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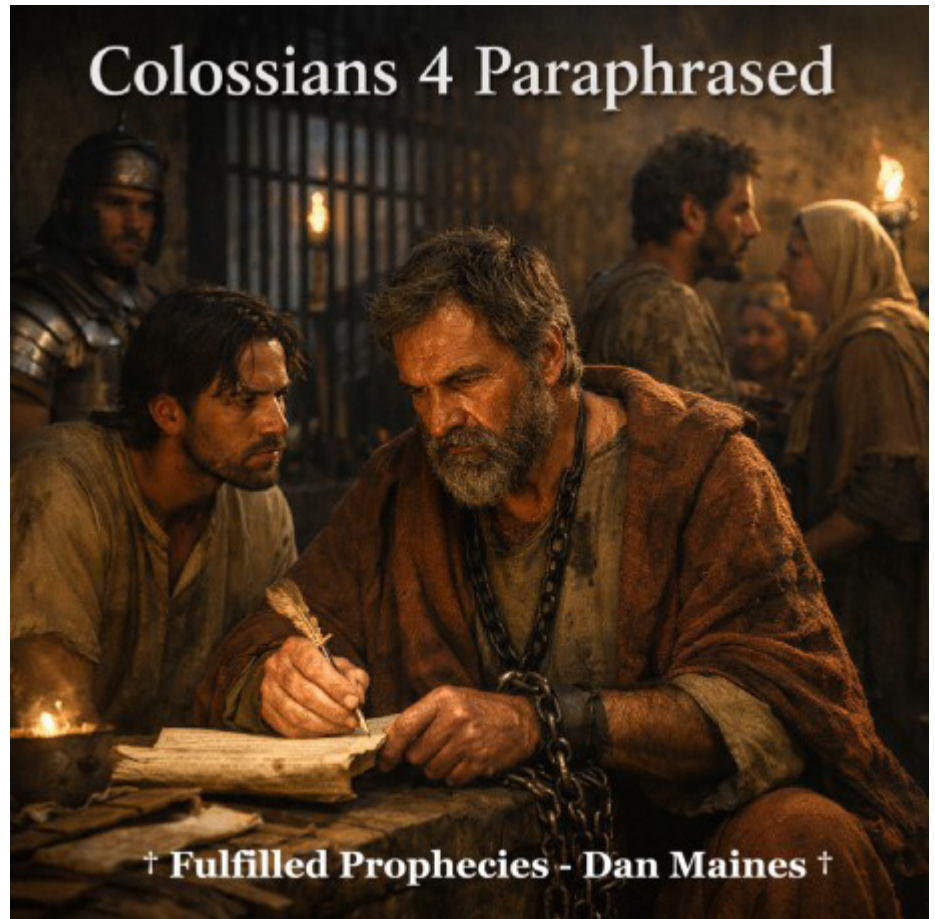
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Colossians 4 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Colossians 4 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Paul closes his letter to the Colossian believers by focusing on how faith shows up in daily life, relationships, and speech.

† This chapter reminds believers that the gospel was spreading in the first century and that faithful conduct strengthened the witness of the church (Matthew 5:16).

† It also shows the strong network of early Christians who worked together to spread the message of Christ throughout the

Roman world.

Colossians 4:1

Masters, treat your servants fairly and justly, remembering that you also have a Master in heaven.

† Paul reminds earthly masters that authority doesn't belong to them alone, because they are accountable to Christ who judges all people fairly (Ephesians 6:9).

† The early church lived within the Roman social system, but Paul planted the seeds of justice by teaching that all believers stand equal before God (Galatians 3:28).

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that Christian masters were to treat servants as brothers because they share the same Lord.

Colossians 4:2

Continue steadily in prayer, staying alert and giving thanks as you pray.

† Prayer kept the early church spiritually awake and focused during persecution and hardship (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).

† Thanksgiving in prayer reminded believers that God was working even during trials.

† Tertullian wrote that Christians prayed frequently throughout the day, showing how central prayer was to early Christian life.

Colossians 4:3

At the same time pray for us also, that God will open a door for the message so we can speak about the mystery of Christ, which is the reason I am in chains.

† Paul was imprisoned for preaching Christ, yet his focus remained on spreading the gospel (Philippians 1:12-13).

† The mystery of Christ refers to the revealed truth that salvation was now openly proclaimed to both Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 3:6).

† Eusebius records that many early Christian leaders were imprisoned but continued preaching boldly despite opposition.

Colossians 4:4

Pray that I may make this message clear, speaking it as I should.

† Paul didn't ask for comfort or release, but for clarity and boldness in preaching the truth (Acts 4:29).

† The gospel message had to be explained plainly so people could understand God's plan through Christ.

† Irenaeus wrote that the apostles faithfully passed down the message in clear teaching so the churches would not be misled.

Colossians 4:5

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of every opportunity.

† Believers were called to live carefully among those who didn't yet follow Christ so their conduct would reflect the truth (1 Peter 2:12).

† Every moment was seen as an opportunity to demonstrate the transforming power of the gospel.

† The Didache encouraged believers to live honorable lives before unbelievers so the name of God would not be dishonored.

Colossians 4:6

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with wisdom, so you'll know how to answer each person.

† Christian speech was meant to build others up and communicate truth with kindness (Ephesians 4:29).

† Wise and gracious speech helped open hearts to the gospel.

† Justin Martyr wrote that Christians were known for their calm and thoughtful responses when questioned about their faith.

Colossians 4:7

Tychicus will tell you everything about my situation. He's a beloved brother, a faithful servant, and a fellow worker in the Lord.

