

Jesus

The True Vine

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Jesus The True Vine

John 15

ESV Audio Bible

Crossway

Jesus The True Vine

What is most important for this study is to understand that Israel is no longer a special nation to God. They are no longer “His people”. That is what Jesus is saying here. Only those Jews or non-Jews who abide in Him—in other words have repented and believed that Christ is Lord and Savior—are in Him and they are part of the True Vine. This study shows, using Scripture from a redemptive-historic approach, that Jesus is now the True Vine and only those in Him are of the Father.

The Old Testament prophets made this very clear, particularly Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

This is the essence of the New Covenant.

Only those who are truly redeemed because they are the chosen of God, in Jesus’ own words, can be members of the New Covenant and all the present and future blessings that brings.

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, fulfills, as the Incarnate New Covenant, Israel's destiny as the True Vine of God. He is the fulfillment of all the Law, and the Prophets in every regard.
- ❖ He is the bread, the water, the light, the life, the temple and so on by way of incarnation. All of these are living attributes of our New Covenant *person*.

In the prophets when speaking of a future Jerusalem and Zion, they are also to be seen as the New Covenant heavenly kingdom, not an earthly kingdom established after the Jews return to Jerusalem after their exile in Babylon.



Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ I am the vine is the last of the great 'I am' sayings in John's gospel.
- ❖ Its significance can be appreciated against the background of the OT idea of Israel as a vine or vineyard

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ Lest the disciples should think they had earned special favor, Jesus reminded them that **he chose them**, not vice versa. But the purpose of the choosing was fruit-bearing, possibly in this context the bringing of others to Christ; definitely in the fruit of The Spirit, showing Christ in their lives that they are in and of the Vine-Christ. The promise that the Father will answer prayer is a result of the choosing and not the consequence of the fruit-bearing. V 17 underlines v 12. It may seem strange to think of love as a command, but this idea is prominent in this passage.

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ Jesus Is the True Vine and the Disciples' Need to Remain in Him (15:1–17)
- ❖ At the heart of the John's Farewell Discourse is the typology depicting Jesus as the true vine in 15:1–17
- ❖ (The OT frequently uses the vineyard or vine as a symbol for Israel, God's covenant people, especially in two "vineyard songs" found in Isaiah (Isa. 5:1–7; 27:2–6; cf. Ps. 80:8–16; Jer. 2:21; 6:9; 12:10–13; Ezek. 15:1–8; 17:5–10; 19:10–14; Hos. 10:1–2; 14:7.

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ Isaiah 27:2–6 [2] In that day, “A pleasant vineyard, sing of it! [3] I, the LORD, am its keeper; every moment I water it...Lest anyone punish it, I keep it night and day; [4] I have no wrath. Would that I had thorns and briers to battle! I would march against them, I would burn them up together. [5] Or let them lay hold of my protection, let them make peace with me, let them make peace with me.” [6] In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit. (ESV)

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- ❖ Jeremiah 2:21[21] Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine? (ESV)
- ❖ Jeremiah 6:9 [9] Thus says the LORD of hosts: “They shall glean thoroughly as a vine the remnant of Israel: like a grape gatherer pass your hand again over its branches.” (ESV)

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- ❖ Jeremiah 12:10–13 [10] Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard; they have trampled down my portion; they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. [11] They have made it a desolation; desolate, it mourns to me. The whole land is made desolate, but no man lays it to heart. [12] Upon all the bare heights in the desert destroyers have come, for the sword of the LORD devours from one end of the land to the other; no flesh has peace. [13] They have sown wheat and have reaped thorns; they have tired themselves out but profit nothing. They shall be ashamed of their harvests because of the fierce anger of the LORD.” (ESV)

Ps. 80 8-16

- ❖ 8 You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.9 You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land.10 The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches.11 It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River.12 Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?13 the boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it.14 Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine,15 the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself.16 They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your face! (ESV)

Isa 5:1-7

- ❖ Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had vineyard on a very fertile hill.² He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?⁵ And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.⁶ I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry! (ESV)

Ezekiel 16:1-6

- ❖ Ezekiel 15:1–6 Jerusalem, a Useless Vine[1] And the word of the LORD came to me: [2] “Son of man, how does the wood of the vine surpass any wood, the vine branch that is among the trees of the forest? [3] Is wood taken from it to make anything? Do people take a peg from it to hang any vessel on it? [4] Behold, it is given to the fire for fuel. When the fire has consumed both ends of it, and the middle of it is charred, is it useful for anything? [5] Behold, when it was whole, it was used for nothing. How much less, when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it ever be used for anything! [6] Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (ESV)

