

## The Vine and the Branch

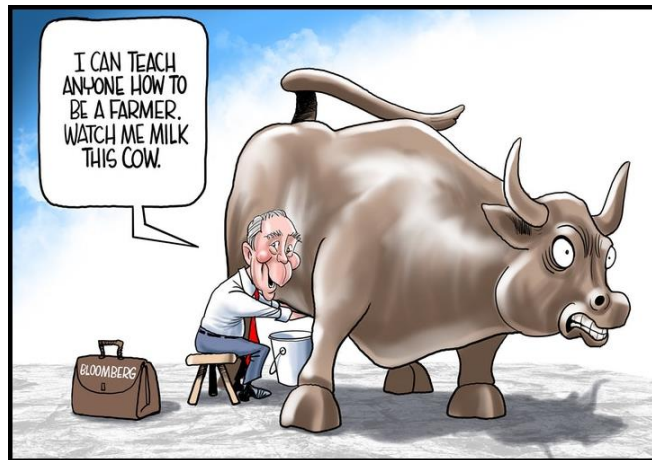
*I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 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. 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. — John 15:1-6*

### **Understanding the Cultural/Historical Setting**

In 2016 Mike Bloomberg said, “I could teach anybody — even people in this room, no offense intended — to be a farmer. It’s a [process]: you dig a hole, you put a seed in, you put dirt on top, add water, up comes the corn.”

That was an extremely ignorant comment. However, could we be guilty of making equally ignorant assumptions when interpreting God’s Word?

When interpreting God’s Word, we should use the literal, historical-grammatical method for understanding the intended meaning of the Biblical text. But how often do we skip over the “historical-cultural” component of this method of interpretation?



If we ignore the “historical” component, then we could end up trying to milk a bull instead of a cow.

How many of us have actually grown grapes? Could it be that growing grapes in Israel 2000 years ago might look a bit different than growing grapes in America does today?

When we come to a text such as John 15, many simply assume that they know all there is to know about growing grapes 2000 years ago in a land thousands of miles away. They put on their 21<sup>st</sup> century American tinted glasses and interpret John 15 through their own cultural filter.

As students of God’s Word, we need to ask ourselves 2 important questions:

- “How would the original readers of John’s Gospel have understood this passage of scripture?”

- “What clues in the context of this passage will shed light on our understanding of the text?”

In 1996, Dr. Gary Derickson wrote an article for the publication *Bibliotheca Sacra* entitled *Viticulture and John 15:1-6*. The term “viticulture” comes from a Latin word meaning “vine.” Simply put, it is the science of cultivating and harvesting of grapes.

What qualifies him to write such an article? Dr. Derickson is Professor of Biblical Studies and Greek Chair, as well as Biblical Studies and Theology at Corban University. He has a Bachelor of Science degree as well as a Master of Science degree in horticulture from Texas A&M University where he taught grape-pruning. He has a Th.M. and Ph.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary. He probably has a better handle on growing grapes than the average theologian today.

Dr. Derickson defines our 21<sup>st</sup> century problem in his article:

Few Bible students today can point to having an agricultural background or having lived on a farm. This has led to a distinct lack of familiarity with all or most aspects of agriculture, including viticulture.

Since the culture of the Bible was principally agrarian, this modern unfamiliarity may contribute to misunderstanding some portions of Scripture. When interpreting difficult passages, such issues as context and lexical meanings are certainly important. But the proper use of historical and cultural data may also inform one’s understanding of key terms and concepts, thereby clarifying what might otherwise be obscure or confusing in a biblical passage.<sup>1</sup>

Not only is it important to understand “historical-cultural” setting, we must also take into account the context of any given passage of scripture that we are studying. As we consider the contextual clues within this passage, we need to understand that Jesus was addressing His eleven disciples who were believers.

Dr. Derickson notes:

As part of His final discourse, Jesus’ words in John 15:1-6 are addressed to His believing disciples. Judas had recently departed from their company with the intention of betraying Him, something the others would learn very soon. Jesus was discussing His relationship to them as their source of life and as the one whose ministry would be continued through the Holy Spirit after His departure. Because the disciples responded with worry and sorrow, Jesus was reassuring and comforting them. In light of His departure and the promised ministry of the Holy Spirit, Jesus introduced the vine-and-branches analogy to reveal to them the importance of their continued dependence on Him. They must “abide.”<sup>2</sup>

The eleven disciples, minus Judas, were all believers. The topic that Jesus addressed in these verses had to do with “abiding.” In John 15:1-10, Jesus mentioned “abide” or “abiding” 10 times, and He spoke of fruit 6 times. The term “abiding” has reference to fellowship. Only those who have been born again are capable of having fellowship with the Father and His Son. This is important to understand. This text is for believers only and not for unbelievers.

The phrase “in Me” is used 16 times in John’s Gospel. In each case it refers to fellowship with Christ. It is inconsistent then to say that the phrase in John 15 refers to a person who merely professes to be saved but is not.

Dr. Constable concurs:

Jesus earlier taught about the mutual indwelling of believers and Himself (Jn 14:20). Therefore it seems clear that Jesus was speaking here of genuine believers such as the Eleven, not simply professing believers.<sup>3</sup>

With that introduction, let's look at the text.

***15:1—I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.***

This is the last of the 7 great “I am” statements in John.

In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was depicted as a vine planted by Jehovah. But the nation proved unfaithful and unfruitful, so the Lord Jesus presented Himself as the true vine, the perfect fulfillment of all the other types and shadows.

The word “true” means genuine or authentic. Jesus, as the true vine, fulfilled what God intended for Israel.

Dr. Constable wrote:

Jesus often used a grapevine to describe the nation of Israel (cf. Mt 20:1-16; 21:23-41; Mk 12:1-9; Lk 13:6-9; 20:9-16). The vine as a symbol of Israel appears on coins of the Maccabees. Here Jesus used the vine metaphorically of Himself. One can hardly escape the inference that Jesus viewed Himself as the fulfillment of Israel. Covenant theologians like to think of the church as the fulfillment of Israel, but there is no scriptural warrant for this conclusion...<sup>4</sup>

The vinedresser tilled the soil, planted the seeds, pruned the vines and harvested the crops. God the Father is pictured as the vinedresser in this passage.

***15:2a—Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away...***

According to Jesus, some believers in Him do not bear fruit. While all believers should bear fruit, it is possible that some will not bear fruit for a season.

Dr. Constable explains:

Fruit-bearing is the normal but not the inevitable consequence of having divine life. This is true of grapevines too. Grapevines have branches that bear fruit, but they must also have branches that presently bear no fruit but are growing stronger so they will bear fruit in the future. There can be genuine life without fruit in a vine, and there can be in a Christian as well.<sup>5</sup>

When a person trusts Christ for salvation, God brings about many changes in their life. Lewis Sperry Chafer listed 33 things that happen to a person the moment they trust Jesus Christ as Savior. However these are all invisible changes. In contrast, fruit is what a plant produces on the outside that other people can see and benefit from.

Who are the branches that do not bear fruit? Theologians give several possible answers to this question.

Some say that an unfruitful branch is an unbeliever who pretends to be a Christian. In other words, this person has never really been born again. However, as we noted, this section is about abiding. Only a genuine believer can abide in Christ. So this cannot be an option.

Others say that an unfruitful branch is a genuine believer who loses (or forfeits) their salvation. However, this contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture regarding the security of the believer.

I was saved in 1973, while attending Oregon Institute of Technology when I trusted Christ for salvation. The fellow who led me to the Lord, did not hold to the security of the believer. Instead, he felt that a genuine believer could lose their salvation. Actually, he probably would have said that they could forfeit their salvation rather than lose their salvation.

As a new believer, I was encouraged to read the Gospel of John. John has so many verses that give us the assurance of salvation. But when I would talk to my friend about passages in John's Gospel, he would rain on my parade!

One day I read John 10:27-30. In this text, Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them **eternal life**, and **they shall never perish**; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 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."

In my excitement, I shared my new discovery of the security of the believer with my friend.

He replied: "That's true. No one can snatch the sheep out of the Father's hand, but the sheep can jump out of His hand."

In other words, while you cannot "lose your salvation" you can willfully forfeit your salvation.

My heart sunk because I could never really be sure that I would make it to heaven.

According to those who teach the "insecurity of the believer," eternal life is not really eternal since it is possible to forfeit your salvation.

And Jesus' words "they shall never perish" are only valid *as long as the sheep does not jump out of the Father's hand*.

But it is not just the Father's hand that the sheep has to jump out of. That wayward sheep must also escape from the hand of Jesus. You see, the Lord Jesus has us in His hand. And the Father's hand is wrapped around the Son's hand.

According to my friend, that willful sheep has the ability to jump out the hands of both the Father and the Son.

Consider this illustration. A father and daughter are standing on a busy street corner. The father is holding his little girl's hand so that she does not run out into the traffic. Suddenly her balloon flies away and she tries to pull away from her father in order to get her balloon. As she struggles, what does her father do? He grips her hand tighter so that she does not run out into traffic. A good parent will not allow harm to come to their child if they have the power to prevent it.

Here is my question for those who hold to the "insecurity of the believer." Does a human parent have more concern and compassion for their child than God the Father has for His own children?

In my opinion, those who hold to the "insecurity of the believer" have a huge theological problem in their view of the character of God. What do I mean? Those holding to the security of the believer can honestly affirm the attributes of God. Those holding to the insecurity of the believer will have to deny at least one of the attributes of God.

We say that God is "all-knowing." The doctrine of omniscience is taught in God's Word.

*Isaiah 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, "My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure."*

If God is all-knowing, then He would know the exact moment a sheep would "jump out of His hand" if indeed it were possible to escape His grip.

We say that God is "all-powerful." The doctrine of omnipotence is also taught in God's Word.

*Jude 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.*

This "all-powerful" God has the ability to keep us from stumbling. But not only that, He is sovereign over matters of life and death.

*1 Samuel 2:6 "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up."*

Since God is "all-knowing" then He knows the exact moment the sheep will "jump out of His hand." Since He is sovereign over matters of life and death, He could prevent that sheep from jumping out of His hand by taking the life of that straying sheep prematurely. Then we must ask ourselves, "why would He allow the straying sheep to jump out of His hand?"

We say that God is All-Loving. In the first letter of John, he confirms that God is indeed omnibenevolent.

*1 John 4:8, 16 "God is love."*

Here is the problem for those who maintain that the sheep can jump out of the Father's hand. If God is "all-knowing" and "all-powerful," then He cannot be "all-loving."

The Father knew the exact moment that the sheep would "jump out of His hand." He had the ability to prevent that from happening by taking the life of the sheep before that occurred. Therefore, this "all-knowing" and "all-powerful" God cannot be "all-loving." Apparently, He does not even possess the care and compassion of an earthly parent.

The U.S. has a "duty to act" law. For example, parents, teachers and other caregivers have a "duty to act" to save children. Trained individuals like EMTs have a "duty to act" while on the job.

The U.S. also has a "stop and render assistance law" in event you're involved in a car accident, even if it only means calling for an ambulance.

Eight states have enacted laws requiring citizens to assist strangers in peril. You can be charged with a misdemeanor for not responding to someone in danger.

Does the U.S. court system have a higher standard of morality than God has? Impossible!

So the unfruitful branch cannot be a genuine believer who loses/forfeits their salvation. That leaves us with one more option.

The unfruitful branch is a genuine believer who simply fails to bear the fruit of the Spirit for a season. His unfruitfulness does not turn him into a non-branch. An unproductive branch is nevertheless still a branch.

What happens to the branch that bears no fruit?

According to Jesus, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He **takes away** [αἶρω; airō]... (John 15:2a).”

The Greek word “αἶρω” [airō] can mean: 1) “to take away” or 2) “to lift up.”

Since this verse is speaking about genuine believers who do not lose/forfeit their salvation, then what does “take away” mean? It could mean to take away in judgement.

It is possible that the life of the unfruitful believer is terminated prematurely. In other words, God took that believer home before their barren life caused irreparable damage. Paul wrote about some Corinthian believers who had their life ended because they were dishonoring the Lord’s Table. He wrote, “For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep (1 Cor. 11:30).”

Another possibility is that the reward of the believer will be taken away at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul also wrote, “If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Cor. 3:15).”

While these are possible options for the concept of “take away,” I think that there is a better explanation.

Another definition of αἶρω [airō] is “to lift up.” This could mean that these unfruitful branches get special attention from the vinedresser so that they will bear fruit in the future.

Notice the footnote in the New King James Version:

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away<sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> Or *lifts up*

The footnote in the New English Translation is very informative:

He takes away<sup>[3]</sup> every branch that does not bear fruit in me.

<sup>[3]</sup> The Greek verb αἶρω (airō) can mean “lift up” as well as “take away,” and it is sometimes argued that here it is a reference to the gardener “lifting up” (i.e., propping up) a weak branch so that it bears fruit again. In Johannine usage the word occurs in the sense of “lift up” in 8:59 and 5:8-12...

Consider the following examples from the New Testament of how the Greek word αἶρω (airō) is used:

Mt. 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and **take up** (airō) his cross, and follow Me.

Jn. 8:59 Then they **took up** (airō) stones to throw at Him...

Jn. 5:8-12 Jesus said to him, “Rise, **take up** (airō) your bed and walk.” And immediately the man was made well, **took up** (airō) his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to **carry** (airō) your bed.” He answered them, “He who made me well said to me, ‘**Take up** (airō) your bed and walk.’” Then they asked him, “Who is the Man who said to you, ‘**Take up** (airō) your bed and walk?’”

Jn. 11:41 And Jesus **lifted up** (*airō*) His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.”

Historical records confirm that vinedressers in Jesus’ day did indeed lift up particular branches in order to give them every opportunity to produce fruit. In the spring of the year, vinedressers lifted up some branches and pruned other branches of grapevines so that they might produce fruit. Jesus gave this teaching in the spring when farmers did exactly what He described in this verse.

In Jesus’ day, there were two methods of training grape vines: 1) trailing & 2) trellising.

Dr. Derickson notes:

In early Israel the branches of cultivated grapes were either allowed to trail along the ground or were trained to grow over a pole. When the stems were trained along the ground the grape clusters were propped up to keep them from contacting the soil and being ruined. Trellising of vines ... allowed air to flow through the branches to dry the dew more quickly.<sup>6</sup>

When Jesus used this analogy, His disciples would no doubt have been familiar with both trailing and trellising practices. With either method, the vines needed to be lifted off of the ground in order to ensure the maximum amount of fruit production.

Dr. Constable agrees:

Jesus was teaching that the Father gives special support to believers who are not yet bearing fruit. In viticulture this involves lifting the branch off the ground so it will not send secondary roots down into the ground that will prove unhealthful. Lifting the branch off the ground onto a pole or trellis also enables air to dry the branch and prevent it from getting moldy and becoming diseased.<sup>7</sup>

***15:2b—... and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.***

Many expositors associate this pruning with the withered branches in verse 6. However, verse 2 deals with the Spring pruning whereas verse 6 deals with the Fall pruning.

John Tucker explains:

Many commentators discuss only one pruning and incorrectly assume that all non-fruit bearing branches are removed and burned at that time. The spring pruning actually encouraged the maturation of non-fruit bearing branches so they could bear fruit the following year. The fall pruning ... occurred to eliminate the woody branches as they prepared the vine for the winter dormant period.<sup>8</sup>

While I have never personally grown grapes, I have grown tomatoes. Tomato plants typically have a main vine with multiple branches stemming off of it. Those branches will have both productive shoots and non-productive shoots called “suckers.” Those “suckers” need to be removed because they will rob the productive shoots of the plant’s life-giving nourishment. Removal of the “suckers” also encourages growth of the productive branches. So too, Christian’s need to be pruned from things that hinder growth.

*Heb 12:1 Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”*

No fruit-bearing branch is exempt from this important though uncomfortable process. The Father's purpose is loving, but the process may be painful.

It has been said that "the Vinedresser" is never nearer to you than when He is pruning!

**15:3—*You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.***

The cleansing agent is the Word of the Lord. The disciples had originally been cleansed by the Word at the time of their conversion. Just as the Savior had been talking to them, His Word had had a purifying effect on their lives.

Dr. Constable notes:

Jesus did not want the Eleven to conclude, as many people do, that the absence of fruit or the presence of difficulties indicates the absence of salvation.<sup>9</sup>

Many expositors conclude that lack of fruit means that the individual was never saved in the first place. Some take on the self-appointed task of "fruit inspector." They feel that it is their duty to determine who are real Christians and who are simply fakes. In doing so, they end up doing more damage than good.

**15:4 —*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.***

What does it mean to abide?

According to Thayer's Lexicon, the Greek word μένω [menō] means to remain, or continue to be present; to live or dwell; not to depart.

William MacDonald wrote:

To abide means to stay where you are. The Christian has been placed in Christ; that is his position. In daily walk, he should stay in intimate fellowship with the Lord. A branch abides in a vine by drawing all its life and nourishment from the vine. So we abide in Christ by spending time in prayer, reading and obeying His Word, fellowshiping with His people, and being continually conscious of our union with Him. As we thus maintain constant contact with Him, we are conscious of His abiding in us and supplying us with spiritual strength and resources. The branch can only bear fruit as it abides in the vine. The only way believers can bear the fruit of a Christ-like character is by living in touch with Christ moment by moment.<sup>10</sup>

Warren Wiersbie added:

It means to keep in fellowship with Christ so that His life can work in and through us to produce fruit. This certainly involves the Word of God and the confession of sin so that nothing hinders our communion with Him. It also involves obeying Him because we love Him.<sup>11</sup>

**15:5—*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.***

Here we see that Christ Himself is the vine; believers are vine branches.

Notice the progression of fruit bearing. In verse 2, Jesus spoke of no fruit, some fruit, and more fruit. In verse 5, He speaks of much fruit.



William MacDonald wrote:

It is not a question of the branch living its life for the Vine, but simply of letting the life of the Vine flow out through the branches. Sometimes we pray, “Lord, help me to live my life for You.” It would be better to pray, “Lord Jesus, live out Your life through me.”<sup>12</sup>

The lesson that Jesus was communicating was this: No contact with the vine results in no fruit. The way to bear much fruit is for the branch to maintain unhindered fellowship with the vine by allowing the vine to have its way with the branch.

Lack of fruit in the life, therefore, may not necessarily be an indication that the branch has no vital relationship to the vine (i.e., that the person is unsaved). It may indicate that the branch, though connected to the vine, is not abiding in it.

Zane Hodges wrote:

How strange that in our day and time we have been told so often that fruitlessness is a sure sign that a person is unsaved. Certainly, we did not get this idea from the Bible. Rather, the Bible teaches that unfruitfulness in a believer is a sure sign that one is no longer moving forward, no longer growing in Christ. It is a sign that the Christian is spiritually sick, and until well again, cannot enjoy spiritual success.<sup>13</sup>

Without Christ, we can do nothing. A branch has one great purpose—to bear fruit. It is useless for making furniture or for building homes. It does not even make good firewood. But it is good for fruit-bearing—as long as it abides in the vine.

***15:6—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.***

Many Bible scholars teach the doctrine of Perseverance.

Some claim that you have to “persevere in the faith” in order to maintain your salvation.

Others claim that if you do not “persevere in the faith” then it proves that you were never saved in the first place.

If either claim is true, then what are we to make of Lot or Solomon?

In Genesis we read the account of Lot offering his daughters to the men of Sodom to be used as sex-objects. In chapter 19 we read:

*See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish. (Gen 19:8)*

If this were the only information that we had about Lot, it would be natural to conclude that he was an unbeliever. And yet Peter wrote:

*[God] delivered **righteous** Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that **righteous** man, dwelling among them, tormented his **righteous** soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds). (2 Pet 2:7-8)*

I think that Peter purposely repeated the word “righteous” for our benefit. It might be easy to think that either Peter had a brief lapse in memory or made a slip of the pen.

And what are we to make of King Solomon? Toward the end of his life, he committed apostasy.

*For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. (1 Kings 11:4-6)*

And yet according to some theologians it is impossible for a genuine believer to commit apostasy.

Dr. Constable wrote:

It is not proper to conclude that non-abiding disciples are all unbelievers. Many interpreters who believe that all genuine believers will inevitably persevere in the faith and good works tend to do this. They tend to impose their doctrine on this verse and make the verse fit their theology rather than interpreting the verse in its context. This is an example of allowing theology to determine exegesis rather than allowing exegesis to determine theology. Jesus was speaking in this context of abiding and non-abiding disciple believers and gave no hint that He was speaking about unbelievers.<sup>14</sup>

What does “*cast them into the fire*” mean?

Dr. Constable explains:

Jesus said the vinedresser disposes of them. This has led some interpreters to conclude that they lose their salvation and go to hell, especially since He mentioned burning in fire.

Fire is a common figure that occurs throughout Scripture to describe the judgment of believers as well as unbelievers (cf. Gen 19:24-26; Num 11:1; Isa 9:19; Eze 15:1-8; et al.).

Pruning may involve premature death or some other form of divine discipline but certainly not loss of salvation and perhaps not even loss of reward.<sup>15</sup>

Paul wrote:

*For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Cor 3:11-15)*

### ***Enjoying the Ride***

Picture this scene. Shem and Ham are on board the ark discussing their future. Shem is worried that they might not make it through the storm. He is hanging on to a post for all he is worth just hoping that he will make it through the flood waters. Ham is relaxing in the hay confident that the promises of God are true.

Finally the flood waters recede and the occupants of the ark depart. Which one made it through the flood waters? Ham? Shem? They both did. The result was the same for both of them. They both survived so there was no difference between the two of them, right?

Wrong! Ham enjoyed the ride! And Shem? Not so much!

You see, it is possible to enjoy the ride resting in the promises of God.

*He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. —1 John 5:12*

*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. —1 John 5:13*

The free gift of salvations has no strings attached. There are no loop holes in God's gracious offer. You do not have to read the fine print in the contract. You can know that you have eternal life.

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<sup>1</sup> Derickson, Gary "Viticulture and John 15:1-6." <https://www.dts.edu/download/publications/bibliotheca/BibSac-Derickson-ViticultureAndJohn15,1-6.pdf> (accessed March 13, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Constable, Thomas. Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas Constable John 15. <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/john-15.html> (accessed March 13, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Derickson "Viticulture and John 15"

<sup>7</sup> Constable "Notes"

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Constable "Notes"

<sup>10</sup> William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary New Testament (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), pp. 365-366.

<sup>11</sup> Constable "Notes"

<sup>12</sup> MacDonald "Believer's Bible Commentary", p. 366

<sup>13</sup> Constable "Notes"

<sup>14</sup> Constable "Notes"

<sup>15</sup> Constable "Notes"