† Tychicus was one of Paul's trusted companions who helped deliver letters and strengthen churches (Ephesians 6:21).

† The early church depended on faithful messengers to carry apostolic teaching across the Roman Empire.

† Early Christian writers noted that these traveling servants of Christ helped keep the churches united in doctrine.

Colossians 4:8

I'm sending him to you for this very purpose, so you'll know how we are doing and so he can encourage your hearts.

† Encouragement was a major part of early Christian ministry, strengthening believers during trials (Hebrews 10:24-25).

† Letters and messengers connected distant churches and helped maintain unity in faith and practice.

† Eusebius recorded that early Christian communities frequently sent letters and representatives to support one another.

Colossians 4:9

He's coming with Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They'll tell you everything happening here.

† Onesimus had once been a runaway servant but was transformed through the gospel and became a beloved brother (Philemon 1:10-16).

† This shows the radical change Christ brought, turning broken relationships into restored fellowship.

† Ignatius later wrote that Onesimus served faithfully in the church, showing how the gospel restored lives.

Colossians 4:10

Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, along with Mark the cousin of Barnabas. You've received instructions about him, welcome him if he comes to you.

† Aristarchus had traveled with Paul and even shared imprisonment with him for the sake of the gospel (Acts 19:29).

† Mark had previously separated from Paul but was later restored and welcomed again in ministry (2 Timothy 4:11).

† Early Christian tradition records that Mark later served in major leadership roles in spreading the gospel.

Colossians 4:11

Jesus who is called Justus also sends greetings. These are the only Jewish coworkers for the kingdom of God among my companions, and they've been a great comfort to me.

† Jewish believers like these helped bridge the message of Christ to the wider world.

† Their partnership with Paul shows the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers in the early church (Ephesians 2:14-16).

† Irenaeus noted that the apostles gathered faithful workers from many backgrounds to serve the churches.

Colossians 4:12

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He's always struggling in prayer for you so you'll stand mature and fully confident in all God's will.

† Epaphras had likely helped establish the church in Colossae and deeply cared for its spiritual growth (Colossians 1:7).

† His constant prayers show the importance of intercession for the strength of believers.

† Early Christian leaders frequently prayed for churches under pressure from false teachings and persecution.

Colossians 4:13

I testify for him that he works hard for you and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

† Epaphras served multiple congregations in the region, showing the connected nature of early Christian communities.

† The gospel spread city to city through the labor of dedicated servants like him.

† Eusebius records that regional leaders often cared for several nearby congregations.

Colossians 4:14

Luke the beloved physician greets you, and so does Demas.

† Luke, the writer of the Gospel of Luke and Acts, was a close companion of Paul (2 Timothy 4:11).

† His presence shows how educated believers also played key

roles in preserving the history of the early church.

† Early tradition consistently identifies Luke as the historian who carefully documented the events of the apostolic age.

Colossians 4:15

Greet the brothers in Laodicea, and greet Nympha and the church that meets in her house.

† Many early Christian gatherings took place in homes before dedicated church buildings existed (Romans 16:5).

† House churches allowed believers to gather in smaller communities while the gospel spread.

† Archaeological and historical evidence confirms that early Christian worship often occurred in private homes.

Colossians 4:16

After this letter is read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and make sure you read the letter from Laodicea as well.

† Apostolic letters circulated between churches so believers could learn the same teachings.

† This sharing helped maintain unity of doctrine across different congregations.

† Early church leaders preserved these writings, which later became part of the New Testament canon.

Colossians 4:17

Tell Archippus to be sure he completes the ministry he received in the Lord.

† Archippus was likely a leader in the Colossian church and was being encouraged to remain faithful in his calling.

† Ministry often required perseverance despite hardship or discouragement.

† Early church writers frequently urged pastors and leaders to remain steadfast in their service to Christ.

Colossians 4:18

I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my

chains. Grace be with you.

† Paul often dictated letters but added a final greeting in his own handwriting as a mark of authenticity (2 Thessalonians 3:17).

† His chains remind readers that the gospel advanced even through imprisonment.

† Early Christian writers honored Paul's endurance as an example of faithful suffering for Christ.

Historical References

† Clement of Alexandria taught that Christian conduct toward servants and others must reflect the justice and mercy of Christ.

† Irenaeus recorded that the apostles worked with many faithful coworkers who carried the message across the Roman world.

† Eusebius documented the imprisonment and suffering of early Christian leaders who continued preaching the gospel.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Believers today are still called to treat others with fairness and compassion because Christ is our true Master.

† Prayer remains the foundation of spiritual strength and guidance for the church.

† Our speech should reflect wisdom and grace so others can see the truth of Christ in how we live and speak.

† Faithfulness in ministry matters, because every believer has a role in God's work.

† Just as the early church supported one another, believers today are called to strengthen and encourage each other in faith.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did Paul emphasize fair treatment of servants?

A: Because all believers answer to the same Lord in heaven (Ephesians 6:9).

Q: Why was prayer so important to the early church?

A: Prayer kept believers spiritually alert and thankful (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).

Q: What does the mystery of Christ refer to?

A: The revealed truth that salvation is offered to both Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 3:6).

Q: Why were house churches common in the first century?

A: Early believers gathered in homes because formal church buildings did not yet exist (Romans 16:5).

Q: Why did Paul mention his chains at the end of the letter?

A: His imprisonment showed the cost of preaching the gospel and reminded believers to remain faithful (Philippians 1:12-13).

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

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Source Index

† Colossians 4

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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