heed to yourselves that your heart may not be deceived...'" (vs 15-16).

What happens when everything is nice, smooth, good and convenient? The next time the electricity goes out in your area think about how hard it is for you to get along without all the things that electricity does. What happens when the electricity goes out? You're so used to getting it.

Right where our house is we've got this big power pole—not a cross-country power-pole—and the electricity lines are there and every once and a while a black bird will get up there and zonk itself, electrocute itself, fall to the ground and electricity goes out. I remember one time that it went off and I forgot that it went off. I went upstairs and I was going to watch a football game or something like that. I sat down and I kept working the remote control and the thing wouldn't go on. I forgot that the electricity was off.

That's how we get so accustom to things. Then one time last year, it happened again, the electricity was off for about six hours. Finally, the

PGE guy came out and Delores said to him, 'Why don't you just put a little shield over that so the birds won't electrocute themselves and we won't have power outages? Just think how much that will save you.' So, sure enough, they put it on and we haven't had a power outage or executed the birds since.

It's the same way *spiritually!* You put on the shield so that you're not going to have power outages. What I'm saying is this: It's so easy to take things for granted that you forget from where they came. And *you forget Who gave them!* You're so used to the rain coming on time that *you forget Who sends the rain!* You get increased with goods and so forth.

Verse 16: "Take heed to yourselves that your heart may not be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods, and worship them... [Can we look at recent history in the Church?] ...and the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain, and so that the land will not yield her fruit, and you perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD gives you. Therefore, you shall lay up these My words in your hearts and in your souls, and bind them for a sign upon your hands so that they may be as frontlets between your eyes" (vs 16-18). In other words, it's going to guide everything that you do.

Look what's happened to this nation because we didn't do v 19: "And you shall teach them to your children..." Now we have to have metal detectors and police at the schools. *Yes!* You can't speak of them to you children; you can't discipline your children because that is 'child abuse.' Just like the 'eco-nazis' have done to the poor, so they have done to our children. You can't correct them. You can't teach them. Therefore, they're like a bunch of wild weeds set up to be burned.

This should be the central thing in your life, v 19: "...speaking of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And *you* shall write them upon the doorposts of your house, and upon your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied..." (vs 19-21).

God wants them written upon our hearts and mind now, not just on the doorpost; not just have a plaque of the Ten Commandments on the wall, but ignore them. Have them in your mind so that you automatically do them. That's what's important! Not that we live by the letter of the law, we don't, but when the sun goes down on the Sabbath, Sabbath has started automatically! God wants the days to be multiplied.

"...in the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers, like the days of heaven above

the earth” (v 21). If you do all of these things then God is going to be with you, fight all your enemies and you won’t have to worry about a thing. Now it’s a completely different story.

Matthew 17:17—this after the disciples couldn’t heal this young man: “Then Jesus answered *and* said, ‘O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you *in your unbelief*? Bring him here to Me.’ And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it departed from him; and the boy was healed from that hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately *and* said, ‘Why were we not able to cast it out?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘**Because of your unbelief.** For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain... [here we have a seed, a plant] ...“Remove from here,” and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you. But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting” (vs 17-21). Here again, we have another analogy of a plant.

Mark 11:12—this is a very unusual one: “And in the morning, after they left Bethany, He became hungry. Then, seeing a fig tree afar off that had leaves, He went *to it to see* if He might possibly find something on it...” (vs 12-13).

It really wasn’t the season of figs, because figs are not ripe until later in the summer, and this was just before the Passover.

Why would Christ do this? Come to a fig tree and then curse it, expecting something on it when there was nothing on it? *This is a parable, an analogy!* The fig tree is much like Judaism. It produced no fruit and all it had was leaves. It looked good, but it didn’t produce anything. Therefore, He cursed it.

“...But after coming to it, He found nothing except leaves because it was not yet *the* season for figs. And Jesus responded *by* saying to it, ‘Let no one eat fruit from you any more forever!’ And His disciples heard *it*” (vs 13-14).

Then they came back in the morning, v 20: “And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from *the* roots. Then Peter remembered *and* said to Him, ‘Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed has dried up.’ And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Have faith *from* God.... [God’s faith] ...For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, “Be taken away and be cast into the sea,” and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say” (vs 20-23).

Of course, we need to modify that according to the will of God. So, whatever is the will of God!

It can be an impossible thing. And the greatest, most impossible thing to change is human nature.

Then He gives another caveat here, v 24: “For this reason I say to you, all *the* things that you ask *when* you are praying, believe that you will receive *them*, and *they* shall be *given* to you. But when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive, so that your Father Who *is* in heaven may forgive you your offenses. For if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who *is* in heaven forgive you your offenses” (vs 24-26).

Now, let’s look at another analogy, here we have the vineyard, and this is taken right out of Isa. 5:

Matthew 21:33: “Hear another parable: There was a certain man, a master of a house, who planted a vineyard, and put a fence around it, and dug a winepress in it...” Of course, that was for grape juice (said sarcastically).

