

# True and False

## The Reality of the Visible Church

### John 15:1-6

John 15:1–6 (NKJV)

**15** “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> “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. <sup>6</sup> 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.

### Introduction

In this past Summer,  
“The evangelical world has been roiled by the headlines concerning Joshua Harris. First came the

news of his divorce, and then came the news of his departure from the Christian faith. It's hard to imagine more sobering news.

We have to go back to 1997 with the release of a book entitled, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*. The book was by Joshua Harris and it became an evangelical publishing phenomenon, eventually selling 1.2 million copies.

Joshua Harris. He is one of the seven children of Gregg and Sono Harris, and they were very influential long before Joshua Harris emerged as a young author. They were mostly influential within the burgeoning homeschool movement of the 1970s and '80s and beyond, and they and their movement were located in the Pacific Northwest.

He followed up *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, with another book entitled *Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship*, published in 2000. He became lead pastor of a Maryland mega church in 2004, and he continued in that role until 2015. He also established a series of conferences that were known as New Attitude.

In 2015, he resigned from the church and indicated that he was moving back to the Pacific Northwest, in this case to Vancouver, British Columbia, to study at Regent College and to give attention to theological education. He said in a statement at the time that he

had been living effectively backwards. He had gone into ministry before his theological education.

But then came the blockbuster social media posts of July. First, in the middle of the month, Harris and his wife Shannon jointly released on their own Instagram accounts this statement: "We're writing to share the news that we are separating and we'll continue our life together as friends. In recent years, some significant changes have taken place in both of us. It is with sincere love for one another and understanding of our unique story as a couple that we are moving forward with this decision. We hope to create a generous and supportive future for each other and for our three amazing children in the years ahead. Thank you for your understanding and for respecting our privacy during a difficult time."

The news was eventually clarified that the couple is divorcing.

The next statement is most important, "The information that was left out of our announcement is that I have undergone a massive shift in regard to my faith in Jesus. The popular phrase for this is deconstruction, the biblical phrase is falling away. By all the measurements that I have for defining a Christian, I am not a Christian. Many people tell me

that there is a different way to practice faith and I want to remain open to this, but I'm not there now." The next paragraph was also very important: "Martin Luther said that the entire life of believers should be repentance. There's beauty in that sentiment regardless of your view of God. I've lived in repentance for the past several years," he wrote, "repenting of my self-righteousness, my fear-based approach to life, the teaching of my books, my views of women in the church, and my approach to parenting to name a few, but," he continued, "I specifically want to add to this list now. To the LGBTQ+ community, I want to say that I am sorry for the views that I taught in my books and as a pastor regarding sexuality. I regret standing against marriage equality, for not affirming you and your place in the church, and for any ways that my writing and speaking contributed to a culture of exclusion and bigotry. I hope you can forgive me."

Those were the most important sections of the posting, and the most important line is where he said that he had undergone a massive shift in regard to his faith in Christ. He said, again, "The popular phrase for this is deconstruction. The biblical phrase is falling away. By all the measurements that I have for defining a Christian, I am not a Christian." Those are absolutely stunning words. They would be

stunning and incredibly troubling coming from anyone, but from the former pastor of a mega-church and from someone who has had a very significant influence in the evangelical world, this is truly a milestone event.”

This article is based on the episode of The Briefing from Thursday, August 1, 2019: <https://albertmohler.com/2019/08/01/briefing-8-1-19>.

When you read the N.T., it become abundantly clear that there is a visible Church and in invisible church. There are those that make up the true church and those that associate with the church. There are the professors and the possessors. The Real and the Fake, the True and the False.

Jesus refers to this reality many times He talked of those who outwardly attach themselves to Him (cf. Matt. 13:20–22; Rom. 9:6–8; 11:16–24; 1 John 2:19).

