

Taking Away, Purging, and Fruitfulness; John Chapter 15

Joh 15:1-3; 1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 ¶ Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

In the Old Testament we often find Israel referred to as the vine, which is indicative of the chosen people of God. In this chapter we see; Jesus telling his disciples "***I am the true vine***" and God the Father is the husbandman, the keeper of the vine. In the following verses we find that Christ's disciples are the visible branches of the vine, indicative of God's chosen and called people.

Herein, we see a glorious mystery revealed. How? The Old Testament is a testimony of Jesus, who is here declared to be the vine in the New Testament, which reveals that the people of Israel, God's chosen people in the Old Testament, were the visible branches, which were succoured from the root vine, and tended to by the husbandman, God the Father.

Comparatively, today; the visible church established by Christ on earth, is indicative of the visible branches of the vine, is declared to be God's people in the New Testament. We see this in:

- ***Joh 14:20 "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."*** We are branches, by virtue of the root of the vine supplying us with the Holy Spirit, which enables us to spring forth and be visible.
- ***Joh 15:5 "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."*** Here, we are told plainly, we are to be fruitful, and we can only be fruitful in the power of Christ.

When Christ says "***I am the true vine***" we understand that he is the Head of the church. He had to come to earth and be planted, in the earth in the "***prepared body***," and buried in the tomb after his death on the cross, to become the root source of vine, that the branches of the vine might be made fruitful. Remember, the vine is represented in the visible branches, which is called the church, which is inclusive of everyone for whom Jesus died, for the remission of sins on the cross.

Let's not get distracted by confusing the context of the scripture here, which is fruitfulness, with salvation. We understand that Christ is the author of all eternal salvation, and Christ is the way, the truth, the life, and the light, of God's people. Therefore, we understand, the branches of the vine are represented in each person who is born-again, by the power of the Holy Spirit in resurrection of the dead soul to newness of life in Christ, and each of these are a part the visible church.

Christ is the unseen root which supplies the life of the visible vine. Christ, the Head of the church is in the eternal heaven on the throne of God, and God the Father has sent the Holy Spirit to cause the branches to become visible on earth. Notice what Jesus says about branches that do not bear fruit. "***Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:***" This is how we know he is talking about fruitfulness and not salvation. Let's review the setting, by going back to chapter thirteen, where we find Jesus has finished the Lord's Supper with his disciples, in the upper room, and has washed their feet. As Jesus washed their feet, he told them they were not all clean, because he knew that Judas was going to betray him, and was not one of them in truth, as we see in: ***Joh 13:26-27; 26 "Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave***

it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly." By commanding Judas to do the work of betrayal, Jesus took away the unfruitful branch, which brings us to an understanding of: **Joh 15:3 "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."** Judas was one of the disciples that Jesus called and was known, heretofore, as one of the disciples of Christ.

Now remember our setting: we are in the upper room, or on the way to the garden, and present are Jesus and the remaining eleven chosen disciples. Thus, Jesus can now say to the disciples **"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."** The command of Jesus to Judas to separate himself from the vine, is picturesque of the end of time, seen in: **Matthew 25:14-46**, where we see the unfruitful servants cast into darkness, and the sheep and goats separated. We see the goats cast forth into eternal death, and the sheep drawn unto the Father God. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

"and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The eleven disciples who remained with Jesus are fruitful branches, who went forth proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They were fruitful branches, but to continue being fruitful they have to be purged. Purge is from the Greek word, kathairo, (pronounced kath-ah'-ee-ro) and means *to cleanse, i.e. (specially) to prune; figuratively, to expiate*. Wherefore, we understand that these disciples had to have their minds, and understanding, about salvation and Jesus, purged from all things earthly. The most of this purging was accomplished in the time, from the resurrection of Christ until his ascension back to the Father. The rest was accomplished, as they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and their understanding of the sayings of Jesus was revealed to them.

Why would Jesus allow one, who is of the devil, to be among his disciples? To accomplish the great and eternal plan of salvation by grace, the devil and sin are a necessary evil, which is just as necessary today as in the beginning. In the beginning, God created all things, and he put man in a garden with only one commandment to keep. The devil was there in the garden and offered unto to Eve and Adam, God's word which he had added unto. This caused trouble and disquiet in the life of the Adam and Eve, and their seed, even until today.

Christ created the church on earth, and gave two commandments for God's people to follow, seen in: **Mt 22:37-40; 37 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."** The devil was present to cause trouble when Christ began his public ministry, and when Jesus began establishing the church, a garden spot for God's people to rest in. The devil will continue to cause trouble, temptation, and disquiet, to God's people until the end of time, at which time the sheep will be separated from the goats.

This is a warning to us to be ever watchful, and mindful of everything around us, as seen in: **1Jo 4:1 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."** Remember, Christ told his disciples that there were many antichrists already present before he ascended back to heaven and his throne. Wherefore, we are reminded: We are to be searching our own minds, our hearts, and our works, to discern if we are bearing good fruit, and whether the word of Jesus testifies that it is good fruit.

- We must have the Holy Spirit guidance to rightly understand the word, and work, of God, and Christ.
- We are just branches and not the vine. The branches derive all their sustenance from the root, which is Jesus Christ, as we see in: ***Joh 15:4 "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."***
- Being born-again, we must remember that we are still mortal, and to continue to be fruitful in the work of Christ, we must be purged continually. Purged from what? Mostly, self-works and self-righteousness, that we may be found to have the "***mind of Christ.***"

Joh 15:3 "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Remember, Jesus commanded Judas to go do his evil work, that the will and purpose of God the Father, the husbandman, would be fulfilled. This accomplished two things:

- One: it separated the devil from his disciples,
- Two: it demonstrated the power of the vine, Jesus Christ.

The devil thought, with the death of Christ on the cross, that he had killed salvation by grace and now had a free hand. However, the root in the earth sprang forth anew, Jesus's "***prepared body***" was resurrected a glorified body, and is continuing flourish, as the visible church in the world today.

Our Head, Jesus the vine, has commanded that we show forth our fruitfulness in our Christian walks in life. As we walk in faithful fruitfulness in Christ, we sow seeds of hope and light to those around us. This is what makes the preaching, of the gospel of Jesus Christ, so important here on earth in time, which is why we see our commandment to be fruitful in: ***Tit 3:1-8; 1 ¶ "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, 2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. 3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."*** Isn't it easy to see that Jesus intends that we are to love God, to love Christ, and to love one another? For in so doing, we build up one another in the faith in Christ, and we thereby purge our own hearts and minds. We also help one another to purge the true church of ungodliness, which continues to bring forth the fruit of praise and glory to our Saviour and Lord. Hallelujah! Amen.

May God help us to be faithful stewards, of the precious gifts Christ Jesus has bestowed upon us. May we be fruitful branches in all things godly, not having to be severed as unfruitful from the vine and cast into the fire. We pray this for Christ's sake, and to the glory of his name, Amen!