

Hybrid Seed

Joe Slater

When I was growing up on a dry-land farm in eastern Colorado, hybrid seed was one of the best things going. Drought tolerance, disease resistance, and other desirable traits were enhanced in hybrid varieties, generally resulting in higher yields and (we hoped) larger profits. Hybrids had their drawbacks, but the advantages out-weighed them. Today, researchers have gone a giant step further. With genetic engineering, desirable traits can be added, or undesirable ones removed, by manipulating the genetic code of the plant! Some object to genetic engineering for various reasons, but that's another discussion for another time.

Desirable as hybrids and genetic engineering might be in agriculture, they are unmitigated disasters in the spiritual realm. Jesus likened God's word to seed (Luke 8:11). We are to desire the "sincere" (unmixed, pure) word of God (1 Peter 2:2). We are specifically forbidden to add to, take from, or alter God's word in any way (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18, 19).

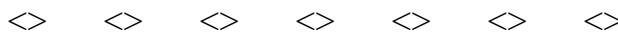
The spiritual seed, as God has given it, is perfect. No mere human can ever improve upon its "genetic code." Cross-breeding God's truth with the traditions and dogmas of man results only in a corrupt harvest.

Hybrids generally do not occur in nature. Man's manipulation is required to produce them. Likewise, man's manipulation is required in order for spiritual hybrids to occur. Unfortunately, people have not long hesitated to modify God's will, mixing in their own opinions and philosophies.

Hybrids and genetically engineered plants often produce larger yields than conventional varieties. Even so, a hybrid or altered "gospel" may produce impressive

"results" (i.e. attract larger crowds, perhaps even generate many baptisms). Well-intentioned brethren may opine: "They are baptizing lots of people; they must be doing something right." Perhaps so, but not necessarily. Jesus did everything right, but even His followers sometimes "went back, and walked with Him no more" (John 6:66). Fickle, fleshly-minded folks may flock to have their ears tickled with fables and half-truths, but will find the plain truth much less tantalizing (see 2 Timothy 4:3, 4).

Let us determine beforehand that we will not yield to the temptation to sacrifice the purity of God's word for the sake of pleasing the multitudes. God's word is truth (John 17:17). The gospel is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Nothing more, nothing less, nothing else, will do.



Virtue of the Poor

Jesus said to him, *"If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me"* (Matthew 19:21, ESV).

Some will interpret the Lord's words as being the virtue of all virtues – selling what one has in order to help the poor, but this would be a mistake in interpretation.

The Lord's point is not selling and then giving, but getting rid of the hurdle that has now become a hindrance to one's standing before the Lord.

What hurdle is it that you feel like you have to jump in order to be pleasing to the Lord? With the Lord's answer to the young man, the rich man turned away disappointed. Will you consider the hurdle the Lord wants you to remove, or will you turn away disappointed?

Ron Thomas (Sullivan, IL) via Bulletin Gold

What is the Bible to You?

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Many people today who profess to be Christians think that the Bible is a collection of men's ideas about God. If that is the case, then what do we really know about God? We can surmise from the universe that there is a Supreme Being who created everything (Romans 1:20). But to really know about God, we need a revelation from Him.

Why would God communicate with people who are so far below Him? God's very character requires Him to communicate with us. God is righteous, holy, and just. If God did not tell us who He is, tell us what He desires from us in our character, let us know the consequences of disobedience, and show us His love, then He would not be a righteous, holy, and just God.

But God has told us. He has given us the Scriptures which are "inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

I believe that God directed every single person who had a part in writing the Bible. I believe that God made sure that they wrote exactly what He wanted said. I also believe that God has protected His message to humanity through the centuries. If God hadn't done these things, then we are completely in the dark concerning Him.

What is the Bible to me? It is the message of a loving, concerned Father. It is a message that will change me. Sometimes the changes come easily. Sometimes they come painfully.

However, they come with the goal of making me fit to spend eternity with God.

Ed Wittlif (Denver, CO)