

RELIGION & OTHER VINES
and
THE TRUE VINE

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." John 15:1 "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." 15:2 "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." 15:3 "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." 15:4 "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." 15:5 "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." 15:6

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." 15:7 "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." 15:8 "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love." 15:9 "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." 15:10

The words of Jesus Christ, addressed to us in Chapter fifteen of John's Gospel carry within them profound revelations about the nature of our spiritual relationship with Christ and his **body** called **the church**. I am sure that most church going persons have heard sermons preached on the subject of "The Vine." The vine and branch is also a popular church icon for decor, wall hangings and such.

Jesus declares that he himself is the true vine (John 15.1.) It is also obvious that God is the husbandman (the grower) and that we are expected to bring forth certain kinds of fruit while in this intimate relationship to Christ. It is also evident that the nurturing power which comes out of the vine is the power of the Holy Spirit with its attributes of Character and Life. Within this figure, there are other issues which touch upon abiding, fruit bearing, as well as warnings and cautions on judgment or destruction pictured in pruning and the burning of unfruitful branches.

Though the text is pertinent and provocative in its message pertaining to the spiritual life. **My purpose of introducing the text is for a different purpose. I would like to examine the question of what is or are the other vines, the *not true vines*.** There is a vine of secular knowledge, (The knowledge of Good and Evil), there is a vine of religion, and there is a vine of Christ Jesus who is in the Father and the Father in him. ([See discussion of the 3 paradigms of truth](#)) This is the abiding place where we can grow up into him and with others share in that same Holy branch.

I believe there is evidence to point to the existence of at least two false branches. Each bears fruit of its own kind. The spurious two are, the vine of religion and the vine of worldliness. Their fruit consists of worldly or humanistic attributes. or familiarity with the values and understanding of the world scientific, social or political systems. The True Vine of which Jesus speaks, bears fruit according to the Kingdom of God.

Thoughts about the True Vine

What is the true vine? Is the true vine the church? Is it partaking in church fellowship and sacraments and activities? Is this what is meant by abiding in Christ? The True Vine springs forth out of the Kingdom of the Heavens. The True Vine is both a person and a spiritual "place" though an invisible one. Christ is that Vine and we become grafted into him. He is the sustaining life and virtue which flows forth to nurture every branch and every twig within the branch. The psalmist pens a similar metaphor in which he describes the tree growing by the river in Psalm 1 verse 3. As we approach the end of this secular age the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. hallelujah, hallelujah. Even now we sense a quickening of the manifestation of things which are from the heavens. Earthly things begin to pass away in the light of Christ. Heaven is our home. Heaven begins to become more and more in manifestation. We see angels ascending and descending upon the son of man. The River of heaven's throne begins to flow fourth and out of our inner most beings the heavenly river is felt moving forth from us.

Abiding

"- he shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth in his season, his leaf also shall not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper" (paraphrase.) It is rooted in life and the life is God's life. If we could ask a fruit tree what it is like to bear fruit, the tree would probably admit that fruit bearing is done without thinking and without expending effort. Fruit just comes.

The Vine of Religion, An Untrue Vine

Most of these commentaries discuss religion as a principle hindrance to the growth of knowledge and godliness. There are numerous applications and aspects to be explored. An untrue vine resembles the true vine. It appearances are similar so that one can easily confuse it with a true vine. It is not for example so different as a grape vine compared to an oak tree. Therefore there is the continuing possibility of being deceived or of confusing the two. Anytime that deception is involved we recognize that the deceiver has been at work. The deceiver or Satan comes to lie, to distort or to distract us from the truth. Religion is a classic model of the deceiver's handy work. While purporting to speak God's mind and God's will we are sidetracked into applying our lives to something which is actually outside of a Spiritual life; Religion can be outside of Christ. Where the true vine brings for the kingdom of God, His approval and his righteousness, the untrue vine brings forth religiosity and self exaltation as it seeks the approval of human authority. Jesus spoke to the fig tree which had no fruit. In this story in the book of Mark the Lord may have been reminded of the fall from Glory when in Eden Adam was clothed with the cover of God's glory. When the glory departed so did innocence, so did the fellowship, so did dominion. Fig leaves were a poor substitute for the true fellowship with heaven's Glory. No wonder Jesus cursed the tree saying, "Let no one eat fruit of you forever hereafter."

In the model of the vine which Jesus speaks of, we see that fruit comes forth from it. The fruit of Christ's vine are spiritual fruits. Righteousness, peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit as well as the fruit of Jesus Christ's character that are described in Paul's letter to the Galatian s Chapter 5 in verses 22 and 23, **Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, Patience, and Self Control.**

There are fruits which issue forth from the religious vine as well. Some of the fruits may also

display virtues or attributes of moral goodness, faithfulness and loyalty, but the key to this fruitfulness is from human will or human effort rather than God's ability and effort.

Let's look at some of the attributes of the Religious vine and contrast those attributes to the true vine:

The overseer or husband man of the true vine, is God the Father who prepared the Way for us to be reconciled to Him through his son, Jesus Christ. The authorship or husbandman of any false vine (religion) is Lucifer, a being who plants seeds of deception, Lucifer who masquerades as an angel of light. This deceiver, seductively cloaked in beauty and promise, presents his words in a way that seems good and plausible but he is leading us in a way contrary to the truth. The Religious Vine institutes **human leadership and authority**. In the vine of religion **human institutions** accredit or approve the **clergy/priesthood**. In the vine of religion religious leaders wear costumes designating **rank and authority**. In the vine of religion God is **a God of the past** not the present. In the vine of religion God is not here but somewhere **out there**. In the vine of religion **human performance** is rewarded In the vine of religion salvation is connected with **obligations or works**.

**The Worldly Vine
An Untrue Vine**

The worldly vine acknowledges one key element **exaltation of the self**. The human ego always strives for recognition, greatness, and personal reward. I am somebody great. I did it with style. I did it my way. The worldly vine may not have any attributes of godliness in fact competitiveness turns to ruthlessness and ruthlessness to any method to achieve one's ends.

[Examine the Paradigms of worldly truth compared to Christian paradigms](#)

NEXT CHAPTER

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