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By Dan Maines

John 15

John 15:1

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser."

† Israel was often symbolized as God's vine (Psalm 80:8-9; Isaiah 5:1-7), but it failed to bear fruit. Jesus declared Himself the true vine, the faithful Israel, with the Father as caretaker.

† Josephus (Antiquities 15.11.3) mentions the golden vine at the temple, a national symbol of Israel. Christ replaced that shadow with reality.

John 15:2

"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."

† Fruitlessness proves false discipleship and leads to removal. Fruitful believers face pruning through trials for greater productivity.

John 15:3-4

"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me."

† The cleansing word prepared the disciples for fruitfulness. Union with Christ is the sole source of life.

John 15:5-6

"I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and throw them into the fire, and they are burned."

† Vital union with Christ produces much fruit; separation results in destruction.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (CD 19.10-11) describe the wicked as branches destined for burning, a vivid cultural parallel.

John 15:7-8

"If you remain in Me, and My words remain 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."

† Fruitfulness in answered prayer and obedience glorifies the Father and confirms true discipleship.

John 15:9-10

"Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; remain in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love."

† Love is maintained by obedience. Jesus modeled this by perfect submission to the Father.

John 15:11

"These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

† True joy flows from abiding in Christ and obeying His commands.

John 15:12-13

"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends."

† Love reaches its highest form in self-sacrifice. Jesus defined love by His coming death.

† Ignatius of Antioch taught that true disciples mirror Christ's love by bearing one another's burdens.

John 15:14-15

"You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."

† Christ elevated His disciples from servants to friends, granting them intimate knowledge of the Father's will.

John 15:16-17

"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. This I command you, that you love one another."

† Election by Christ secures mission and fruit. Prayer in His name empowers service.

John 15:18-19

"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 you as 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."

† Hatred from the world validates discipleship. Believers share in the rejection of Christ.

† Tacitus (Annals 15.44) describes Roman hostility toward Christians, confirming the reality of persecution.

John 15:20-21

"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 followed My word, they will follow yours also. But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me."

† Persecution is certain for disciples, rooted in ignorance of God.

John 15:22-25

"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. The one who hates Me hates My Father as well. 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

this happened so that the word which is written in their Law will be fulfilled: 'They hated Me for no reason.'

† Rejection of Christ revealed rejection of the Father. Scripture (Psalm 35:19; Psalm 69:4) foretold their baseless hatred.

John 15:26-27

"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, namely the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you are testifying as well, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

† The Spirit confirms Christ's testimony, empowering the apostles to bear witness.

† Early Christian writings (Didache 16.7) emphasize the Spirit's role in guiding truth and witness.

How it applies to us today

† Christ is the true vine; apart from Him, we can do nothing.

† Love is the essence of fruitfulness, modeled by Christ's sacrifice.

† Expect hatred from the world, but take courage in the Spirit's testimony.

† Remaining in Christ brings lasting fruit, joy, and assurance.

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

Source Index

† Josephus, Antiquities 15.11.3 – golden vine at the temple

† Dead Sea Scrolls, CD 19.10-11 – wicked as branches burned

† Ignatius of Antioch – sacrificial love in the church

† Tacitus, Annals 15.44 – Roman hostility toward Christians

† Didache 16.7 – Spirit's role in guiding testimony

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