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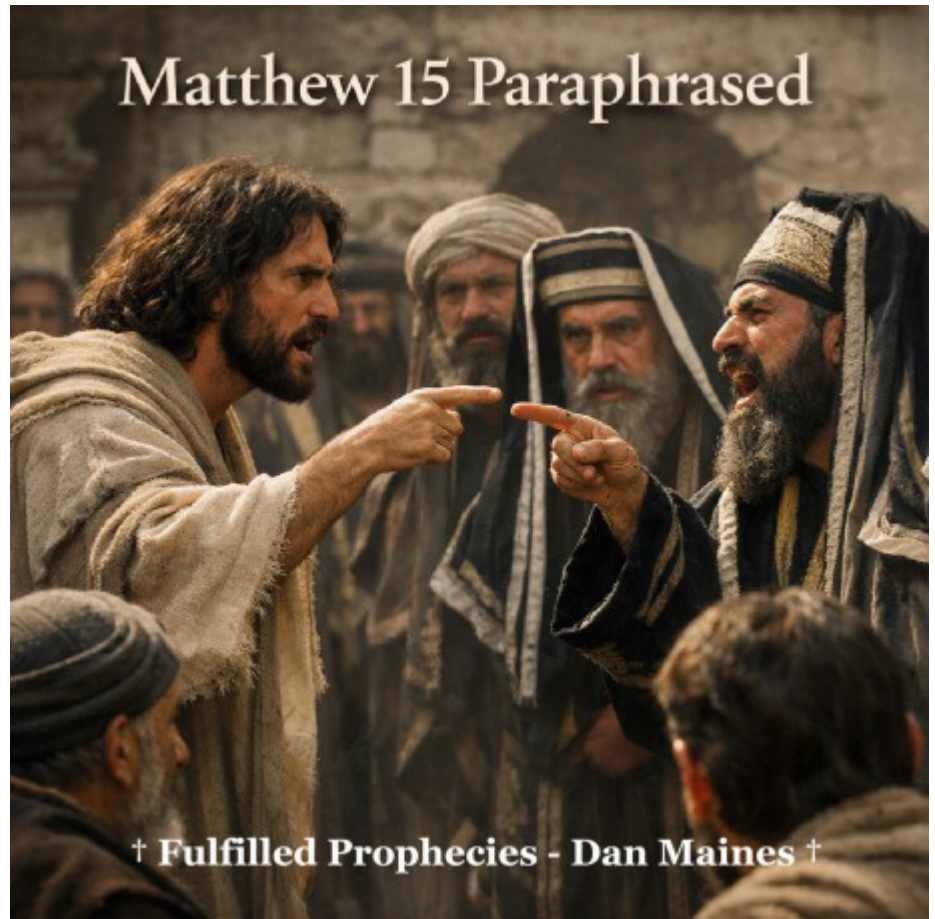
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## Matthew 15 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

## Matthew 15 Paraphrased

### Introduction

† Jesus confronts the growing problem among the religious leaders, they had elevated human traditions above the commandments of God, which distorted the true meaning of the Law (Isaiah 29:13).

† The conflict in this chapter exposes the difference between outward religion and true obedience that comes from the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

† Matthew records this event to show that the corruption of

Israel's leadership was one of the reasons judgment would eventually fall on that generation (Matthew 23:36).

### **Matthew 15:1**

Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said,

† These leaders traveled from Jerusalem because Jesus' influence was spreading rapidly, and they wanted to challenge His authority (John 7:32).

† Jerusalem was the center of religious authority in Israel, so this confrontation represents the official religious establishment confronting the Messiah (Matthew 21:23).

### **Matthew 15:2**

Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.

† The issue was not hygiene but ritual tradition, these ceremonial washings were man made rules added to the Law (Mark 7:3-4).

† By elevating tradition to the same level as God's command, the leaders were corrupting the Law itself (Deuteronomy 4:2).

### **Matthew 15:3**

And He answered and said to them, Why do you yourselves break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?

† Jesus immediately exposes their hypocrisy by showing that their traditions were actually causing them to violate God's commands (Isaiah 29:13).

