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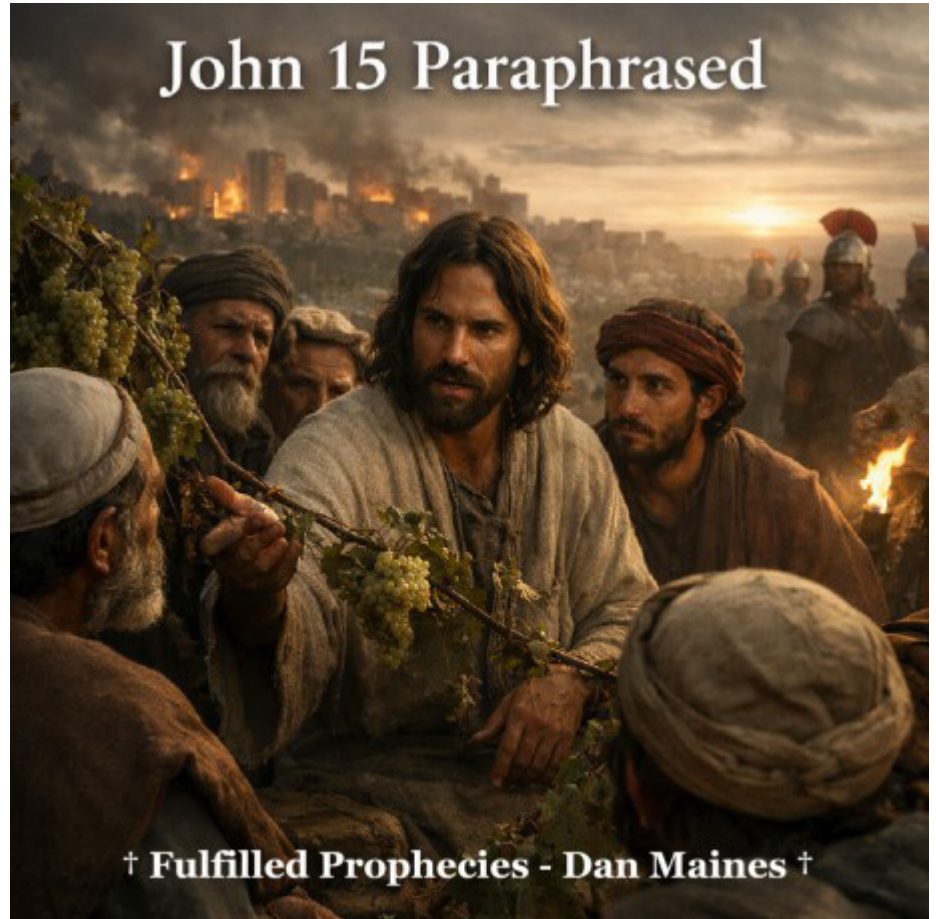
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John 15 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

John 15 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Jesus is speaking to His disciples about covenant life, not future speculation, but present reality that was being fulfilled in their generation

† The imagery of the vine and branches points to Israel as the old vineyard and Christ as the true source of life now replacing it (Isaiah 5:1-7)

† This chapter shows the transition from the old covenant

system to life fully rooted in Christ

John 15:1

I am the true vine, and My Father is the one who tends it

† Israel was called God's vine, but failed, now Christ stands as the true and faithful vine (Psalm 80:8-16)

† The Father tending the vine shows active covenant oversight and judgment happening in that generation

† Irenaeus wrote that Christ recapitulates Israel, becoming what Israel failed to be

John 15:2

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He removes, and every branch that bears fruit He cleans so it produces more

† Fruitlessness points to unbelieving Israel, especially leadership that rejected Christ

† Removal is covenant judgment, fulfilled in AD 70 when the unfruitful were cut off

† Josephus records the destruction and removal of that generation as judgment upon them

John 15:3

You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you

† The disciples were set apart through Christ's teaching, not temple rituals

† Cleansing here replaces the old purification system with the word of Christ

† Clement of Alexandria taught that the word of Christ purifies the soul

John 15:4

Remain in Me, and I will remain in you, just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine

† Remaining is covenant union, not mystical future language, but present obedience and faith

† Life flows from Christ alone, not from law or temple

† Eusebius notes the early believers separated from temple reliance and remained in Christ

John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches, the one who remains in Me bears much fruit, apart from Me you can do nothing

† This shows total dependence on Christ, not partial reliance

† The fruit is covenant fruit, righteousness, faithfulness, obedience

† Tertullian emphasized that apart from Christ, all works are empty

John 15:6

If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up, then they gather them and burn them

† This is judgment language tied directly to that generation

† Burning reflects the destruction of Jerusalem and the old covenant system

† Josephus describes the literal burning of Jerusalem in AD 70

John 15:7

If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done

† This promise is tied to alignment with Christ's will, not personal desires

† The disciples were empowered for their mission before the covenant ended

† Early church writings show prayers centered on kingdom fulfillment

John 15:8

My Father is glorified when you bear much fruit and prove to be My disciples

† Fruit was the visible evidence of true covenant identity

† This replaced lineage identity under the old covenant

† Irenaeus taught that true discipleship is shown through fruit

John 15:9

Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you, remain in My love

- † This is covenant love, consistent, active, and relational
- † Remaining in love means obedience and faithfulness
- † Clement of Alexandria emphasized love as the mark of the new covenant