Someone sent me something that obviously they had grape juice for the Passover because it was fresh squeezed in the spring. That shows you they have never planted anything. They don’t know a thing about grapes. You don’t get grapes in the spring; you get grapes in the fall. In order to have something from the fruit of the vine to drink in the spring, you must make it into wine.

Samuele Bacchiocchi put out a book trying to vindicate grape juice for their communion, saying they could put sulfur in and keep the grape juice fresh. The only way you could do that is have a deep cellar where it’s always cool and you could put the sulfur in it and keep the grape juice for a period of time. What happens? *You have polluted drink for the Passover if you have grape juice!* Two reasons:

1. the natural leaven from the grape is in the juice, so you’re drinking a leavened product
2. if you drink the grape juice, if you have to put sulfur in it then it’s contaminated

We always have wine for our Passover services.

“...[he] dug a winepress in it and built a tower...” (v 33). Why have the tower? *Obviously so you can watch over the vineyards*, take care of it, whatever you needed.

“...and *then* leased it to husbandmen and left the country. Now, when the season of the fruits was drawing near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen to receive his fruits. But the husbandmen took his servants and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another” (vs 33-35).

This is what some people would like to do

ministers today who teach that tithing ought to be something you should do. They want to beat them; they want to stone them; they don't want to give to God what is His!

Verse 36: "Again he sent other servants, more than the first *time*; and they did the same thing to them. Then at last he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will have respect for my son.' But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us murder him and gain possession of his inheritance'" (vs 36-38).

Sounds like what's going on in Zimbabwe today. *Wait and see, they will have famine!* 'Oh yes, we must send them famine relief!' But it will be a self-induced famine from lust and stupidity and barbarianism. 'Let's get the land. Let's take the land.'

Farrakhan—leader of the Islamic Nation—says, 'We're a nation within a nation, and the United States should give us millions of acres so we, as the black Muslim nation, can prosper on our own.' Don't laugh! They'll take it by force. Same thing here.

Verse 39: "'Then they took him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and murdered him.... [that's where Jesus was killed, outside the camp] ...Therefore, when the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen?' They said to Him, 'Evil men! He will utterly destroy them...'" (vs 39-41).

These are the scribes and Pharisees answering back to Christ. When He gets done they're going to perceive that *they* are in trouble.

"...and he will lease his vineyard to other husbandmen, who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures...'" (vs 41-42).

Isn't it interesting how last time we talked about the *foundation*, which is Christ? This time we're talking about the *garden*, talking about the vineyard. So, right here the same thing follows. He talks about the vineyard and then He talks about the *foundational stone* being Himself.

"... 'Have you never read in the Scriptures...'" (v 42). Isn't that so true? All of those who leave God, leave the Scriptures and think they still know them, and they don't have a clue!

Verse 42—that's why "Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures, "*The Stone* that the builders rejected, this has become *the Head of the corner*. This was from *the Lord*, and it is wonderful in our eyes"? Because of this, I say to

you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and it shall be given to a nation *that* produces the fruits of it.... [They're going to tend to their garden!] ...And the one who falls on this Stone shall be broken..." (vs 42-44)—showing that ***IF you repent and turn to Christ with a 'broken spirit and contrite heart' you'll receive forgiveness and the Holy Spirit!***

But if you don't, your day with the Stone is still coming; "...but on whomever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (v 44).

Finally the scribes and Pharisees got the point, but not the right way, v 45: "Now, after hearing His parables, the chief priests and the Pharisees knew that He was speaking about them. And they sought to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the multitudes, because they held Him as a prophet" (vs 45-46).

Let's look at some genetically engineered plants. We can be guaranteed; genetically engineered plants are going to be rooted out. What are genetically engineered plants? Let's see what they were for the scribes and the Pharisees.

Matthew 15:1: "Then the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 'Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?....'" (vs 1-2).

They came all the way down there. This is an official committee to track Him down. They wanted to find out, because they heard and they saw that His disciples didn't wash their hands before they ate, and they weren't following the traditions of the elders, which is effrontery.

We're not as familiar with that today as we are with the Muslims praying five times a day, because of the recent thing with Islam. It's likened to the same thing. 'Why don't you pray five times a day? Why don't you wash your hands when you eat? And you've got to do it in this way.'

Verse 2: "'Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.' But He answered and said to them, 'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?'" (vs 2-3). You've made a hybrid. You have genetically engineered the commandments of God.

Verse 4: "For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'The one who speaks evil of father or mother, let him die the death.' But you say, 'Whoever shall say to father or mother, "Whatever benefit you might receive from me *is being given as a gift to the temple*," he is not at all *obligated to honor his father or his mother*'" (vs

4-5).

In other words, he's going to be released. 'If you don't take care of the obligation of God, we'll release you; we'll figure a way.' They had their arguments. Which is greater:

- he that bows on the altar?
- *or* he that bows on the sacrifice on the altar?
- *or* he that swears by the temple?
- *or* by the gold in the temple?

All of those things are nonsense, because if your heart isn't right it doesn't matter. Likewise here; these traditions, which are the genetically engineered religious practices of the Jews—or any other religion; you can apply that to any religion today—you shall be free.

