

# I AM THE VINE

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JOHN'S I AM STATEMENTS OF JESUS

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.



"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

- John 15:1-17



# WHERE/WHO ARE THEY?

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- Chapters 13-17 of John take place in the upper room
- This conversation is between Jesus and the Disciples
  - The Vine = Jesus
  - The Branches = Disciples
- All takes place during the last supper
- Jesus has just shared the bread & wine with them
  - The New Covenant

# THE VINE

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- The Vine was the traditional symbol of Israel (Judah in particular)
- Frequently used in the Prophets
- Examples:
  - Isaiah 5:1-7
  - Jeremiah 2:21
  - Ezekiel 19:10-14

# THE VINEYARD SONG – ISAIAH 5:1-7

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- YHWH is a Vinedresser who built a vineyard on a fertile hill & planted choice vines
- But it produced wild, useless grapes
- YHWH has done all that he can for it, but it does not produce good fruit
- So he removes its protection
- The land is grazed over & trampled
- It becomes a waste, & thorns grow there
- He commands the clouds not to rain on it
- The Vine is Israel/Judah
- YHWH wanted righteousness as a fruit, but it yielded wickedness

# JEREMIAH 2:21

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- Parallel verses
- 20 – “I broke your yoke & bonds, yet you refused me and instead worshiped other gods on every high hill”
- 21 – “I planted you a choice vine of pure seed – you have turned degenerate and become a wild vine”

# LAMENT FOR THE PRINCES OF JUDAH – EZEKIEL 19:10-14

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- Part of a song about the rulers of Judah
- Their mother (Judah) was like a vineyard planted by water
- Fruitful with many branches because of the water
- Its strong stems became ruler's sceptres
- It towered aloft with a mass of branches
- But the vine was plucked up & cast down
- The east wind dried up its fruit
- Fire consumed its strong stems
- Now planted in the wilderness, dry & thirsty
- Fire has consumed its fruit
- No strong stems, no sceptre

# COMMON THEME

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- Israel was a vine planted by YHWH by the water, it was a fruitful vine with many branches
- But the fruitfulness became wild and fruitless – righteousness became wickedness
- So, the vine was destroyed, burnt, plucked up, replanted in a dry wilderness
- With no rulers, no fruit, and no life

# THE FRUIT OF THE VINE

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- Israel's role was to be the priestly nation
- To bring all nations to YHWH
- Abraham's covenant
  - All families of the world will be blessed through you
  - The father of many nations
- Good fruit – bring the nations to God
- Bad fruit – push them away from God
  - Ezekiel 36 “you blasphemed my name among the nations’

# JESUS IS THE TRUE VINE

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- Jesus tells the Disciples “I am true Israel” & “My Father is YHWH”
- Fulfilling what Isaiah speaks of him in the Servant Songs
  - Israel – YHWH’s servant that failed him
  - The Servant – YHWH’s servant that would save Israel
- Jesus is the true servant, the true Israel
  - He saves Israel by becoming Israel
- He would fulfil the destiny of Israel
  - Bring all nations into the family

# YOU ARE THE BRANCHES

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- If Jesus the vine is the true Israel, then who are the branches?
- Branches – The Disciples – New Israel
  - 6:70 – Jesus calls 12 Disciples – 12 Tribes of Israel
  - 4:21-26 – speaks of a New Temple – The Tabernacle
  - 6:31-33 – Jesus is the bread of life – Bread in Tabernacle representing Manna
  - 7:37-39 – at the Feast of Tabernacles says “I am living water” – YHWH provides water in the wilderness
- The Disciples (and those that follow them) are the New Israel promised by the Prophets

# A NEW ISRAEL A NEW COVENANT

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- Before saying “I am the vine”, he said “this wine is the new covenant in my blood”
- The True Israel offers a covenant to the New Israel
- This covenant binds the New Israel, the New Temple, to the True Israel
  - They become his branches, they become his body
  - The life of the New Israel, the life of the Church is found in the vine, in Jesus the True Israel
- Its success or failure depends on its connection to Jesus
- Its fruit depends on its link to Jesus

# THE FRUIT OF THE VINE

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- They know the fruit of the Old Israel
- They know what happened to Judah – because they did not obey the Covenant with YHWH their God and their King and pushed the nations away
- They know the image that Jesus is painting for them – the seriousness of being branches of the vine
- How are New Israel to avoid being like Old Israel?
- How can they bring the nations into the family, to be branches of the vine?

