



Isaiah 5:4 *“What more could have been done to My vineyard That I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?”*

I think the vine can be looked at in at least two ways. The first is that in the Old Testament a vineyard was considered part of their culture. An owner with a vineyard was probably rich and had power. Over and over we see God talk about the vineyard through his prophets and within the Bible stories. Song of Solomon is riddled with grand imagery of the budding vineyard. Some depict it as sexual description while others have it describing Israel. Isaiah 5:7 says *the vineyard is Israel*. Clearly, pleasure, wealth, happiness and safety can be found within the vineyard theme of old.

The other side of this is the vine. Isaiah 36:17 *“until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.”* There it begins as Jesus saw himself as the bread of life, the vine, and new wine. Jeremiah 2 says *God has given them a new vine*. He painfully asks them why they have defiled it. I mean Jesus first miracle is turning water into wine. There is no question that Jesus tried hard to connect himself to a new vine. John 15:1 boldly states *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.”*

John 2:10 *“Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”* All through the Gospels are images of Jesus being the new Moses or the good shepherd. Here in John 2 Jesus does his first miracle and of course it's wine from the fruit of the vine. The owner of the house

says its better wine than he expected. Jesus is the better vine. He is the one that would produce something new for his people. All through the Old Testament were descriptions of destroyed vineyards because they did not follow God. It had been 400 years since the last prophet. The new vine (Jesus) has come to bring back prosperity and the vineyard. Within that would come wealth, safety, and happiness.

Yet, the story does not change. Jesus stands before them just as the prophets did hundreds of years before. He looked across the land and found it a plentiful of vines. They were full of wine and not full of God. It's not like God had not warned them. In Isaiah 7:23 God says "*It shall happen in that day, that wherever there could be a thousand vines Worth a thousand shekels of silver, it will be for briers and thorns.*" Several times Gods people were taken captive. In Jesus day they were under Roman rule. The Israelites were clinging to the prophesy of hope like in Jerimiah 32:15 "*For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land."*

So, there stands Jesus looking at those same hills. Then he claims in John 15:5-6 "*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. 6 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.*"

Any learned Jew would have got it. Jesus was claiming to be the same God that told them that if they wanted to keep their vineyards then they needed to return to God. Jesus claims to be the vine and He is proclaiming the same thing. He wants to protect the grapes. To guard the vineyard. He will trim the bad faith and allow good faith to grow abundantly. Years before, God gave them a choice and a warning. He even allowed the enemy to burn down the great vineyards. Jesus (as the vine) is taking it a whole lot further. Yes, Israel is still Gods vineyard. However,

they must believe in the true vine. They must be grafted in with the gentiles. In a new twist, they can't wallow in depravity and neglect their God as they did before. Jesus told them he would cut them off.

Jesus as the vine is crazy imagery. God is back and full of purpose. He had allowed his vines to grow wild. Now Jesus was sent to set things straight. Matthew 26:29 *"Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."* It's so clear! Jesus is telling them all that he will have no part of the current vineyard called Israel. Instead he is growing a new vine and a new vineyard.

John 14:20 *"On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."*

This is it! Jesus is the vine because he is the main root to God the Father in heaven. All the spiritual nutrients to grow a spiritual life are found in him. If we are willing to be grafted into his vine then we will grow abundantly. Jesus talked about vines and soil. He talked about spiritual food. If we are to become the real children of God then we need God food. To be part of the God vine. Why? So, we can be like Jesus and thrive in the kingdom's vineyard.

Galatians 5:22-23 *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."*