Such people will always be present with the true church. The New Testament describes them as tares among the wheat (Matt. 13:25–30); bad fish that are thrown away (Matt. 13:48); goats condemned to eternal punishment (Matt. 25:33, 41); t hose left standing outside when the head of the house shuts the door (Luke 13:25–27); foolish virgins shut out of the wedding feast (Matt. 25:1–12); useless slaves who bury their master’s talent in the ground (Matt. 25:24–30);

apostates who eventually leave the fellowship of believers (1 John 2:19), manifest an evil, unbelieving heart by abandoning the living God (Heb. 3:12), continue to sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth (Heb. 10:26), and fall away from the truth to everlasting destruction (Heb. 10:39). Although they imagine that they are on their way to heaven, they are actually on the broad path leading to hell (Matt. 7:13–14).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 152). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

## Lesson

1. Two Vines
2. Two Branches
3. Two Realities

# I. Two Vines

- A. True Vine
- B. False Vine

## A. True Vine

**15** “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

**Εγώ ειμι η αμπελος η αληθινη** και ο πατηρ μου ο γεωργος εστιν

The vivid imagery of the grape vine would be very familiar to the disciples and would present a very clear picture of that the Lord wanted to teach.

1. It was presented by the golden vine on the door of the temple (Josephus *Ant.* XV. 11, 3; *De bello Jud.* V. 5, 4), viewed during a stay in the temple (Jerome, Rosenmüller), or seen from a distance in the moonlight (Lampe). [This golden vine was one of the chief ornaments of Herod’s temple and no doubt a symbol of the theocracy which is called ‘a noble vine’ (Jer. 2:21; comp. Isa. 5:1 ff.; Ezek. 19:10 ff.; Ps. 80:8–19); Lange, J. P., & Schaff, P. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John* (p. 461). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

2. The sight of the wine-cup at the Lord’s supper (see Matt. 26:28; Grotius, Nösselt, Meyer). Lange, J. P., & Schaff, P. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John* (p. 461). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

3. A vine which, from the house, had shot its tendrils into the guest-chamber (Knapp, Tholuck).

4. The view of vineyards reposing outside in the full moon (Storr).

5. Only the mental recollection of the Old Testament figure (Is. 5:1; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 15:2; 19:10; Ps. 80:8;

Lange, J. P., & Schaff, P. (2008). [A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John](#) (p. 461). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

6. The walk down to Kedron through the vineyards (Lampe, Lange) [in his *Leben Jesu*, followed by Godet (II. 406), who supposes that Christ, seeing a vine with branches, stopped on the way, gathered His disciples around Him and spoke this parable.—P. S.]

Further, the wood of the vine has the curious characteristic that it is good for nothing. It is too soft for any purpose. At certain times of the year, as was laid down by the law, the people must bring offerings of wood to the Temple for the altar fires. But the wood of the vine must not be brought. The only thing that could be done with the wood pruned out of a vine was to make a bonfire of it and destroy it. This adds to the picture Jesus draws.

Barclay, W. (2001). [The Gospel of John](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 202–203). Louisville, KY: Edinburgh.

We, however, in upholding this latter view, proceed from the supposition that there were burning along the sides of the valley of Kedron nocturnal vineyard-fires,—for the burning of the cut-off branches is a principal point of consideration. It was 1. the time of year for the vineyard-fires, 2. for the cleansing of the vine, 3. for the burning of the offal from the Paschal lamb; this last was strictly commanded (Ex. 12:10; Num. 9:12) and might



easily have been performed in connection with the duties appertaining to vine-dressing

Lange, J. P., & Schaff, P. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John* (p. 461). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

## I. Two Vines

# II. Two Branches

<sup>2</sup> 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

παν κλημα εν εμοι μη φερων καρπον αιρει αυτο και παν το καρπον φερων καθαιρει αυτο ινα πλειονα καρπον φερη

### There are 2 branches

1. One that does not Bear Fruit
2. One that Does Bear Fruit.

Before we consider the 2 branches, we need to bring some clarity to the a phrase in the text that has led to a great deal of confusion.

**2** Every branch in Me

**4** Abide in Me,.....unless you abide in Me.

**5** He who abides in Me

**6** If anyone does not abide in Me

Some have taken the phrase, “in Me” to mean a universal salvation of all the branches. That this passage is referring to all branches “in Me” as all that are saved and that some are eventually lost because they do not continue to remain in Christ. In other words some teach that this is clear evidence in Scripture that someone can be genuinely saved and lose their salvation

1st it needs to be acknowledged that the Bible does often use the term “in Christ” as a reference to the being saved.

Apostle Paul uses this many times, so much so that it is a Pauline phrase.

### Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,

### Ephesians 1:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

### Ephesians 1:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

### Ephesians 1:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

### Ephesians 1:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

Philippians 3:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

So what is Jesus saying, Is He using the same understanding as Paul had in mind of being in Christ as “in Me” in the vine.

To understand what Jesus means here in John 15 we need to understand 3 thing.

1. The Clarity of Salvation
2. The Context of the Story
3. The Character of the Statement

### **1. The Clarity of Salvation.**

The Bible explicitly teaches the eternal nature of Salvation. That when a person is genuinely saved, they cannot loose there salvation. Salvation is solely a work of God based in the completed work of Christ and the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Anyone who has been truly born again, cannot un-birth themselves. You have been granted by grace, repentance, faith and confession of Jesus as Lord and Savior. You have been made alive in Christ.

It is God who saves you and it is God who keeps you.

John 10:28–29 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand.

John 6:37–39 (NKJV)

<sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. <sup>39</sup> This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

**8** *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:28–33 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies.

1 Peter 1:3–5 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the

resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The very nature of the Work of God in Saving makes it impossible for someone to loose their salvation. If one person who was genuinely saved lost their salvation then the verses we read would be a lie

So we need to first understand, that based on the very clear teaching of Scripture and our own Lord's Words in the Gospel of John, that the loss of salvation is not what Jesus is teaching here in this text.

So what does he have in mind. What does he means by "in Me"

## 1. The Clarity of Salvation

## 2. The Context of the Story

Remember the context of the statement. Jesus is with his disciples for the last passover meal. He has gather with them in the upper room and is showing His love of them by his selfless service to them. He

is teaching them about his departure to die on the cross. He states that one of them will betray him and point to Judas Iscariot.

Judas who has been with them 3 years, serving along side Jesus and the other disciples is filled with the devil and leaves to do the devils bidding.

Judas was so like the other disciples and considered honest enough to be given the responsibility of Treasurer. He was not even suspected when Jesus said someone would betray Him. The other disciples started questioning whether it was themselves. No one pointed a finger at Judas

This is a sobering reminder, that you can be so identified with Christ and that you look like you are the real thing even to the point that you may believe you are the real thing. You have all the initial characteristics of being a true believer but in the end you are false.

As the disciples are trying to process the nights events and as more begins to unfold, questions they have are going to be numerous.

How could Judas do this? How could he be with us for 3 years, and go out 2 by 2 and do ministry? How could he eat and sleep and fellowship with Jesus, see and participate in the same miracles, live such



an exemplary life that no one ever suspected him?  
 How could he fall away? How can he not be real?  
 Are they themselves real?

The “in me” in verse 2

**<sup>2</sup> Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;**

Does not necessarily imply true salvation. But can sometime imply superficial attachment. Association with. Participation with.

I believe Jesus gives this story to illustrate an answer to the raging question about Judas.

1. The Clarity of Salvation

2. The Context of the Story

**3. The Character of the Statement**

**15 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> 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**

Using the picture in the minds of the disciples of the vine and the branches, would necessitate the

attachment of the all the branches initially, the good and the bad. To have the vine and the branches never attached would not be reality and would miss the points that Jesus wants to make.

1. Good and bad branches can be attached to the vine
2. Good Branches are kept and bad are thrown away.
3. Bearing Fruit is what determines Good from Bad branches
4. The Vine, ie Jesus is the only source of life for the good Branches
5. The Branches cannot do anything without the Vine.
6. Bad, unproductive, fruitless branches are burned.

So in with these points of

1. The Clarity of Salvation
2. The Context of the Story
3. The Character of the Statement

The Power of what Jesus is saying is much clearer.

So with this said

Lets look at the 2 branches

## First Consider

### 1. The Bad Branch

<sup>2</sup> Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;

παν κλημα εν εμοι μη φερον  
καρπον αιρει αυτο

The circumstance that the fruit-bearing branches are not placed in the fore-ground, is indicative of the occasion which suggested the figure: the view of the vineyard-fires.

Lange, J. P., & Schaff, P. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John* (p. 462). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

<sup>2</sup> Every branch in Me

παν κλημα (singular)

**Branch** (κλήμα). Occurring only in this chapter. Both this and κλάδος, *branch* (see on Matt. 24:32; Mark 11:8) are derived from κλάω, *to break*. The word emphasizes the ideas of *tenderness* and *flexibility*.