Ezekiel 19:10-14

- ❖ Ezekiel 19:10–14 [10] Your mother was like a vine in a vineyard planted by the water, fruitful and full of branches by reason of abundant water. [11] Its strong stems became rulers' scepters; it towered aloft among the thick boughs; it was seen in its height with the mass of its branches. [12] But the vine was plucked up in fury, cast down to the ground; the east wind dried up its fruit; they were stripped off and withered. As for its strong stem, fire consumed it. [13] Now it is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty land. [14] And fire has gone out from the stem of its shoots, has consumed its fruit, so that there remains in it no strong stem, no scepter for ruling. This is a lamentation and has become a lamentation. (ESV)

Ezekiel 15:1-8

- ❖ Ezekiel 15 Jerusalem, a Useless Vine [1] And the word of the LORD came to me: [2] “Son of man, how does the wood of the vine surpass any wood, the vine branch that is among the trees of the forest? [3] Is wood taken from it to make anything? Do people take a peg from it to hang any vessel on it? [4] Behold, it is given to the fire for fuel. When the fire has consumed both ends of it, and the middle of it is charred, is it useful for anything? [5] Behold, when it was whole, it was used for nothing. How much less, when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it ever be used for anything! [6] Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [7] And I will set my face against them. Though they escape from the fire, the fire shall yet consume them, and you will know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them. [8] And I will make the land desolate, because they have acted faithlessly, declares the Lord GOD.” (ESV)

Ezekiel 17:5–10

- ❖ Ezekiel 17:5–10[5] Then he took of the seed of the land and planted it in fertile soil. He placed it beside abundant waters. He set it like a willow twig, [6] and it sprouted and became a low spreading vine, and its branches turned toward him, and its roots remained where it stood. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out boughs.[7] “And there was another great eagle with great wings and much plumage, and behold, this vine bent its roots toward him and shot forth its branches toward him from the bed where it was planted, that he might water it. [8] It had been planted on good soil by abundant waters, that it might produce branches and bear fruit and become a noble vine.[9] “Say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit, so that it withers, so that all its fresh sprouting leaves wither? It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull it from its roots. [10] Behold, it is planted; will it thrive? Will it not utterly wither when the east wind strikes it—wither away on the bed where it sprouted?” (ESV)

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ Jesus was the true vine in the sense of being genuine as compared with Israel which had not acted in harmony with its calling. Jesus was the reality of which Israel was but the type/picture/model/shadow. The gardener, identified as the Father, would be responsible for the caring for the vine.
- ❖ The figure shows how close is the relationship between Jesus and the Father.

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ However, whereas the vine's purpose of existence is to bear fruit for its owner, references to Israel as God's vine regularly stress Israel's **failure** to produce good fruit, issuing in divine judgment. In contrast to Israel's failure, Jesus claims to be the "true vine," bringing forth the fruit Israel failed to produce. Thus Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, *fulfills* Israel's destiny as the true vine of God. He is the fulfillment of all the Law and the Prophets in every regard. He is the Temple, He is the bread, the water, the light, the Life and so on. He is the literal fulfillment of all the festivals and what they meant and pointed to.

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ As the picture or model vine, Jesus embodies God's true intentions for Israel: Jesus is the channel through whom God's blessings flow. Just as Jesus is the new temple and the fulfillment of Jewish festival symbolism, so also he is the new Israel, the true vine. Hence Jesus fulfills the focus of God's plan of redemptive history and salvation, with the implication that faith in Jesus becomes the decisive characteristic for membership among God's people.

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ Whereas OT Israel under the Old Covenant was made of only Jewish people, believers (few) and non-believers, the new Messianic community, made up of believing Jews and Gentiles,(one new people in the body of Christ His church) is united by faith in Jesus the Messiah. Jews still have a place in God's family, (not as a covenant nation) but they as individuals must come to God on his terms rather than their own. A model shift has taken place: *faith in Jesus has replaced keeping the law as the primary point of reference between God and His people.*

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ Since the purpose of the vine is to produce fruit, the focus of attention falls on the branches and what needs to be done to ensure a good crop. Pruning is the most important operation for maintaining the fruitfulness of the vine. A completely fruitless branch is not worthy of its place in the vine and has to be removed, whereas weak branches can be strengthened by being pruned. This is the work of the Holy Spirit as we grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and walk in a manner worthy of Him. We still repent as believers — We are not SINNERS as a spiritual class of people. We are The Bride, His Church and His saints.