† This reversal turns the accusation back on them and reveals their spiritual blindness (Matthew 23:24).

### **Matthew 15:4**

For God said, Honor your father and mother, and, He who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.

† Jesus quotes directly from the Law to show that the command to honor parents was clear and binding (Exodus 20:12; Exodus 21:17).

† The seriousness of the command demonstrates how deeply the leaders had distorted God's Law through their traditions (Deuteronomy 27:16).

### **Matthew 15:5**

But you say, Whoever says to his father or mother, Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,

† This refers to the Corban tradition, where a person could declare their possessions dedicated to God to avoid helping their parents (Mark 7:11).

† The practice allowed people to appear religious while neglecting their family responsibilities (Proverbs 28:24).

### **Matthew 15:6**

he is not to honor his father or his mother. And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

† Jesus makes the central point clear, their tradition directly contradicted God's command (Isaiah 29:13).

† When human tradition replaces scripture, it always results in corruption of truth (Colossians 2:8).

### **Matthew 15:7**

You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:

† Jesus identifies their behavior as the exact fulfillment of Isaiah's warning about empty religious worship (Isaiah 29:13).

† Hypocrisy means wearing a mask, outward religion without inward obedience (Matthew 23:27).

### **Matthew 15:8**

This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me.

† God has always looked at the heart rather than outward religious performance (1 Samuel 16:7).

† Empty words without obedience are meaningless to God (James 1:26).

### **Matthew 15:9**

But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.

† Worship becomes worthless when it is built on human traditions instead of God's word (Isaiah 29:13).

† This same danger exists whenever religious systems elevate traditions above scripture (Colossians 2:22).

### **Matthew 15:10**

After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, Hear and understand.

† Jesus now shifts from confronting the leaders to teaching the crowd directly (Matthew 13:9).

† This instruction reveals that spiritual understanding requires listening carefully to truth (Proverbs 4:7).

### **Matthew 15:11**

It is not what enters the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.

† Jesus is explaining that moral corruption comes from the heart, not from ceremonial food laws (Mark 7:18-23).

† This teaching begins to expose the deeper spiritual nature of the Law's fulfillment (Jeremiah 31:33).

### **Matthew 15:12**

Then the disciples came and said to Him, Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?

† The disciples recognized that Jesus' teaching directly challenged the authority of the religious leaders (John 7:48).

† Truth often offends those who rely on tradition rather than scripture (Galatians 4:16).

### **Matthew 15:13**

But He answered and said, Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted.

† Jesus is warning that religious systems not established by God will ultimately be destroyed (Psalm 1:4-6).

† This also anticipates the coming judgment on the corrupt leadership of Israel (Matthew 23:38).

### **Matthew 15:14**

Let them alone, they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.

† Jesus describes the spiritual blindness of the leaders who were supposed to guide Israel (Isaiah 56:10).

† When false teachers lead others, both the leaders and their followers suffer the consequences (Romans 2:19-21).

### **Matthew 15:15**

Peter said to Him, Explain the parable to us.

† Even the disciples sometimes struggled to fully grasp Jesus' teachings (Mark 8:17).

† Their willingness to ask questions shows their desire to understand the truth more deeply (Luke 24:45).

### **Matthew 15:16**

Jesus said, Are you still lacking in understanding also?

† Jesus gently corrects the disciples for not grasping the spiritual meaning of His teaching (Hebrews 5:12).

† Spiritual understanding develops over time as truth is revealed (John 16:12).

### **Matthew 15:17**

Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?

† Jesus uses a simple physical explanation to show that food cannot corrupt the soul (Romans 14:17).

† The focus of God's concern has always been the inner person (Psalm 51:6).

### **Matthew 15:18**

But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.

† Words reveal the true condition of the heart (Luke 6:45).

† Sin originates from the inner nature of humanity, not external circumstances (Jeremiah 17:9).

### **Matthew 15:19**

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false witness, slanders.

† Jesus lists the kinds of sins that originate from the corrupted human heart (Galatians 5:19-21).

† These are violations of God's moral law and cannot be corrected by outward rituals (Romans 3:20).

### **Matthew 15:20**

These are the things which defile the man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.

† Jesus clearly rejects the Pharisaic tradition that elevated ceremonial washing above moral obedience (Mark 7:23).

† This teaching shifts the focus from ritual religion to genuine righteousness (Micah 6:8).

### **Matthew 15:21**

Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.

† Tyre and Sidon were Gentile regions, showing that Jesus' ministry was beginning to reach beyond Israel (Isaiah 49:6).

† This movement anticipates the later inclusion of the nations into the covenant blessings (Acts 13:47).

### **Matthew 15:22**

And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David, my daughter is cruelly demon possessed.

† This woman demonstrates remarkable faith by recognizing Jesus as the Son of David, a Messianic title (Matthew 9:27).

† Her plea also shows that Gentiles were already recognizing Christ's authority (Isaiah 60:3).

### **Matthew 15:23**

But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.

† Jesus' silence serves as a test of the woman's persistence and faith (Hebrews 11:6).

† The disciples' reaction reflects the common Jewish attitude toward Gentiles at that time (Acts 10:28).

### **Matthew 15:24**

But He answered and said, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

† Jesus' earthly mission focused first on Israel because they were the covenant people (Romans 1:16).

† The promises given to the patriarchs were to be fulfilled through Israel before extending to the nations (Genesis 12:3).

### **Matthew 15:25**

But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, Lord, help me.

† Her humility and persistence demonstrate genuine faith (James 4:10).

† True faith approaches God with dependence and humility (Psalm 34:18).

### **Matthew 15:26**

And He answered and said, It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.

† This statement reflects the common Jewish expression distinguishing Israel from Gentiles (Matthew 10:6).

† Yet Jesus uses the moment to reveal the depth of the woman's faith (Luke 7:9).

### **Matthew 15:27**

But she said, Yes, Lord, but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

† Her response shows remarkable humility and confidence in

Jesus' mercy (Psalm 145:9).

† Faith does not demand rights, it trusts in God's grace (Ephesians 2:8).

### **Matthew 15:28**

Then Jesus said to her, O woman, your faith is great, it shall be done for you as you wish. And her daughter was healed at once.

† Jesus publicly praises her faith, something rarely stated even about His disciples (Matthew 8:10).

† The healing demonstrates Christ's authority over spiritual forces (Luke 4:36).

### **Matthew 15:29**

Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there.

† Jesus often withdrew to elevated places for teaching and ministry (Matthew 5:1).

† These locations allowed large crowds to gather and hear His teaching (Mark 3:13).

### **Matthew 15:30**

And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet, and He healed them.

† The miracles demonstrated that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecies concerning the Messiah (Isaiah 35:5-6).

† These healings were signs pointing to the restoration promised in the kingdom (Luke 7:22).

### **Matthew 15:31**

So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they glorified the God of Israel.

† The miracles caused the people to recognize the power of God working through Jesus (Psalm 103:2-3).

† The phrase God of Israel reflects that many witnesses were

likely Gentiles in this region (Matthew 4:25).

### **Matthew 15:32**

And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat, and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.

† Jesus' compassion shows His concern for both spiritual and physical needs (Psalm 145:15-16).

† This moment leads to another miracle that demonstrates His provision (John 6:5-13).

### **Matthew 15:33**

The disciples said to Him, Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?

† The disciples again struggle to remember the earlier feeding miracle (Matthew 14:15-21).

† This shows how easily people forget God's past works (Psalm 78:11).

### **Matthew 15:34**

And Jesus said to them, How many loaves do you have? And they said, Seven, and a few small fish.

† Jesus often used what little was available to demonstrate God's power (2 Kings 4:42-44).

† Faith begins with trusting God with what we already have (Luke 16:10).

### **Matthew 15:35**

And He directed the people to sit down on the ground.

† The orderly preparation reflects that God is a God of order (1 Corinthians 14:33).

† Jesus prepares the crowd before performing the miracle (John 6:10).

### **Matthew 15:36**

And He took the seven loaves and the fish, and giving thanks,

He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

† Jesus gives thanks to the Father before providing the miracle (1 Timothy 4:4).

† The disciples act as the distributors, demonstrating their role in ministry (Matthew 10:1).

### **Matthew 15:37**

And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.

† God's provision is always abundant, far beyond what people expect (Ephesians 3:20).

† The leftover baskets demonstrate the completeness of the miracle (Psalm 107:9).

### **Matthew 15:38**

And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.

† The total crowd would have been far larger when counting families (Matthew 14:21).

† This miracle again confirms Jesus as the provider for His people (Psalm 132:15).

### **Matthew 15:39**

And sending away the crowds, Jesus got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan.

† Jesus frequently moved between regions during His ministry, continuing to spread His message (Matthew 9:35).

† These movements prepared the way for the wider proclamation of the gospel (Acts 1:8).

### **Historical References**

† Eusebius recorded that early Christians understood Jesus' confrontations with the Pharisees as evidence of the corruption of the religious leadership that would later face judgment in AD 70 (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5).

† Josephus describes how the religious leadership of Jerusalem

had become deeply influenced by traditions and internal corruption during the first century (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 13.10).

† Irenaeus wrote that Christ revealed the true intent of the Law by exposing how traditions had replaced obedience to God (Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.13).

### **How It Applies To Us Today**

† This chapter reminds us that religious tradition must never replace the clear teaching of scripture (Colossians 2:8).

† God cares about the condition of the heart more than outward religious appearances (1 Samuel 16:7).

† True faith, like the Canaanite woman's faith, trusts God's mercy even when circumstances seem difficult (Hebrews 11:6).

† Jesus still provides for His people just as He provided for the crowds in the wilderness (Matthew 6:33).

### **Q & A Appendix**

**Q** Why did Jesus confront the Pharisees so strongly?

**A** Because their traditions had replaced God's commandments and were misleading the people (Matthew 15:3-9).

**Q** What does Jesus mean when He says what comes out of the mouth defiles a person?

**A** He is teaching that sin originates in the heart, not in external rituals or food laws (Matthew 15:18-20; Luke 6:45).

**Q** Why did Jesus initially say He was sent only to Israel?

**A** His earthly ministry began with Israel as the covenant people, but the blessing was always intended to reach the nations (Matthew 15:24; Genesis 12:3).

**Q** What does the feeding of the four thousand demonstrate?

**A** It shows Christ's authority, compassion, and ability to provide abundantly for those who follow Him (Matthew 15:32-38).

**Q** Why did Jesus quote Isaiah when confronting the Pharisees?

**A** Because Isaiah had already warned that Israel's leaders would honor God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him. Jesus shows that the same spiritual condition still existed

in His day (Matthew 15:7-9; Isaiah 29:13).

**Q** Why did Jesus call the Pharisees blind guides?

**A** They claimed to teach God's Law, but their traditions had replaced the commandments of God. Because they were spiritually blind, they were leading the people into the same blindness (Matthew 15:13-14; Romans 2:19-21).

**Q** Why did Jesus test the Canaanite woman before healing her daughter?

**A** Her persistence revealed genuine faith. Jesus used the moment to show that true faith could be found even among Gentiles while many in Israel were rejecting Him (Matthew 15:21-28; Matthew 8:10).

**Q** What does this chapter teach about tradition in religion?

**A** It shows that when human traditions replace scripture, they corrupt the truth and mislead people. God's word must always remain the authority (Matthew 15:3-6; Colossians 2:8).

**Q** Why did Jesus perform another feeding miracle in this chapter?

**A** The feeding of the four thousand demonstrated again that the Messiah provides for His people and has authority over creation. It also revealed His compassion for the crowds who followed Him (Matthew 15:32-38; Psalm 107:9).

**Q** How does this chapter connect to the coming judgment on Jerusalem?

**A** Jesus exposed the corruption of Israel's leadership, which later led to the judgment He warned about throughout the Gospels. Their rejection of God's commandments and their traditions prepared the way for that national judgment (Matthew 23:36-38; Luke 19:41-44).

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

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## Source Index

† Matthew 15; Isaiah 29:13; Exodus 20:12; Exodus 21:17; Mark 7:3-23; Luke 6:45; Isaiah 35:5-6; Matthew 14:15-21; Genesis 12:3

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5; Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 13.10; Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.13

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