Vincent, M. R. (1887). *Word studies in the New Testament* (Vol. 2, p. 249). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Every single branch. This is not “All branches” although it could have been stated that way. Here

our Lord points out the **individual nature of attention**. The Father will address every single branch. There are no exceptions. NO one will escape. He is not here talking of the atheist, or the agnostics. He is not talking about the immoral blasphemer. The antagonistic unbeliever.

The word “in Me” makes it clear that he is He is talking of the one closely associated with Christianity. This is the professor. This is the one who walked the isle, prayed the prayer, signed the card. shoot the pastors hand. This is the Sunday school teacher. The faithful attender to the local church. This is the deacon, the Elder the Preacher who has an affiliation with Christ. He presents himself as a Christian. He uses Biblical words. He talks in Christian language. He does drink and smoke. He’s a good moral person.

This is the person who can quote bible verses. This is the one who used to go to church. This the one that gives all the right answers when asked if he is saved. This man is religious. This man is moral. This man is good. This is the branch Jesus is talking about.

**Matthew 7:13–14 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. <sup>14</sup> Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

### Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV)

<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

### Matthew 25:11–12 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ <sup>12</sup> But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

### Titus 1:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

James 1:22 (NKJV)

<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

John 8:31 (NKJV)

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to those Jews who **believed Him**, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

Matthew 13:20–21 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup> yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

1 John 2:19 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

**So how does he identify these branches?**

<sup>2</sup> **Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;**

παν κλημα εν εμοι μη φερον  
καρπον αιρει αυτο

First, note that this determination is not based on Omniscience. Also God knows everything and knows the heart of man. This is not determined by omniscience.

This is determined by fruit. Bad Branches do not produce fruit.

Reason.

1. To better determine the genuine faith of believers
2. To better determine the genuine faith of ourselves.

<sup>2</sup> **Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit**

**bear P. A. Part.**

pheró: to bear, carry, bring forth

**Original Word:** φέρω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** pheró

**Phonetic Spelling:** (fer'-o)

**Definition:** to bear, carry, bring forth

**Usage:** I carry, bear, bring; I conduct, lead; perhaps:  
I make publicly known.

Matthew 14:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought *it* to her mother.

Mark 1:32 (NKJV)

<sup>32</sup> At evening, when the sun had set, they **brought** to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed.

Mark 2:3 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> Then they came to Him, **bringing** a paralytic who was carried by four *men*.

So here. Jesus is talking of bring forth public fruit.  
visible fruit.

Bad branches don't produce fruit

This refers to the fruitless Professor.

Luke 6:46 (NKJV)



<sup>46</sup> “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”

1 John 2:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1 John 2:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.

1 John 2:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 John 3:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

1 John 3:8 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

### 1 John 3:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother.

### 1 John 3:17 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

#### 1. The Bad Branch

## 2. The Good Branch

<sup>2</sup> 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.*

bears P.A. Part

continually habitually characteristically

A popular misconception equates fruit with outward success. By that common standard, external religion, superficial righteousness, having a large church, a popular ministry, or a successful program are considered fruitful. But the Bible nowhere equates fruit with superficial, external behavior or results, which deceivers and hypocrites, as well as non-Christian cults and religions can duplicate. Instead,

Scripture defines fruit in terms of spiritual qualities.

“The fruit of the Spirit,” Paul reminded the Galatians, “is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22–23).

Those Christlike traits mark those through whom His life flows.

(Your life is marked by

1. Love For Christ
2. Love for His Word
3. Love for His Church
4. Hatred for Sin.
5. Confession of Sin
6. Repentance from Sin
7. Desire for Holiness
8. A Love for Sinners )

**Praise offered to God is also fruit.** The writer of Hebrews exhorts his readers, “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15; cf. Isa. 57:19; Hos. 14:2).

**The Bible also identifies sacrificial love in meeting the needs of others as fruit.** Referring to the monetary gift he was collecting for the needy believers at Jerusalem, Paul wrote to the Romans, “Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain” (Rom. 15:28). Acknowledging the Philippians’ financial support of his ministry, Paul told them, “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account” (Phil. 4:17 nkjv). Supporting others who are in need is a tangible expression of love, which is one of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

**Fruit may also be defined as holy, righteous, God-honoring behavior in general.** Such conduct is “fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matt. 3:8); the fruit produced by the good soil (Matt. 13:23) of a transformed life; the “fruit of the Light [that] consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth” (Eph.