Verse 6: "And you have made void the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition.... [it's a plant that cannot bring forth fruit] ...Hypocrites! Isaiah has prophesied well concerning you, saying, 'This people draw near to Me with their mouths, and with their lips they honor Me; but their hearts are far away from Me.... [Doesn't that describe today? *Yes, it does!*] ...But they worship Me in vain, teaching *for doctrine the* commandments of men'" (vs 6-10).

If you have all of these genetically engineered commandments—which are 'religious'—you're not going to produce any fruit. You're not going to worship God that way. This also shows that ***you worship God by doing His commandments!*** Isn't that interesting? Not that you just come to a temple and do chants and then everything is fine; the doctrines and commandments of men! If the Jews don't take care of it, I'm sure one of the first things that God is going to get rid of is Mecca! And Medina!

Verse 10: "And after calling the multitude to *Him*, He said to them, 'Hear, and understand.... [I want you to get the point!] ...That which goes into the mouth does not defile the man...' " (vs 10-11).

If you have a little dirt on your hands, are you going to die? I mean, what are you going to do if you're out in the orchard and pluck an apple? *You're going to rub it on your sleeve and start eating it! Same thing!* What if a spider crawled on that just the minute before you started eating it? You rubbed it on your sleeve and you got it as clean as you could, are you going to die? *Of course not!* Those little minute things are not going to defile you! It's not going to make you less acceptable to God! What makes you acceptable to God is what's in your heart. That's what He's saying here.

Verse 11: "That which goes into the mouth does not defile the man, but that which comes out of

his mouth, this defiles the man."

Of course, the worst kind of defilement does not come with cursing and swearing. The worst kind of defilement comes from genetically engineered 'religious' plants that you say, in all righteousness, that this is good and right. Like all the traditions of the Catholics and Muslims and Buddhists and whatever. *That defiles!*

Verse 12: "Then His disciples came to Him and said... [You're not politically correct, Jesus!] ...'Do You realize that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?' But He answered *and* said, 'Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted **shall be rooted up**'" (vs 12-13).

- How is your *spiritual garden*?
- How is your *spiritual Truth*?
- How is it *growing*?

Matthew 13:31—here it shows that the Kingdom of God is likened unto a plant that grows: "Another parable He presented to them, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a *tiny* mustard seed... [this is about the third time we've read 'mustard seed'] ...which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is very small among all the seeds; but after it is grown, it is greater than all the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of heaven come and roost in its branches'" (vs 31-32).

What if you plant a thistle? What if you plant a genetically engineered plant that really looks good, but its fruit is deadly? *It will be rooted up!*

Matthew 15:13: "But He answered *and* said, 'Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up.'" In other words:

- no one is going to get into the Kingdom of God on their own terms
- no one is going to get there by their own fruits
- no one is going to get there by their own works

Verse 14: "Leave them alone. They are blind leaders of *the* blind. And if *the* blind lead *the* blind, both shall fall into the pit." That's where it's all headed!

Luke 13 shows that there is hope. If you haven't been producing fruit, *you can*. If you've been letting the weeds grow up, *you can get rid of them*. But you've got some work to do! There are some plants and some trees that if you have too much growing around them they can't produce. That's kind of like what it was here:

Luke 13:6: "And He spoke this parable: 'A certain *man* had planted a fig tree in his vineyard;

and he came seeking fruit on it, but he did not find *any*. Then he said to the vinedresser, “Look *here!* For three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and have not found *any*. Cut it down. Why should it *continue* to waste *space in* the ground?” But he answered *and* said to him, “Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and put *in* manure, and *see* if in fact it will bear fruit; but if not, after that you shall cut it down”” (vs 6-8).

If you’re not bringing forth some fruit, what you have to do is to do a little digging and dung it; a little ‘d and d’. You dig around it so the earth is loose and when you water it—after you put the manure on it—the nutrients go down into the ground and tree can bring it up and produce fruit. That’s what we need to do. We need to have a little ‘d and d’ —a little *spiritual* ‘d and d’ and little *digging and dunging*, and to clean it up.

Verse 9: “And *see* if in fact it will bear fruit; but if not, after that you shall cut it down.” It’s very interesting: God is long suffering with us—isn’t He? He’ll give us a chance! He’ll give us an opportunity to grow!

- You’ve got to ‘dig and dung’!
- You’ve got to water!
- You’ve got to get rid of the weeds!
- You’ve got to get rid of the thistles!

***You have to be on guard so that your spiritual garden will produce the fruit that God wants!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 6:6-8
- 2) Genesis 2:15-17
- 3) Genesis 3:17-18
- 4) Psalm 1:1-6
- 5) Jeremiah 17:1-11
- 6) Deuteronomy 29:9-23, 25-29
- 7) Isaiah 1:5-8
- 8) Isaiah 5:1-8
- 9) Deuteronomy 11:13-21
- 10) Matthew 17:17-21
- 11) Mark 11:12-14, 20-26
- 12) Matthew 21:33-46
- 13) Matthew 15:1-13
- 14) Matthew 13:31-32
- 15) Matthew 15:13-14
- 16) Luke 13:6-9

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 15
- Hebrews 10:26

- Acts 11
- Deuteronomy 30

Also referenced: Book: *Josephus*

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