John 15:10

If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love

- † Obedience is the evidence of remaining, not the cause of salvation
- † This shifts focus from law to Christ's commands
- † Tertullian wrote that obedience flows from faith, not from law

John 15:11

I have spoken these things so My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete

- † Joy here is covenant fulfillment, not emotional feeling
- † The completion of joy comes with the completion of the old covenant age
- † Eusebius connects this joy to the establishment of the church

John 15:12

This is My commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you

- † Love replaces the law as the central command
- † This command defined the new covenant community
- † Early writers consistently pointed to love as the defining mark

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this, that one lays down his life for his friends

- † This directly points to Christ's sacrifice
- † It also sets the standard for His followers
- † Irenaeus highlights Christ's death as the ultimate act of love

John 15:14

You are My friends if you do what I command

† Friendship with Christ is based on obedience

† This is relational, not ritualistic

† Clement wrote that obedience reveals true friendship with God

John 15:15

I no longer call you slaves, but friends, because I have made known everything I heard from My Father

† This marks a shift from servant to covenant partner

† Revelation of truth replaces hidden mysteries

† Early church writings emphasize this new relationship

John 15:16

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to bear fruit that remains

† This is about their mission to bring the gospel before AD 70

† Lasting fruit is the establishment of the new covenant people

† Eusebius records the spread of the gospel before Jerusalem fell

John 15:17

This I command you, that you love one another

† The command is repeated to show its importance

† Love is the defining mark of the new covenant

† Tertullian noted how the early church was known for love

John 15:18

If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you

† The world here refers to the unbelieving Jewish system

† Their rejection of Christ extended to His followers

† Josephus records intense persecution during this time

John 15:19

If you were of the world, the world would love you, but I chose

you out of the world

† Separation from the old system brought persecution

† The disciples were no longer part of that covenant structure

† Early believers were cast out of synagogues

John 15:20

A slave is not greater than his master, if they persecuted Me, they will persecute you

† This prepares them for coming suffering

† Persecution confirms alignment with Christ

† Eusebius documents the persecution of early Christians

John 15:21

They will do all these things because they do not know the One who sent Me

† Ignorance of God led to rejection of Christ

† This applies directly to that generation

† Irenaeus said they rejected the Son because they did not know the Father

John 15:22

If I had not come and spoken, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse

† Christ's presence exposed their sin fully

† Judgment came because of revealed truth

† This aligns with covenant accountability

John 15:23

The one who hates Me hates My Father also

† Rejecting Christ is rejecting God

† This destroys the idea that they were still in covenant favor

† Clement emphasized unity between Father and Son

John 15:24

If I had not done the works among them, they would not have sin, but now they have seen and hated both Me and My Father

† Miracles confirmed His identity

- † Their rejection was willful, not ignorant
- † This sealed their judgment

John 15:25

They hated Me without a cause

- † This fulfills what was written in the law (Psalm 35:19)
- † Their hatred was unjustified and revealed their hearts
- † Early writers saw this as clear prophetic fulfillment

John 15:26

When the Helper comes, whom I will send from the Father, He will testify about Me

- † The Spirit would empower their witness before judgment came
- † This was fulfilled in Acts as the gospel spread rapidly
- † Eusebius records the spread of testimony across nations

John 15:27

You will also testify because you have been with Me from the beginning

- † The disciples were eyewitnesses, their testimony carried authority
- † Their mission was completed before the end of that age
- † The historical record confirms their testimony spread before AD 70

Historical References

- † Josephus, Wars of the Jews, records the destruction of Jerusalem and burning of the city
- † Irenaeus, Against Heresies, explains Christ as the true vine replacing Israel
- † Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, documents early church persecution and expansion
- † Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, teaches purification through the word
- † Tertullian, Apology, describes the fruit and love of early

believers

How it applies to us today

† We are not connected to God through systems or traditions, but through Christ alone

† Fruit still matters, not for earning life, but as evidence of being in Him

† Love remains the defining mark of those who belong to Christ

† We don't fear judgment like they did, because that covenant judgment has already been fulfilled

† We live in the reality of the completed work, not waiting for it

Q & A Appendix:

Q What does the vine represent

A Christ as the true source of covenant life replacing Israel (Isaiah 5:1-7)

Q What does it mean to be cut off

A Covenant judgment on unbelieving Israel fulfilled in AD 70 (Luke 21:20-22)

Q What is the fruit

A Righteousness and obedience flowing from union with Christ (Galatians 5:22-23)

Q Who is the world that hates them

A The unbelieving Jewish system that rejected Christ (John 1:11)

Q When was this fulfilled

A In that generation leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:34)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† John 15

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

- † Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History
- † Clement of Alexandria, Stromata
- † Tertullian, Apology

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