

The True Vine (John 15:1–6)
By Pastor Jeff Alexander (9/3/2017)

Introduction

1. There is a considerable emphasis these days on the end of the age and whether the events occurring are signs of the end and the nearness of Christ's return.
 - a. The reason for lack of agreement on the interpretation of many Scriptures is due presuppositions held by interpreters.
 - b. Everyone approaches the Bible with presuppositions. For this reason, we must take care to test and prove our understanding of what the Scripture actually teaches.
 - c. The primary issue is whether one's eschatology is fixed on the nation of Israel or on the person of Jesus Christ.
2. Hebrews 11 reveals an important truth that is often missed by both reader and teacher—God made promises to individuals that were not fully realized by them in their lifetime (Heb. 11:13).
3. What was the greater content in these promises that the patriarchs could not see?
 - a. The plan of God includes so much more than anyone could have imagined.
 - b. The faithful did seem to grasp some notion of it and thus were enabled to endure great obstacles.
4. The bottom line is that every type and shadow in the Old Testament is fully realized in the person of Jesus Christ.

I. The Claim

1. Jesus is—
 - a. The last Adam (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:45)
 - b. The true Son (Matt. 2:15)
 - c. The real Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7)
 - d. The true Sabbath (Matt. 11:28, 29; 12:8)
 - e. The true Temple (John 2:19, 21; Matt. 12:6; 26:61)
 - f. The true Bread from heaven (John 6:32)
 - g. The Light of the world (John 8:12)
 - h. The true Vine (John 15:1)
2. On the night that Jesus was arrested and condemned, He gave the disciples His last instructions (John 14–16).
 - a. In John 15 Jesus made an astonishing claim, one that passes over our heads due to our ignorance of what the disciples understood as Jews. That claim was that He, not Israel, was the true Vine.
 - b. In order to understand the significance of this assertion, we need to look back at God's declarations regarding His purpose for Israel. See Psalm 80:8–19.
3. God planted Israel in Canaan as His vine to bear fruit unto Him in righteousness as we saw in Isaiah 5.
 - a. Yet, He allowed it to be destroyed. Why? The vine bore wild grapes (Isa. 5:4), interpreted as lack of justice and righteousness (v. 7). Note Hosea 10:1–5.

- b. Israel, chosen to be God’s vine to bring forth fruit to His glory, failed, and God declared that He would reject and discard that worthless vine.
- c. Yet, in Isaiah 27:6 God promised, *“In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit”* (Isa. 27:6). How will this be?
- d. God intended to use the *“son of His right hand”* to restore the fruitfulness of His true vine and to fill the whole earth with its fruit.

II. Judgment

1. Matthew 21 recounts the final days of Christ's life on earth: His triumphal entry into Jerusalem as her King (vv. 1–11) and His rejection and judgment of national Israel as seen in:
 - a. His presentation in the temple, cleansing the court of the Gentiles, confrontation with the priests, and subsequent departure (v. 17)
 - b. Did the Hebrews trust their God (Ex. 14:10–12)? Fear and faith cannot co-exist.
 - c. The parable of the vineyard (Israel; vv. 33–46, note particularly v. 43)
2. Christ fulfilled and replaced all the temporal things that formed the basis of Old Testament worship due to Israel's failure.
 - a. Israel's failure was not an experiment gone wrong but a demonstration of the weakness of the flesh.
 - b. Their failure did not prevent God's declared purpose as promised in Isaiah 27:6.
 - c. Jesus accomplished what Israel could not because He operates by the Spirit, not the flesh.
 - d. Jesus is the Vine who will fill the earth with fruit.

III. A New Vineyard

1. Jesus, as the true Vine, gives life to the branches that are joined to Him and enabled to bear fruit.
2. The Father purges and prunes to make the branches more fruitful (vv. 2, 8).
3. While His disciples were the immediate objects of these words, Jesus included all who would join them because of their testimony—a host of Gentile believers (John 17:20–23).

Application

1. Are you abiding in the true Vine, Jesus Christ (vv. 4–6)?
2. Are your prayers answered in such a way as to glorify the Father (vv. 7–10)?
3. Are you joy-filled, experiencing life that fulfills His purpose as declared in Isaiah 27:6 (v. 11)?
4. Do you recognize what good, Spirit-produced fruit looks like (Luke 8:15; Rom. 6:21, 22; Phil. 1:11)?