

2:6-8)—there were times when he grew tired (4:6) and things he did not know (Mk 13:32). Yet in his essence, he and the Father are One (1:1-3, 5:23, 6:62, 10:30, 14:9)."²²⁵

Issues involving whether Yeshua the Son is only subordinate to the Heavenly Father in matters of His human Incarnation and/or His Heavenly status, do involve other passages within the Apostolic Writings. This most especially includes 1 Corinthians 15:23-28, which speaks of the consolidation of all power and authority, at the commencement of the Eternal State:

"But each in his own order: Messiah the first fruits, after that those who are Messiah's at His coming, then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET [Psalm 8:6]. But when He says, 'All things are put in subjection,' it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:23-28).

With a passage like 1 Corinthians 15:23-28, there are perspective issues to be considered, just like those seen in John 14:28, which do involve the supremacy of the Messiah in the eschaton (cf. Romans 9:5; Ephesians 1:20-22). Is the subjection of the Son to the Father in 1 Corinthians 15:28, speaking of the Son in His Heavenly status, or in His human Incarnation? Given the application of Psalm 8:6 to Yeshua in 1 Corinthians 15:27, originally speaking of humanity—"You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet"—the latter is most probable. And surely also to be weighed is the better rendering of *hina ē ho Theos [ta] panta en pasin* (ὅτι ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσι) as, "that the Godhead may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28, PME).

John 15:1-11

"Yeshua is the True Vine"

"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 bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and *so* prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also 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 so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full."

Readers of John 15:1-11, in Yeshua's teaching about how He is the Vine and His Father is the Vinedresser or Gardener, should be able to easily pick up how there is a mutual relationship between the Son, the Father, and disciples of the Messiah. Without a born again Believer abiding in the sphere of the Messiah, then there will not only be no abundance of love or peace, but eternal punishment likely awaits (John 15:4-11). When we see Yeshua's

²²⁵ Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 201.

The Nature of Yeshua in the Gospel of John

statements, “I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for apart from Me, you can do nothing...If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:4, 6, TLV), we should realize that unless we are fully integrated into a life centered around the Messiah Yeshua, that we will not have any true blessings.

That Yeshua the Son and God the Father are involved together, in a relationship of Yeshua being the Vine and the Father the Vinedresser, does indicate how the Son serves as the Father’s agent in some significant capacity. The Son is hardly some independent actor, all alone and on His own, in the salvation process and experience of His followers. However, when some of the statements made are evaluated a bit more closely, that Yeshua is integrated into the Divine Identity is quite clear.

Yeshua declares to His Disciples, “I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener” (John 15:1, CJB/CJSB). As seen throughout the Tanach, the vine is a frequent symbol for Israel (Psalm 80:8-19; Isaiah 5:1-7; 27:2-3; Jeremiah 2:21; Ezekiel 15:1-8; 17:1-21; 19:10-14; Hosea 10:1). Some commentators have used Yeshua the Messiah being “the true vine,” and hence the “true Israel,” as a means to promote supersessionism or replacement theology.²²⁶ This is not only unacceptable, but it goes beyond the scope of what the Messiah being “the true vine” would represent. The Messiah in His person, very much represents the hopes and aspirations of Israel, something quantitatively seen in the quotation of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15. No differently, the Messiah being “the true vine” in John 15:1 serves to represent such hopes as well. As Kruse indicates, “He used it on this occasion to indicate that, as the true vine, he produced what the nation Israel failed to produce: fruit for which the gardener (the Father) was looking.”²²⁷ Among the different Tanach passages to consider, Psalm 80:8, 17 is one which bears some importance:

“You removed a vine from Egypt; You drove out the nations and planted it...Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man [al-ben-adam, עַל-בֶּן-אָדָם] whom You made strong for Yourself.”

Milne applies this word to Yeshua of Nazareth, identifying Him as “the one who stands in the midst of Israel, and among the disciples...He is the obedient Son through whose sacrifice and consequent mission the age-old purpose of Israel would find fulfillment {quoting Genesis 12:2}.”²²⁸ The annotation provided in the 2016 *Complete Jewish Study Bible* also usefully indicates, “Isra’el is also God’s vine or vineyard. The fact that ‘vine’ describes both the Jewish people and its Messiah reinforces the close identification of Yeshua with the people and Isra’el.”²²⁹ Yeshua saying that He is “the true vine,” is hardly some representation of the Messiah replacing Israel; it is correctly taken as an indication that the Messiah is the culmination of the hopes for Israel’s redemption.

The source text of John 15:1 communicates something even more specific, than Yeshua the Messiah simply being “the true vine” and embodying all of the hopes of Israel: *Egō eimi hē ampelos hē alēthinē* (Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή). As Kruse notes, “This is the last of the seven different ‘I am sayings’ with predicates in the Fourth Gospel (6:35, 48, 51; 8:12; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5).”²³⁰ Gramatically, the author could have simply said *Egō hē ampelos hē alēthinē* to convey the point that Yeshua is the true vine, but the employment of the *egō eimi* or

²²⁶ Cf. Carson, *John*, pp 511-512.

²²⁷ Kruse, *John*, 316.

²²⁸ Milne, 219.

²²⁹ *Complete Jewish Study Bible*, 1546.

²³⁰ Kruse, *John*, 316.

“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