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ Among the disciples Judas was removed while the others had to undergo ‘pruning’ experiences before producing fruit after Pentecost. Since Jesus spoke of his word as the means of pruning, he could speak as if the disciples were already pruned , although the process was clearly far from complete.

Jesus : The True Vine

❖ Since branches unattached to the vine have no chance of bearing fruit, it is imperative for the disciples to remain in me (4). The main purpose of the vine allegory is to stress the importance of their dependence on him. V 5 underlines the disciples' helplessness apart from Jesus.

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ The ‘casting out’ of v 6 is the complement of the pruning action in v 2. There is no need here to regard the fire as anything more than a vivid detail of the parable. These branches which need to be lopped are destined for the bonfire. But the application of the illustration is found in v 7, where remaining in the vine is closely linked with prayer.

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ Those close enough to the vine will not wish to ask anything not in line with the vine himself. This paragraph ends (8) with a further emphasis on the need for fruitfulness; it is not an end in itself but is meant to bring glory to the Father.
- ❖ The second paragraph of this section develops some of the themes of the first, especially the close relationship between Jesus and his disciples.

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ First, the Father's love for the Son is the pattern for the Son's love for his disciples (9). Secondly, the Son's obedience to the Father is the pattern for the disciples' obedience to the Son (10). Thirdly, the need to remain in my love is repeated three times in vs 9-10. Fourthly, the Son's joy is the basis for the disciples' joy (11). There is a particular poignancy here in view of the approaching passion (cf. Heb. 12:2).
- ❖ Hebrews 12:2[2] looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (ESV)

Jesus : The True Vine

- ❖ Jesus next focused on the power of love. This must be mutual (12)—again the pattern is Jesus' love for his disciples. That Jesus himself was thinking of his coming passion is seen from the greater love saying of vs 13-14, for he was about to lay down his life for his friends, an act of sacrifice which they were not yet capable of appreciating.
- ❖ *The change of relationship from servants to friends is significant.*

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ The difference does not lie in a change of attitude—both are expected to obey (14)—but in communication. Whereas servants blindly obey, friends are taken into confidence (15).
- ❖ Although the statement “everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” appears as a completed act, the revelation was not fully understood until after the death and resurrection of Jesus (cf. 16:12). John 16:12[12] “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. (ESV)

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ “I am the true vine” (15:1; cf. Jer. 2:21) is the last of John’s seven “I am” sayings. “True” vine contrasts Jesus with OT Israel in its lack of fruitfulness and spiritual degeneracy. Joseph is called a “fruitful vine” in Gen. 49:22. Building on the OT depiction of Israel as a vine, later tradition employed the vine as a symbol for wisdom, the dominion of the Messiah and the Judaism of Jesus’ day.

Jesus The True Vine

❖ The term “vineyard” occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Matt. 26:29; James 3:12; Rev. 14:18–19. References to vines and vineyards occur frequently in parables (Matt. 20:1–16; 21:28–32, 33–44; Luke 13:6–9).

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ Jesus' statement in 15:1 that his "Father is the vinedresser" harks back to Isaiah's first vineyard song, where God is depicted as spading, clearing, planting, and taking care of the vineyard, only to be rewarded with sour grapes (Isa. 5:1–7; cf. Ps. 80:8–9). According to 15:2, the vinedresser does two things to ensure maximum fruit production ("he removes ... he prunes"; cf. Heb. 6:7–8): (1) in the winter he cuts off the dry and withered branches, which may involve pruning the vines to the extent that only the stalks remain (2) later, when the vine has sprouted leaves, he removes the smaller shoots so that the main fruit-bearing branches receive adequate nourishment.