# THE FRUIT OF THE VINE

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- They are told to bear fruit, & they will be pruned to bear even more
- They must abide in Jesus and his words must abide in them, and then they can bear fruit
- They must abide in his love & keep his commandments
- They must abide in his love & love one another as he has loved them
- They are now his friends, no longer his servants
- They were chosen to bear fruit
- They are commanded to love one another

# ABIDE & LOVE

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graph TD; A("Abide in Jesus & love one another") --> B("Bear fruit: bring more into his & their love");
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Abide in Jesus &  
love one another

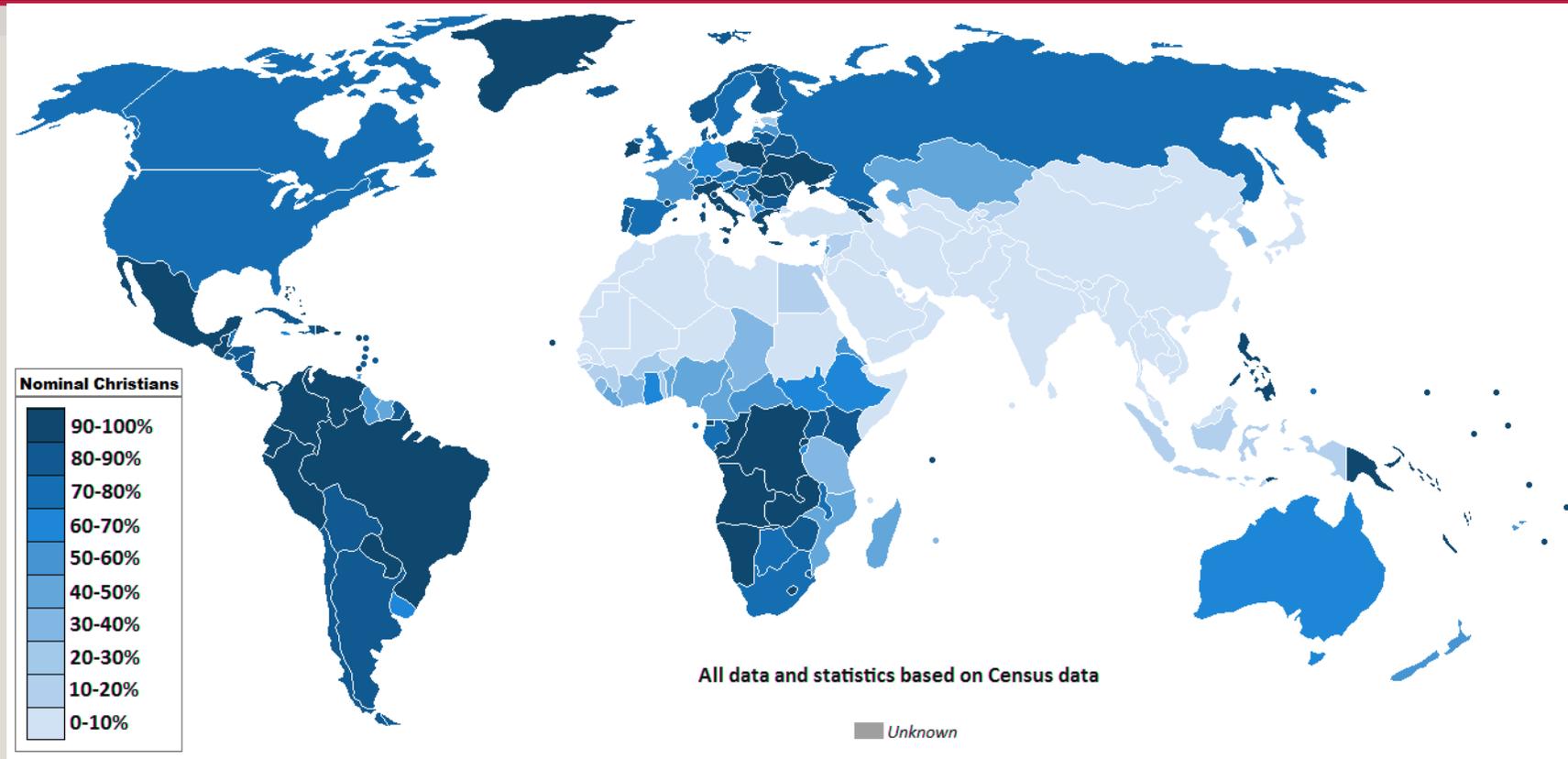
Bear fruit:  
bring more into his &  
their love

# THE FRUIT OF THE BRANCHES

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- Jews in Jerusalem & from Empire
  - Hebrew & Greek speaking
- Samaritans
- First Gentiles
- Gentile Church in Syria
- Paul's Missionary Journeys:
  - Galatia, Macedonia, Greece, Asia, Rome

# THE FRUIT OF THE BRANCHES



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# THE LIFE OF THE BRANCHES

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- All life comes from the vine, all that we have is from Jesus
- He is not just our King, he is the source of all we have
- All our fruit depends on him, we cannot succeed without him
- Our task depends on our relationships
  - Abiding in the vine
  - Loving one another
- Our fruit is making more branches – bringing more into the family