

John 15:1-17 – The True Vine

Chapter 14 ended with the words “Arise, let us go from here”. Some believe that they remained in the upper room until after chapter 17. Others believe that they went out of the upper room at the end of chapter 14. Some speculate that they passed by the temple where there was a famous golden vine and that Jesus used this visual aide to proclaim that he was the true vine.

Read John 15:1-10.

Isaiah 5:1-7 and Psalm 80 are some of the Old Testament passages which talk about Israel as God’s vine or vineyard. This passage contains the last “I am” statement in the Gospel of John. What is Jesus claiming when he says that he is the true vine? (15:1, 5)

Verse 2 is taken by some that a believer can loose his/her salvation. Later in verse 6, these branches which are cut off are gathered and cast into the fire and burned. Some commentators who believe that these two verses teach that you can loose your salvation also believe that these verses apply to Judas. I think Judas is the poster child of those whom the Father cuts off from the vine but I believe these commentators make a bad assumption about Judas. What makes people think that Judas was ever a true believer? Yes, he was chosen as one of Jesus’ twelve disciples. Yes, he followed Jesus around. But what have we already learned about Judas? John 6:64 says that Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe and who was going to betray him. In John 6:70-71 Jesus said that one of the twelve was a devil. John confirmed that Jesus was talking about Judas. Where is the evidence that Judas was ever a true believer in Jesus? The verses in John 6 indicate that Judas was never a believer. He didn’t “turn bad” or “backslide”. He was bad from the time Jesus chose him to be one of his disciples. The branches which are cutoff were never, in the term’s of Paul, “in Christ”. They profess but do not posses. They are part of the visible church but not the invisible church. They are tares/weeds among the wheat. (Matthew 13:24-30)

What does the Father do to the branches which bear fruit? Why does the Father do this? (15:2)

Compare John 13:10 (you are clean but not all of you) with verse 3 (you are already clean). What is the difference? What has changed since Jesus said that they were not all clean?

What was Jesus teaching his eleven disciples by using the figure of the vine and the branches? What is the fruit? (4-10)

From verse 7, what condition does Jesus give so that his disciples will receive what they ask for?

From verse 8, how can we bring glory to God the Father? What is the relationship between loving and keeping Jesus' commands? (15:9-10)

Read John 15:11-17.

What is Jesus' joy? (15:11)

In verse 12, Jesus repeated his new commandment. The disciples are to love one another and they are to love as Jesus loved them. Verse 13 talks about Jesus' greatest example of his love for his disciples? What was that example?

Why did Jesus now refer to his disciples as "friends"? (14-15)

Jesus chose his disciples. They did not choose him. What was their mission? (16-17)