

Chapter 7

"I Am the Vine"

This is a good place to interject what Jesus actually said about becoming a follower or disciple of Him. We touched upon Jesus, equipping His disciples with the power and ability to heal the sick, in Jesus' name, when we looked at Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Man. Jesus commissioned His disciples to do the same. [Matthew 10:1](#) "And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." Jesus was speaking to His twelve handpicked disciples or apostles. Jesus had many followers, but He chose only twelve to take under His wing. [Mark 3:14-19](#) "¹⁴ And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, ¹⁵ and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: ¹⁶ And Simon He surnamed Peter; ¹⁷ And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and He surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: ¹⁸ And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite, ¹⁹ And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house." Jesus left them with new commandments and in turn to following generations. [Matthew 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." [John 14:15](#) "If you love Me, keep My commandments." [John 14:19-21](#) "¹⁹ Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. ²⁰ At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. ²¹ He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." [John 15:12-17 \(NKJV\)](#) "¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, that you love one another." [Matthew 28:16-20 \(NIV\)](#) "¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Theologians label this passage as the Great Commission. Jesus also warned His disciples that following Him would not be easy, but that it would also be worthwhile and rewarding. In fact, it would be treacherous and potentially life threatening. Jesus plainly said to them that the world would hate them (us) because they (we) chose to follow Christ. [John 15:18-19 \(NKJV\)](#) "¹⁸ If the world hates you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." [John 16:33](#) "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." [Luke 6:37-38](#) "³⁷ Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: ³⁸ Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Paul and John also reinforce the importance of loving one another. [Romans 8:28-29](#) "²⁸ And we know that all things work together for

good to them that love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestine to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” [1 Corinthians 13:13 \(NIV\)](#) “¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” In its simplest terms, the cost is great but the benefits and rewards are far greater. [1 John 4:7-10 \(NIV\)](#) “⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” We will come back to Peter and Paul and their missions to the Jews and Gentiles after we look at Jesus and His mission.

We'll now put a bookmark in this narrative about Israel and look at how Jesus influenced the Gentile world, or more specifically, what became known as “the church” regarding God’s plan. I think the first question is that, as a community of Gentile believers, do we have the right to claim Jesus’ promises to us? Both Jesus and Paul use the gardening metaphor of grafting a “new vine” to “the root” as a way to demonstrate how the gentiles can acquire direct access to Yahweh. Jesus said in [John 15:1-8 \(NKJV\)](#) “¹ I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” Paul said in [Romans 11:16-18 \(NIV\)](#) “¹⁶ If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷ If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸ do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.” Paul also uses the analogy of adoption for us gentiles to be considered part of the family of God. [Ephesians 1:4-6](#) “⁴ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: ⁵ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Paul also called us gentiles “heirs,” which solidifies our inclusion into the family of God Almighty. [Ephesians 3:6](#) “That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” [Galatians 3:26-29 \(NIV\)](#) “²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” [Romans 8:14-17](#) “¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ¹⁵ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ¹⁶ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” This, along with Jesus’ mission to bring a new covenant to those who receive His gift confirms our right to do so. Just to be clear, redemption or salvation is available to us not by anything we have done or deserve, but by His grace to extend His forgiveness and mercy towards us. As He said to Martha at the death of Lazarus, [John 11:25-26](#) “²⁵ Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: ²⁶ And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never

die. Believest thou this?” Jesus also reached out directly to gentiles. There is a well-known story of Jesus reaching out to the Gentile Samaritan woman at the well. [John 4:7-14](#) “⁷There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink. ⁸(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) ⁹Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. ¹⁰Jesus answered and said unto her, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. ¹¹The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? ¹²Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? ¹³Jesus answered and said unto her, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: ¹⁴But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”