Jesus The True Vine

❖ The pruning activity of the divine vinedresser resembles that of his earthly counterpart. (“every branch in me that does not bear fruit”/“every branch in me that does bear fruit”) is matched by corresponding divine action, be it judgment (negative [cf. 15:6]) or discipline (positive)

The True Vine

- ❖ In the case of Jesus' followers, Judas was an example of the former, Peter of the latter. Pruning is also mentioned in prophetic texts such as Isa. 18:5; Jer. 5:10 (cf. Heb. 12:4–11).
- ❖ Isaiah 18:5[5] For before the harvest, when the blossom is over, and the flower becomes a ripening grape, he cuts off the shoots with pruning hooks, and the spreading branches he lops off and clears away. (ESV)
- ❖ Jeremiah 5:10 [10] “Go up through her vine rows and destroy, but make not a full end; strip away her branches, for they are not the LORD's. (ESV)

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ The term “branch” (found in the NT only in John 15:2, 4–6), occurs in the Greek translation of the Hebrew for the shoot of a vine (e.g., Num. 13:23; Ezek. 17:6), as distinct from the branch of other trees. The expression is used particularly of vine tendrils, although occasionally it refers to heavier branches as well. In 15:5 Jesus makes clear that the branches in the present symbolic discourse represent his followers.

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ Numbers 13:23[23] And they came to the Valley of Eshcol and cut down from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two of them; they also brought some pomegranates and figs. (ESV)
- ❖ Ezekiel 17:6[6] and it sprouted and became a low spreading vine, and its branches turned toward him, and its roots remained where it stood. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out boughs. (ESV)

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ In the original instance “in me” (15:2) would include Judas.
- ❖ The reference in 15:6 to branches that do not remain in the vine being picked up and thrown into the fire and burned closely resembles the thought of Ezek. 15:1–8, where the prophet likewise warned that a vine failing to produce fruit would be good for nothing but a fire.

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ The repeated references “does not bear fruit ... does bear fruit ... bear even more fruit” (15:4, 5, 8) draw attention to the fact that the bearing of fruit is God’s primary creative (Gen. 1:11–12, 22, 28) and redemptive purpose (cf. John 15:8, 16).
- ❖ The OT prophets envisioned a time when Israel would “bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit” (Isa. 27:6; cf. Hos. 14:4–8). Indeed, the bearing of fruit is the essential purpose of a vineyard.

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- ❖ Isaiah 27:6 [6] In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit. (ESV)
- ❖ Hosea 14:4–8 [4] I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them. [5] I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon; [6] his shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive, and his fragrance like Lebanon. [7] They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow; they shall flourish like the grain; they shall blossom like the vine; their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon. [8] O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress; from me comes your fruit. (ESV)

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ The “vine” metaphor illustrates the closely-knit relationship that Jesus desires with his disciples. Even more than the “shepherd” imagery in chapter 10, which conveys the notion of the intimacy between Jesus and his “sheep,” the illustration of a vine and its branches focuses on the organic, vital connection that Jesus has with his followers, a connection that will be made possible in the future through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

- ❖ As we noted, in a model shift, Jesus' presence among his disciples is about to be replaced by the Spirit's taking up residence in believers (cf. 14:16–18). This spiritual relationship must be nurtured if Jesus' followers are to remain connected to their exalted Lord.
- ❖ The “in” terminology in chapter 15 harks back to OT covenant theology, including prophetic texts regarding a future new covenant (cf. Exod. 25:8; 29:45; Lev. 26:11–12; Ezek. 37:27–28; 43:9; Is. 42, Is. 49, Jer 31).

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- ❖ Exodus 25:8[8] And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. (ESV)
- ❖ Exodus 29:45–46[45] I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. [46] And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God. (ESV)

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- ❖ Leviticus 26:11–12[11] I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. [12] And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. (ESV)
- ❖ Ezekiel 37:27–28[27] My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [28] Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.” (ESV)
- ❖ Ezekiel 43:9[9] Now let them put away their whoring and the dead bodies of their kings far from me, and I will dwell in their midst forever. (ESV)

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- ❖ The imagery in 15:6 of a branch that is thrown away and withers and subsequently is picked up, thrown into the fire, and burned may hark back to the parallel in Ezek. 15:1–8, where a vine failing to produce fruit is said to be good for nothing but the fire (cf. Ezek. 19:12;
- ❖ Ezekiel 19:12 [12] But the vine was plucked up in fury, cast down to the ground; the east wind dried up its fruit; they were stripped off and withered. As for its strong stem, fire consumed it. (ESV)

