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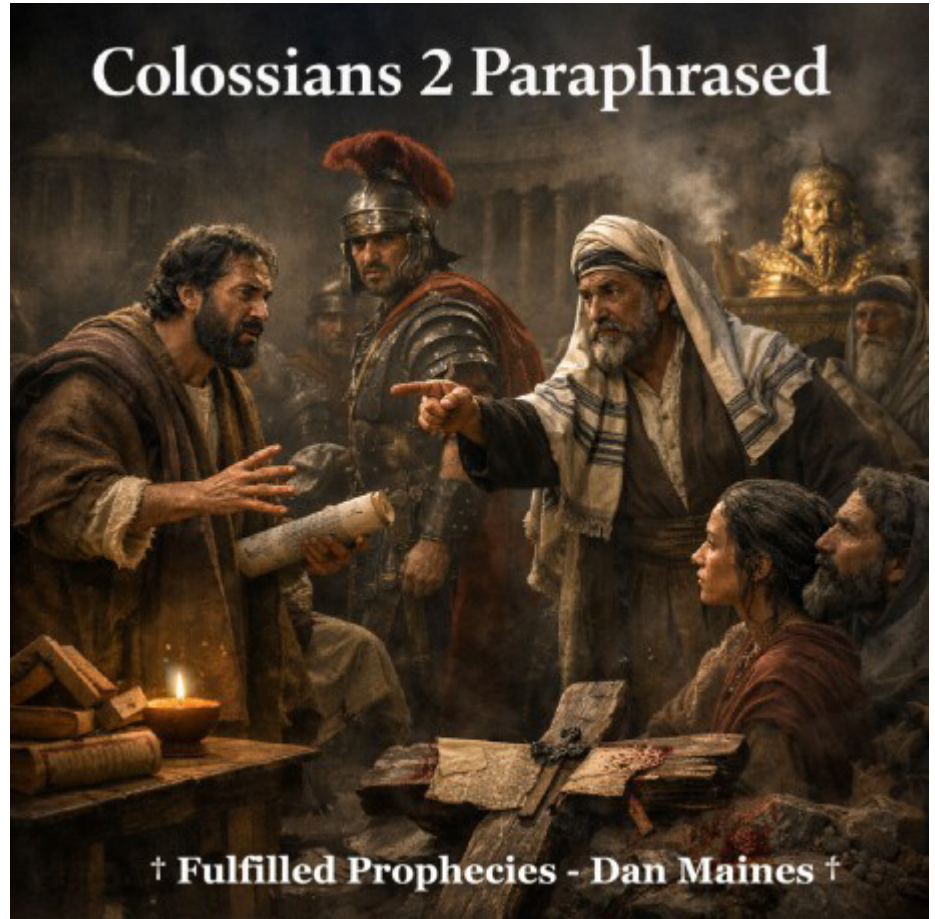
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## Colossians 2 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

## Colossians 2 Paraphrased

### Introduction

† Paul writes to believers who were being pressured by false teachers. Some were mixing the gospel with philosophy, Jewish traditions, and man made rules.

† His goal is to strengthen their confidence in Christ so they won't be deceived by teachings that add to the gospel.

† The central truth in this chapter is simple, everything believers need is already found in Christ. Nothing else can complete what

God has already done.

### **Colossians 2:1**

I want you to understand how deeply concerned I am for you, and for the believers in Laodicea, and for others who have never met me in person.

† Paul cared deeply for churches he had never physically visited because the unity of the body mattered to him (Romans 1:11-12).

† This shows how the early church was connected across cities and regions, even when apostles weren't present.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that the apostles labored not only where they traveled but also for distant believers through letters and teaching.

### **Colossians 2:2**

My goal is that their hearts will be encouraged and joined together in love, so they will gain the full confidence that comes from understanding the mystery of God, which is Christ himself.

† The mystery once hidden in the past was the revealing of Christ and the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Him (Ephesians 3:4-6).

† Encouragement and unity protect believers from false teaching because truth grows strongest in a united body.

† Irenaeus explained that Christ revealed the mystery of God openly so believers wouldn't be misled by secret teachings claimed by false teachers.

### **Colossians 2:3**

In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

† Paul makes it clear that true wisdom isn't found in human philosophy but in Christ alone (1 Corinthians 1:24).

† This directly challenged teachers who claimed deeper knowledge beyond the gospel.

† Irenaeus warned that those who claim hidden wisdom apart from Christ distort the truth.

## **Colossians 2:4**

I'm telling you this so that no one will deceive you with persuasive arguments that sound convincing but aren't true.

† False teaching often sounds intelligent and persuasive, but its foundation is human reasoning rather than God's revelation (2 Peter 2:1).

† The early church constantly warned believers about teachers who used impressive speech to mislead others.

† Eusebius recorded that many early heresies entered the church through persuasive teachers who twisted scripture.

## **Colossians 2:5**

Even though I'm not physically with you, I'm with you in spirit, and I rejoice when I see your discipline and the strong faith you have in Christ.

† Paul celebrates their stability in faith despite the pressures around them.

† Discipline in doctrine protects believers from drifting into error.

† Tertullian emphasized that the churches that held firmly to apostolic teaching remained protected from heresy.

## **Colossians 2:6**

Since you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him.

† The same faith that begins the Christian life is the faith that sustains it (Galatians 3:3).

† Believers don't move beyond Christ into something greater, they grow deeper in Him.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that maturity in Christ is not new knowledge but deeper understanding of the truth already given.

## **Colossians 2:7**

Be rooted in Him, built up in Him, strengthened in the faith you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.

† Rooted faith draws nourishment from Christ the same way a tree draws life from the soil (Jeremiah 17:7-8).

† Gratitude is evidence of a heart that recognizes what God has

already done.

† Irenaeus taught that believers grow firm when they remain planted in the teaching handed down from the apostles.

### **Colossians 2:8**

Be careful that no one captures you through philosophy and empty deception based on human traditions and the basic principles of the world instead of Christ.

† Paul isn't condemning all learning, but philosophies that replace the authority of Christ.

† Many false teachings in the first century blended Greek philosophy with religious ideas.

† Irenaeus wrote that these mixtures produced systems of belief that sounded spiritual but denied the truth of Christ.

### **Colossians 2:9**

All the fullness of God's nature lives in Christ in bodily form.

† This is one of the clearest statements about the divine nature of Christ in the New Testament (John 1:14).

† Jesus isn't merely representing God, He embodies God's fullness.

† Early church writers consistently defended this truth against groups who denied Christ's full divinity.

### **Colossians 2:10**

And because you belong to Him, you have been made complete in Him, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

† Believers aren't spiritually lacking because Christ already provides everything needed for life with God.

† Christ's authority extends over every spiritual power and earthly ruler (Matthew 28:18).

† Irenaeus wrote that believers are made complete in Christ because He restores what humanity lost.

### **Colossians 2:11**

In Him you were also spiritually circumcised, not by human hands but through Christ removing the sinful nature.

† Paul speaks of an inward transformation rather than the physical covenant sign of Israel (Romans 2:29).

† This spiritual circumcision represents the removal of the old life dominated by sin.

† Early Christian writers often described conversion as a transformation of the heart rather than a physical ritual.

### **Colossians 2:12**

You were buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through faith in God's power that raised Him from the dead.

† Baptism symbolized union with Christ in His death and resurrection (Romans 6:4).

† The believer's new life flows from God's power, the same power that raised Jesus.

† Tertullian described baptism as the sign of entering into Christ's death and rising into new life.

### **Colossians 2:13**

You were once spiritually dead because of your sins and your uncircumcised nature, but God made you alive together with Christ and forgave all your sins.

† Spiritual death describes separation from God before salvation (Ephesians 2:1).

† Forgiveness and new life come entirely from God's action, not human effort.

† Irenaeus taught that Christ restored life to humanity by overcoming the death brought by sin.

### **Colossians 2:14**

He canceled the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands, and He removed it by nailing it to the cross.

† The written record refers to the charges that condemned sinners before God's law.

† Christ's death removed that condemnation completely.

† Early Christian writers saw this verse as proof that Christ fully dealt with the accusations of the law against believers.

## **Colossians 2:15**

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and publicly displayed their defeat, triumphing over them through the cross.

† Christ's victory exposed the defeat of spiritual powers that once held authority through sin and death (Hebrews 2:14).

† The imagery reflects a Roman triumph parade where defeated enemies were displayed publicly.

† Irenaeus described the cross as the moment where Christ overturned the authority of evil powers.

## **Colossians 2:16**

So don't let anyone judge you about food, drink, religious festivals, new moon celebrations, or Sabbath days.

† These were parts of the old covenant system that pointed forward to Christ.

† Paul warns believers not to return to ceremonial requirements that Christ fulfilled.

† Early Christian teachers consistently taught that Christ completed what the law foreshadowed.

## **Colossians 2:17**

Those things were only shadows of what was coming, but the reality belongs to Christ.

† The law served as a shadow pointing forward to the substance found in Christ (Hebrews 10:1).

† Once the reality arrived, the shadow was no longer the focus.

† Barnabas wrote that the ceremonies of the law pointed prophetically toward Christ.

## **Colossians 2:18**

Don't let anyone disqualify you by insisting on false humility or the worship of angels, claiming visions and becoming arrogant without reason.

† Some teachers promoted mystical practices that claimed special access to spiritual beings.

† Paul warns that these ideas inflate pride rather than produce true faith.

† Early church leaders repeatedly rejected angel worship as a corruption of the gospel.

### **Colossians 2:19**

They aren't holding firmly to the head, from whom the whole body grows as God supplies what it needs through every joint and connection.

† Christ is the head of the church, and spiritual growth comes from remaining connected to Him (Ephesians 4:15-16).

† False teachers disconnect believers from the true source of life.

† Irenaeus wrote that unity with Christ sustains the life of the church.

### **Colossians 2:20**

Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of the world, why do you still live as though you belong to it? Why submit to its rules?

† Paul reminds believers that their identity has already changed through Christ (Galatians 2:20).

† Returning to worldly systems contradicts the freedom found in the gospel.

† Early teachers warned against returning to legalistic systems that ignore Christ's finished work.

### **Colossians 2:21**

People say things like do not handle, do not taste, do not touch.

† These rules reflect human religious systems focused on external behavior.

† Paul exposes the emptiness of man made spiritual restrictions.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that true holiness comes from transformation of the heart, not external prohibitions.

### **Colossians 2:22**

These rules concern things that disappear when used, and they are based on human commands and teachings.

† Paul points out that these rules focus on temporary things rather than eternal truth.

† Human traditions often replace God's commands when religious systems grow rigid.

† Early Christian writers warned believers to distinguish between God's word and human tradition.

## **Colossians 2:23**

These practices appear wise because they promote self made religion, false humility, and harsh treatment of the body, but they have no real power to stop sinful desires.

† External discipline can't transform the heart without God's power (Romans 7:18).

† Only the life of Christ within believers can overcome the power of sin.

† Irenaeus warned that self imposed religious systems create an appearance of holiness without true spiritual life.

## **Historical References**

† Irenaeus defended the sufficiency of Christ and warned against secret knowledge and mystical teachings that claimed to go beyond the gospel.

† Clement of Alexandria explained that true wisdom is found in Christ rather than in philosophical systems that compete with the gospel.

† Eusebius recorded how the early church guarded apostolic teaching against philosophical and mystical distortions.

## **How it applies to us today**

† Believers today still face teachings that try to add something to the gospel, whether traditions, philosophies, or spiritual systems.

† Colossians 2 reminds us that Christ already provides everything needed for salvation and spiritual life.

† Confidence in Christ protects us from teachings that sound impressive but move us away from the truth.

† Our strength comes from staying rooted in Christ rather than

chasing new spiritual ideas.

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** Why did Paul warn the Colossians about philosophy?

**A:** Because some teachings mixed human ideas with the gospel and threatened to pull believers away from Christ's sufficiency (Colossians 2:8).

**Q:** What does it mean that believers are complete in Christ?

**A:** It means nothing needs to be added to what Christ has already accomplished for salvation and life with God (Colossians 2:10).

**Q:** What was nailed to the cross according to Paul?

**A:** The record of debt and legal accusations that condemned sinners under the law (Colossians 2:14).

**Q:** Why did Paul say the law's ceremonies were shadows?

**A:** Because they pointed forward to Christ, who is the reality those symbols represented (Colossians 2:17).

**Q:** Why are human religious rules powerless against sin?

**A:** Because external rules cannot change the heart, only Christ's life within believers can do that (Colossians 2:23).

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

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## **Source Index**

† Colossians 2

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Tertullian, On Baptism

## † Epistle of Barnabas

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