

## **Names of God from the Bible**

### **47 – The Vine**

*All God's Names are eternal names – so He is still The Vine for us today.*

#### **Reading: John 15:1-17**

I have a vine. I planted it shortly after we moved into our home. It grew up to our deck and then along the security rail. It does that, of course, because I 'trained' it to do so. I love the grapes it produces and each year the yield seems to be more than ever before. In fact, there are so many grapes that we are able to share with our neighbours, work colleagues and church members.

I always get excited when I see the first 'buds' form, followed by the fresh leaves of green. However, I soon learn that you cannot just leave a vine to 'do its own thing'. No, you have to constantly watch it, prune away the fruitless branches and make sure that the ones producing fruit don't over extend themselves or their fruit will 'suffer'.

It's no good picking the fruit too early, either. Ideally, you want the grapes fully formed and ripe. Then you can enjoy the beautiful fragrance and the sweet juicy flesh.

Most of the references to the vine in the Old Testament suggest Israel is the vine and God is the vine-dresser. However, Jesus reveals the fact that He is the Vine and we (and Israel) are the branches. Yes, Father is the vine-dresser, whereas Jesus is the Vine.

The picture of the vine given in the Old Testament seen through the lens of Jesus' teaching is similar. Israel (the people) was to represent God on the earth then (and now), just as Christians, Jesus' disciples, are today.

When God chose and blessed Abraham, it was so God could and would bless the world through him. God chooses to bless the world (the nations) through His chosen people – Israel and the Church.

When Jesus addressed His disciples and told them that He was the Vine and they the branches, He continued by saying that His (God's) desire was that they would be fruitful – and thereby bless others.

However, there would be a major condition in that Jesus' disciples would have to "*remain in (Him).*" A branch of a vine that is not attached to the vine will wither and die, and cannot bear any fruit. All the sustenance a branch needs flows from the vine. Have you noticed how each of the branches is attached to the main 'trunk' of the vine? They all need direct access. Any branch that is not directly connected is sub-standard. They should not branch off from another branch – they need to be directly connected.

What is the purpose of a vine? As God asked the prophet – Do you use vine branches for carving or for firewood? No! A vine branch's primary role is to produce fruit – grapes. Not figs, not thorns, not beautiful flowers.

I have to constantly prune my vine (at least once a week) during its growing season to bring out its best. I do it because I want the best, for it to bear most fruit. God does the same. I don't like His pruning much when it happens to me, but I realise it's for my best and for His eventual glory.

## **Names of God from the Bible**

Jesus was reminding His disciples that, without Him, they could do nothing of value. However, He also reminded them that as long as they remained attached to the Vine, nothing would be impossible for them.

Indeed, God intended them to be fruitful, ever increasingly fruitful. Not so they could boast but so they could be a constant blessing to others.

It's the same for us. God wants to bless us in every way so that we can bless others. God has chosen His Church as the means to bless this world. What an incredible thought, what an incredible blessing and what an incredible privilege.

The Vine has chosen to bless this world through His branches – you and me.

### **What does that name mean for us today**

Vines bring blessing and joy. The Church, you and me, are the ones God wants to use to bless this broken and needy world. How much of a blessing are you? Are you constantly connected to the Vine?

### **Prayer**

*Thank You, Jesus, for reminding me that You are the Vine and I am a branch. Please help me to remain connected so I can produce everlasting fruit and thus bless this world. Amen.*

### **Additional Readings**

- Isaiah 5:1-7
- Hosea 10:1-8
- Song of Songs 7:1-13

### **Questions**

1. What do we need to ensure we are constantly connected to the Vine?
2. Has God revealed Himself in this way to you? How and when?
3. How are you going to bless this world this year?