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ “Fire” (pyr, only here in John’s Gospel) is a common Jewish and biblical symbol for divine judgment (e.g., Isa. 30:27; Matt. 3:12 par.; 5:22; 18:8; 25:41; Luke 12:49; Heb. 12:29; 2 Pet. 3:10; Jude 7, 23; Rev. 20:14).
- ❖ Matthew 18:8[8] And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. (ESV)

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- ❖ Isaiah 30:27 [27] Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke; his lips are full of fury, and his tongue is like a devouring fire; (ESV)
- ❖ Matthew 3:12[12] His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” (ESV)

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- ❖ Luke 12:49 Not Peace, but Division[49] “I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! (ESV)
- ❖ Hebrews 12:29[29] for our God is a consuming fire. (ESV)
- ❖ 2 Peter 3:10[10] But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. (ESV)

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- ❖ Jude 7[7] just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. (ESV)
- ❖ Jude 23[23] save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. (ESV)
- ❖ Revelation 20:14[14] Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (ESV)

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- ❖ Jesus, in order to forestall the notion that obedience is all gloom and doom states to the contrary that the goal of his instruction is joy. Jesus' desire is that his joy may be in his followers and that their joy may be complete (15:11; cf. Ps. 19:8). Repentance is a sweet thing and we should be glad, since that truly separates us from the world of sinners.
- ❖ Ps. 19:8 the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

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- ❖ In keeping with John's focus on believers' present experience of salvation blessings, he grounds their joy in OT prophetic notions of end-time rejoicing (e.g., Isa. 25:9; 35:10; 51:3; 61:10; 66:10; Zeph. 3:14–17; Zech. 9:9). In rabbinic thought joy was imperfect in the present age, marred by the certain prospect of death and the worries of this life (Gen. Rab. 42:3; attributed to Rabbi Samuel ben Nahman [ca. AD 260]). Only the age to come, the messianic era, would see perfect joy. Jesus' reference to "perfect joy" means He claims to be the Messiah. (On Jesus' love commandment in 15:12–17 [cf. 15:9–10]).

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- ❖ Isaiah 25:9 [9] It will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” (ESV)
- ❖ Isaiah 35:10 [10] And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (ESV)
- ❖ Isaiah 51:3 [3] For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song. (ESV)

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- ❖ Isaiah 61:10[10] I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (ESV)
- ❖ Isaiah 66:10[10] “Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her; (ESV)

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- ❖ In light of Jesus' statement that the greatest love is to lay down one's life for his friends (15:13), the question naturally arises, "Who are Jesus' friends?" Jesus' answer is, "You are my friends if you do what I command you." In the OT only Abraham (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8) and, by implication, Moses (Exod. 33:11) are "friends of God." Here Jesus extends the same privilege of friendship to all believers, predicated on their obedience to his commands.

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- ❖ Zephaniah 3:14–17 [14] Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! [15] The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.[16] On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. [17] The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. (ESV)
- ❖ Zechariah 9:9 The Coming King of Zion [9] Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (ESV)

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- ❖ The disciples' status as Jesus' "friends" is not an idle privilege, but rather carries with it a solemn responsibility: "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (15:16). Election is hardly ever mentioned in the case of the OT "friends of God." Only once is it said of Abraham (Neh. 9:7) and Moses (Ps. 106:23) that they were chosen by God.

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- ❖ Nehemiah 9:7 [7] You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham. (ESV)
- ❖ Psalm 106:23 [23] Therefore he said he would destroy them—had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them. (ESV)

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- ❖ The OT concept of election is primarily related to the king and Israel, God's "chosen people." Jesus here broke with contemporary custom, for it was common in first-century Palestine for disciples to attach themselves to a particular rabbi, not vice versa. The term for "appointed" in 15:16 is probably a Semiticism; the same or a similar expression is used in the OT for God's appointment of Abraham as father of many nations (Gen. 17:5; cf. Rom. 4:17), the ordination of Levites (Num. 8:10), and Moses' commissioning of Joshua (Num. 27:18).

Jesus The True Vine

- ❖ Genesis 17:5[5] No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. (ESV)
- ❖ Romans 4:17[17] as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. (ESV)
- ❖ Numbers 8:10[10] When you bring the Levites before the LORD, the people of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites, (ESV)
- ❖ Numbers 27:18[18] So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him. (ESV)