

“I am” formula from the Exodus 3:14 burning bush theophany, is intended to go beyond Yeshua’s Messianic importance. A version like the Phillips New Testament makes a point to highlight this: “I AM the real vine, my Father is the vinedresser.”

Any created being saying “I am the true vine,” *without* any direct connection intended with previous manifestations of God in the Tanach, would be viewed with extreme suspicion and skepticism. In John 15:1, readers are asked to not only view Yeshua as the nexus in which all of Israel’s Kingdom hopes are to be realized, but that such hopes can only be realized via His integration into the Divine Identity, and His close association with the Heavenly Father. So important is this, that John 15:5a repeats: *egō eimi hē ampelos, humeis ta klēmata* (ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος, ὑμεῖς τὰ κλήματα), “I AM the vine, you are the branches” (PME). Only by being directly dependent on the One who identifies as “I am,” can Believers experience all of the blessings and peace intended for the redeemed.

John 15:18-27

“Hatred of Yeshua is Hatred of the Father”

“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, ‘THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE’ [Psalm 35:19; 69:4]. When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

It should hardly be surprising that during the Last Supper—with His betrayal, humiliation, and execution impending—that Yeshua the Messiah would speak to His Disciples about how they will be hated because of knowing Him (John 15:18). Yeshua details how they are not of the world (*ek tou kosmou ouk este, ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκ ἐστέ*). But unlike how Yeshua is One who originated from the God the Heavenly Father (John 13:3), Yeshua’s Disciples not being of the world is a statement of them being chosen out of the world (*exelexamēn humas ek tou kosmou, ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου*) by their Master (John 15:19). Yeshua assures His Disciples that persecution is guaranteed to them as His followers, but also how as His followers and representatives, there will be those who follow them (John 15:20). And, as Yeshua describes, “But all these things they will do to you for the sake of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me” (John 15:21, TLV). Yeshua Himself is not some independent agent or actor, as He came to fulfill the will of His Heavenly Father.

Contextually, we are to understand “they” to broadly be the powers of the world (John 15:18; cf. 1 Corinthians 2:8), but further on it is applied in the sense of the Jewish religious leaders not understanding the details of their Sacred Scriptures (John 15:25). Even though Yeshua mainly did interact with His fellow Jews in the Land of Israel during the time of His ministry, Yeshua did encounter various Greeks and Romans, and so it would be inappropriate to only think that His word of John 15:22 applies to Jewish people He encountered: “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin” (NIV). A direct encounter, with Yeshua the Messiah, made many people

The Nature of Yeshua in the Gospel of John

responsible for their sin. The Lord would further decree how “Whoever hates me hates my Father also” (John 15:23, NRSV). To only compound some of the challenges, it is not only for hearing Yeshua’s dynamic teachings and admonitions that many would be held accountable for their sin; it was also witnessing Yeshua’s miracles which served as a testimony against many: “If I had not done works among them that no one else did, they would have no sin. But now they have seen and have hated both Me and My Father” (John 10:24, TLV).

Yeshua’s rejection, mainly by the Jewish religious leaders, is given Tanach substantiation: “But *this has happened* in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Torah, ‘THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE’” (John 10:25, PME). Here, Torah or Law is given a broader sense than just the Pentateuch proper, as Psalm 35:19 and 69:4 are alluded to. In a wider context, these are both Davidic Psalms, where David had once appealed to God for help and vindication. Yeshua the Messiah, in His position as King of Israel, necessarily appeals to these concepts for what is about to occur to Him, as what happened to David in the past would be somewhat repeated in the Messiah’s own experience:

“But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered themselves together; the smiters whom I did not know gathered together against me, they slandered me without ceasing. Like godless jesters at a feast, they gnashed at me with their teeth. Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue my soul from their ravages, my only *life* from the lions. I will give You thanks in the great congregation; I will praise You among a mighty throng. **Do not let those who are wrongfully my enemies rejoice over me; nor let those who hate me without cause wink maliciously.** For they do not speak peace, but they devise deceitful words against those who are quiet in the land. They opened their mouth wide against me; they said, ‘Aha, aha, our eyes have seen it!’ You have seen it, O LORD, do not keep silent; O Lord, do not be far from me. Stir up Yourself, and awake to my right And to my cause, my God and my Lord. Judge me, O LORD my God, according to Your righteousness, and do not let them rejoice over me. Do not let them say in their heart, ‘Aha, our desire!’ Do not let them say, ‘We have swallowed him up!’ Let those be ashamed and humiliated altogether who rejoice at my distress; let those be clothed with shame and dishonor who magnify themselves over me. Let them shout for joy and rejoice, who favor my vindication; and let them say continually, ‘The LORD be magnified, who delights in the prosperity of His servant.’ And my tongue shall declare Your righteousness *and* Your praise all day long” (Psalm 35:15-28).

“For the choir director; according to Shoshannim. A *Psalm* of David. Save me, O God, For the waters have threatened my life. I have sunk in deep mire, and there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and a flood overflows me. I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched; My eyes fail while I wait for my God. **Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; those who would destroy me are powerful, being wrongfully my enemies;** what I did not steal, I then have to restore” (Psalm 69:1-4).

Even though Yeshua would be brutally executed, the Heavenly Father would be seen to vindicate Him, just as He did King David centuries earlier. However, even though Yeshua the Messiah would be resurrected from the dead, He was still leaving His Disciples and returning to Heaven. Yeshua promised that the Helper (or Counselor, Advocate), the Holy Spirit, would be sent to them in His stead:

“When the Counselor comes, whom I will send you from the Father—the Spirit of Truth, who keeps going out from the Father—he will testify on my behalf. And you testify too, because you have been with me from the outset” (John 15:26-27, CJB/CJSB).

Obviously, the sending of the Holy Spirit would be most imperative for the work that the Disciples would perform in Yeshua’s absence. But it cannot be overlooked from a passage like John 15:26-27, how readers unambiguously encounter the Father, the Son, and the Spirit all

functioning together in the supernatural experience of the Disciples. While there is likely more to the composition of *Elohim* than just Father, Son, and Spirit—to claim that a revealed tri-unity of the Godhead is “pagan,” is simply unsustainable from a textual standpoint. Examiners who have tried to evaluate the nature of God, in any capacity, have had to catalogue John 15:26-27 into their deliberations—and to be true to the Biblical record, we have to do the same as well.

John 16:1-15

“The Spirit, the Son, and the Father”

“These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me. But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.”

While Yeshua’s teaching to His Disciples at the Last Supper or Last Seder do include some strong words, particularly as they involve the coming persecution of His Disciples, they are specifically intended to offer them with key points of solace and comfort. Yeshua directs, “All this I have told you so that you will not go astray” (John 16:1, NIV). There is going to be some anticipated hostility issued against the Disciples, by the Jewish Synagogue, because of the Disciples’ belief in Yeshua as the Messiah (John 16:2). Yeshua informs them, “They will do these things because they have never known the Father or Me” (John 16:4, TLV). Of course, it would be inappropriate to apply this statement to the whole of the First Century Jewish community, as many of Yeshua’s fellow Jews did acknowledge Him, and surely also knew the Heavenly Father. This is mainly a Messianic indictment against the religious leadership. What cannot go overlooked, though, is how the knowing in view applies equally to the Father and the Son (*ton patera oude eme, τον πατέρα ουδέ εμε*).

Yeshua is returning to the Heavenly Father who sent Him, but He is perplexed as to why none of the Disciples have asked Him about it: “But now I am going to the One who sent me. ‘Not one of you is asking me, “Where are you going?”’” (John 16:5, CJB/CJSB). The Disciples were apparently saddened by their Master’s soon departure, as He indicates, “Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief” (John 16:6, NIV). One of the key reasons, as explained by Yeshua to His Disciples, that He must leave is so that the Holy Spirit can finally come on the scene. The Holy Spirit is attested to have some significant powers involving conviction, righteousness, and judgment—which will seemingly be manifested in the activity that the Disciples perform as they go out and proclaim the message of Yeshua. Of course, the Disciples could not fully comprehend it during the discussion that was taking place at the meal: