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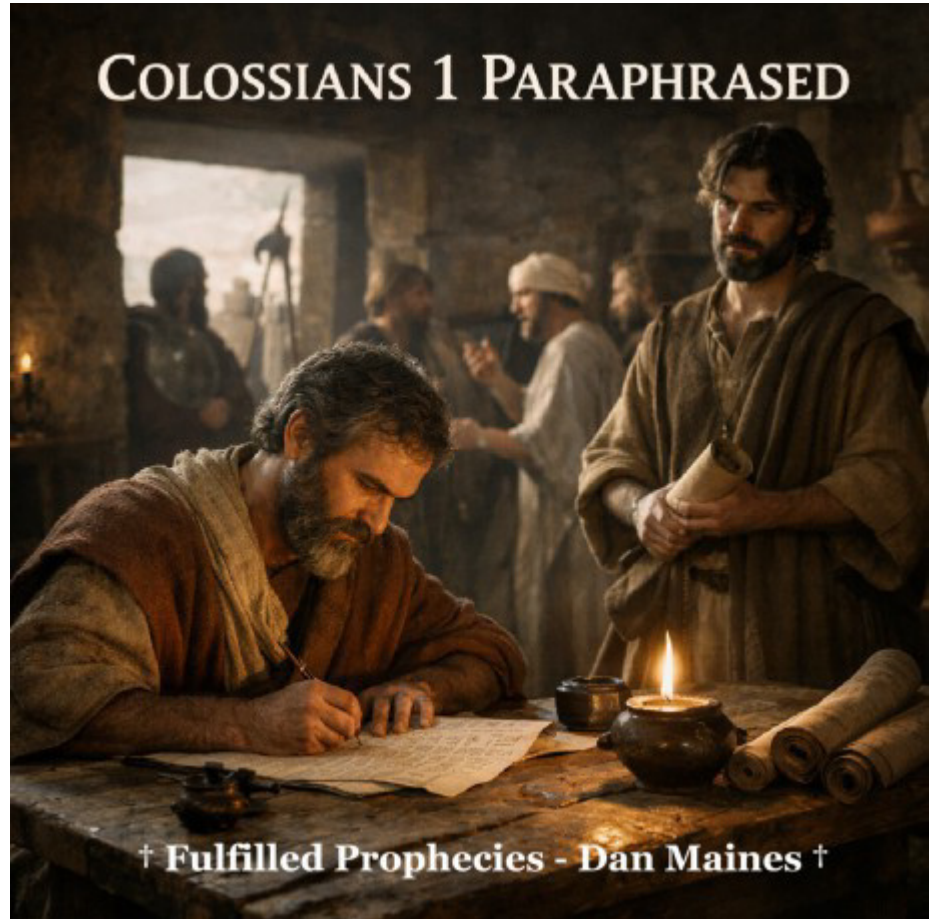
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Colossians 1 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Colossians 1 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Paul wrote to the believers in Colossae to strengthen them in the truth about Christ and to guard them from teachings that tried to add human philosophy to the gospel. The message of this chapter centers on the authority and supremacy of Christ.

† The church in Colossae was established through the preaching of the gospel during Paul's ministry period even though Paul had likely not personally visited them (Colossians 2:1).

† Early Christian writers repeatedly pointed to Colossians when defending the identity of Christ as fully divine and fully authoritative over the church.

Colossians 1:1

Paul, chosen by God to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother

† Paul begins by reminding them that his apostleship came from God's calling, not from human appointment (Acts 9:15).

† Timothy is included because he was a trusted co-worker who helped strengthen many churches (Philippians 2:19-22).

† Clement of Alexandria noted that apostolic authority came directly from Christ and carried the responsibility of guarding the truth of the gospel.

Colossians 1:2

To the faithful believers in Colossae who belong to Christ.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

† Paul addresses them as faithful believers, recognizing their continued trust in Christ even while correcting errors.

† Grace and peace summarize the message of salvation, grace describing God's gift and peace describing reconciliation with Him (Romans 5:1).

† Early church letters regularly used this greeting because grace and peace defined the Christian life.

Colossians 1:3

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whenever we pray for you.

† Paul shows that prayer for fellow believers was constant among the apostles.

† Thanksgiving reflects the unity shared among believers across different cities and regions (1 Thessalonians 1:2).

† Eusebius recorded that the early churches maintained regular prayer for one another.

Colossians 1:4

We have heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and the love you show toward all the saints.

† Faith and love always appear together in the New Testament as evidence of genuine belief (1 John 3:14).

† Saints refers to all believers, meaning those set apart for God.

† Irenaeus used passages like this to show that true faith produces visible love among believers.

Colossians 1:5

You have this faith and love because of the hope stored up for you in heaven, which you heard about earlier through the message of truth, the gospel.

† Hope refers to the promised inheritance believers receive through Christ (Ephesians 1:13-14).

† The gospel is described as the message of truth because it reveals God's fulfilled promises.

† Early Christian teachers emphasized that this hope rests entirely on Christ's finished work.

Colossians 1:6

This gospel has come to you just as it has spread throughout the whole world, producing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

† The gospel was rapidly spreading throughout the Roman world during the apostolic age (Romans 10:18).

† The fruit Paul mentions refers to transformed lives and growing faith.

† Eusebius documented the rapid expansion of the church throughout the empire.

Colossians 1:7

You learned this from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who faithfully ministers on your behalf.

† Epaphras was likely the one who brought the gospel to Colossae and helped establish the church (Colossians 4:12).

† Paul calls him a fellow servant, emphasizing shared service to Christ.

† Early Christian writers recognized many local evangelists who helped spread the gospel beyond the apostles.

Colossians 1:8

He also told us about the love you have through the Spirit.

† Their love was evidence that the Holy Spirit was working among them (Galatians 5:22).

† Reports like this encouraged Paul and strengthened the unity of the churches.

† Clement of Alexandria taught that love among believers was the clearest sign of genuine Christianity.

Colossians 1:9

For this reason, since the day we heard about it, we haven't stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

† Spiritual growth requires understanding God's will through the truth revealed in Christ.

† Wisdom and understanding describe the ability to apply that truth to life.

† Irenaeus emphasized that true wisdom comes from the teachings passed down by the apostles.

Colossians 1:10

So that you'll walk in a way worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in every way, producing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.

† Walking worthy of the Lord means living a life consistent with the gospel (Ephesians 4:1).

† Good works are the natural result of genuine faith.

† Early Christian teachers constantly connected faith with obedient living.

Colossians 1:11

May you be strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you'll have endurance and patience with joy.

† Endurance was essential for believers facing persecution and opposition.

† The strength described here comes from God's power rather than human effort.

† Eusebius recorded many examples of early Christians enduring suffering with joy.

Colossians 1:12

Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.

† The inheritance refers to the blessings of God's kingdom promised through Christ.

† Believers are qualified by God's grace, not by their own works.

† Early Christian writers connected this inheritance with the new covenant promises.

Colossians 1:13

He rescued us from the authority of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of His beloved Son.

† Salvation is described as a transfer from darkness into Christ's kingdom.

† This language reflects the fulfillment of God's kingdom promises (Daniel 7:14).

† Irenaeus explained that believers now live under Christ's rule because of this deliverance.

Colossians 1:14

In Him we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

† Redemption means being set free through a payment, referring to Christ's sacrifice.

† Forgiveness is central to the gospel message proclaimed by the apostles (Acts 13:38).

† Early Christian teaching centered on Christ's sacrifice as the basis for salvation.

Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

† Christ perfectly reveals the nature of God (John 1:18).

† Firstborn refers to authority and rank rather than being created.

† Irenaeus used this verse to defend Christ's divine authority.

Colossians 1:16

Because through Him everything was created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. Everything was created through Him and for Him.

† Christ's authority extends over every spiritual and earthly power.

† This refutes ideas that angels or spiritual beings should be worshiped.

† Clement of Alexandria taught that all creation exists through Christ.

Colossians 1:17

He existed before everything else, and in Him everything holds together.

† Christ's existence precedes creation.

† The universe continues because it is sustained by His power.

† Early Christian theology consistently affirmed Christ's eternal nature.

Colossians 1:18

He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He might come to have first place in everything.

† Christ leads the church as its head and source of life.

† His resurrection demonstrates His authority over death.

† Early church writers emphasized Christ's leadership over the church.

Colossians 1:19

Because God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him.

† The fullness of God's nature is revealed in Christ.

† This counters teachings that tried to reduce Christ to a lesser being.

† Irenaeus pointed to this verse when defending Christ's divinity.

Colossians 1:20

And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, making peace through the blood of His cross.

† Reconciliation describes restoring the relationship between God and humanity.

† The peace mentioned here comes through Christ's sacrificial death.

† Early Christian teachers consistently emphasized the cross as the center of redemption.

Colossians 1:21

Once you were separated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil actions.

† Paul reminds them of their former state before coming to Christ.

† Sin created separation between humanity and God (Isaiah 59:2).

† Early Christian teaching regularly emphasized the transformation from hostility to reconciliation.

Colossians 1:22

But now He has reconciled you through Christ's physical body through death so that He may present you holy, blameless, and beyond accusation before Him.

† Christ's death made reconciliation possible.

† Believers are now presented as righteous because of His work.

† Early Christian teachers explained that Christ's sacrifice removes the accusation of sin.

Colossians 1:23

If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steady, and don't move away from the hope of the gospel that you heard.

† Paul urges them to remain firmly grounded in the gospel message.

† False teachings threatened to pull believers away from this hope.

† Irenaeus repeatedly warned believers to remain faithful to the apostolic gospel.

Colossians 1:24

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what remains of Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, which is the church.

† Paul's suffering served the purpose of strengthening the church.

† The phrase refers to continuing the mission of Christ through apostolic ministry.

† Early Christian writers saw apostolic suffering as evidence of their dedication to the gospel.

Colossians 1:25

I became a servant of the church according to the responsibility God gave me to fully proclaim the word of God.

† Paul's ministry was a stewardship entrusted to him by God.

† His role was to proclaim the full message of the gospel to the nations.

† Eusebius described Paul's mission as foundational to the spread of Christianity.

Colossians 1:26

The mystery that was hidden for ages and generations but has now been revealed to His saints.

† The mystery refers to God's plan now revealed through Christ.

† What had been concealed in earlier ages is now made known through the gospel.

† Early Christian writers often spoke of this revelation as the unveiling of God's plan.

Colossians 1:27

God wanted them to know the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

† The mystery includes the inclusion of the nations in God's promises.

† Christ dwelling among believers brings the hope of future glory.

† Early Christian teachers recognized this as the fulfillment of God's promise to bless the nations.

Colossians 1:28

We proclaim Him, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

† The goal of teaching is spiritual maturity.

† The message centers on Christ rather than human philosophy.

† Early Christian leaders focused their preaching on Christ as the center of faith.

Colossians 1:29

For this purpose I labor and struggle according to His power which works mightily within me.

† Paul's ministry required intense effort and perseverance.

† The strength for that work came from God's power.

† Early church writers often described the apostolic mission as sustained by divine strength.

Historical References

† Irenaeus cited Colossians when defending the full authority and divinity of Christ.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that Christ is the true revelation of God and the source of wisdom.

† Eusebius documented the spread of the gospel across the Roman world during the apostolic age.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Christ still holds first place over the church and over creation. Believers today are called to remain rooted in Him alone.

† The gospel that spread across the Roman world continues to transform lives today.

† Just as the early believers resisted false teachings, Christians today must stay grounded in the truth of Christ.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Who wrote the letter to the Colossians?

A: Paul the apostle wrote it while working with Timothy (Colossians 1:1).

Q: What is the main theme of Colossians 1?

A: The supremacy of Christ and the salvation believers receive through Him (Colossians 1:15-20).

Q: What does it mean that Christ is the image of the invisible God?

A: Christ perfectly reveals the character and nature of God (Colossians 1:15).

Q: What kingdom are believers brought into?

A: Believers are transferred from darkness into the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13).

Q: What is the mystery revealed in the gospel?

A: The mystery is that Christ is revealed among the nations and

lives among His people (Colossians 1:27).

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

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Source Index

† Colossians 1

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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