5:9); the “fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Phil. 1:11); the “peaceful fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11). Paul prayed that the Colossians would be continually “bearing fruit in every good work” (Col. 1:10), because Christians were “created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

Finally, the Bible defines fruit as converts to the gospel—not the artificial fruit of superficial “believers,” but genuine disciples who abide in the true vine. Referring to the Samaritans who were coming out to Him from the village of Sychar, many of whom would believe savingly in Him (John 4:39, 41), Jesus said, “Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together” (v. 36). He declared of His sacrificial death, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24). Paul expressed his desire to the Christians in Rome to win converts in the imperial capital: “I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you

also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles” (Rom. 1:13). At the close of his letter, Paul greeted “Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ” (16:5 nkjv). In 1 Corinthians 16:15 the apostle referred to “the household of Stephanas,” as “the first fruits of Achaia,” while in Colossians 1:6 he rejoiced that “in all the world also it [the gospel; v. 5] is constantly bearing fruit and increasing.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (pp. 149–150). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

## **Conclusion:**

These two men were both called by Jesus. They were called to follow Him, to become a learner, a disciple, a *mathētēs*, a student of Jesus. And they followed Him. And they followed Him from the moment that He called them until the end. They were there. They followed Jesus for years. It was a 24/7 deal. They walked together. They talked together. They slept side by side. They were itinerant. They moved from place to place and town to town and village to village for a period of three years inseparably, Jesus and these two men.

They both declared their complete devotion to Jesus. They so clearly affirmed their devotion to Jesus that they were believed by the most intimate friends of Jesus to be completely loyal to their Lord. Everybody assumed that their trust in Him, their faith in Him, their submission to Him, their devotion to Him was the real deal. They were trained by Jesus. They were trained how to face the world. They were given a worldview by Jesus. They were trained by Him to evaluate everything they saw, from the most simple elements of the material world to the most complex facets of religion. He was their sole Teacher. Not one of the men who traveled with Jesus ever taught. He was the only Teacher. Jesus' little group didn't have a faculty.

In fact, for the most part, whenever any of the disciples said anything, it had to be corrected.

So they had one Teacher for three years. They were taught by precept, principle, truth, explanation, and by example, because everything He taught He modeled. They were taught truth, wisdom, error. They were taught

about life, and death, and time, and eternity.

They were taught the importance of the revelation of God, the will of God, and obedience to Him.

They saw the miracles that Jesus did. They saw them all. They saw them all virtually every day for three years. They saw Him give sight to blind people, hearing to deaf people, voices to mute people, legs to people who couldn't walk. They saw Him raise people from the dead. They saw Him abruptly end funerals. They saw it all. They heard Him answer every important theological question that could ever be asked, and His answers were always truthful, accurate, and complete. They were confronted by Jesus every day on the issue of sin. They were confronted by Jesus every day on the importance of salvation. They learned things pertaining to the kingdom of God. It even went so far that He delegated His miracle power to them, and they were able to demonstrate power over disease, power over demons. They went out and did miracles in His name. Not only that, He sent them out to preach about Him, and they



went out, all of them – these two in particular – and they preached Jesus as Lord, Jesus as King and Messiah and Savior.

But during this final week, these two men who went through that experience both did something unimaginable, incomprehensible, unbelievable. Both of them betrayed Jesus. Both of them. They betrayed Him just before His death.

Let me tell you something else about them. Both were sinners and they knew it. . Both felt guilty for what they had done. Both felt guilt that was so powerful and so overwhelming that it affected them emotionally and they lost control. Both experienced overwhelming guilt. Another parallel, both of them, were overtaken by Satan himself to be his unholy agent. They're so similar.

And these two lived side by side, 24/7, for a period of three years, and they had the very identical experience and ended up as far as the east is from the west, infinitely and extremely separated forever. One of them, Peter, has his name at the head of the four lists of apostles in the New

Testament. The other one, Judas, has his name at the bottom. They are the top and the bottom, but they had the same experience with the same person.

One is in Heaven the other is in Hell

One repented and returned to Jesus the other committed suicide .

One became a preacher, the other the son of perdition

One was saved, the other lost.

One bore fruit the other did not.