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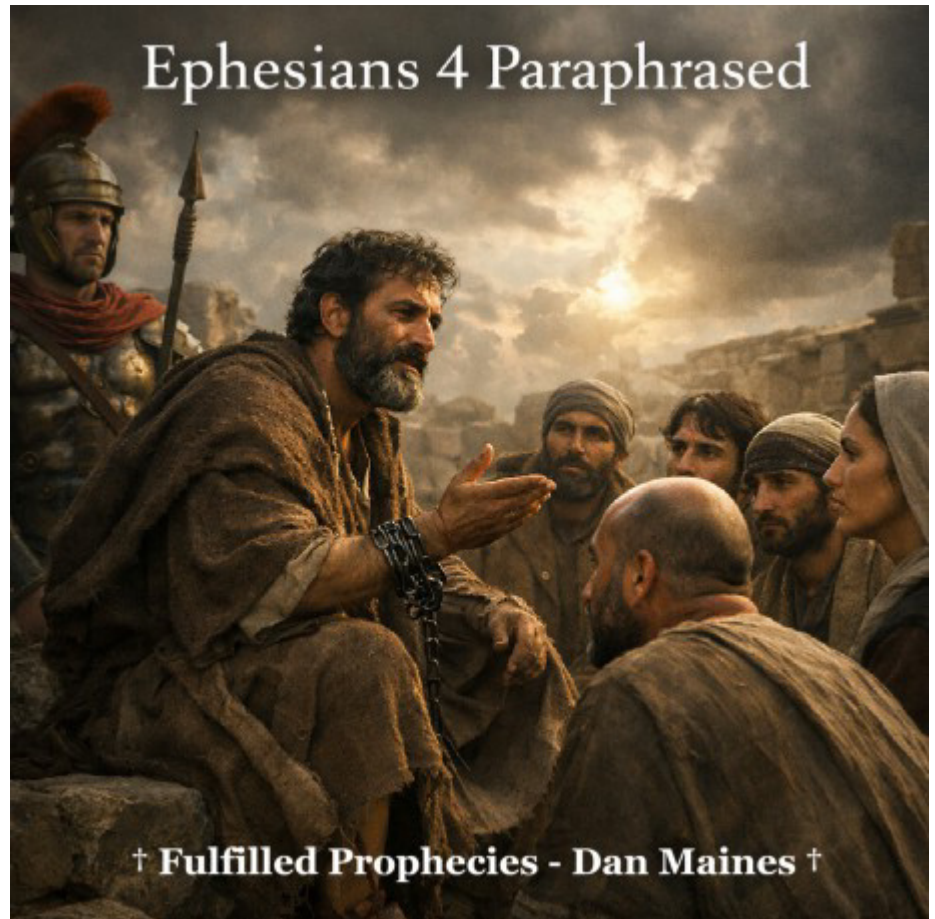
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Ephesians 4 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Ephesians 4 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Paul moved from explaining what Christ accomplished to showing how believers were supposed to live in light of that finished work. The message wasn't about earning salvation, it was about living in unity as the new covenant people of God (Romans 12:4-5).

† The early church was learning how to live as one body made from Jews and Gentiles together. Paul reminded them that humility, patience, and unity were essential for that new

covenant community (Colossians 3:12-14).

† Clement of Alexandria noted that the unity of believers was evidence that Christ had already established His kingdom among His people.

Ephesians 4:1

I, the Lord's prisoner, urge you to live in a way that reflects the calling you received.

† Paul was literally imprisoned because he preached Christ to the nations, yet he still urged believers to live worthy of the new life God had given them (Acts 28:30-31).

† The calling Paul spoke of was the calling into the body of Christ, where Jews and Gentiles became one people under the new covenant (Ephesians 2:14-16).

† Irenaeus later wrote that the unity of the church proved that Christ had gathered the nations into one family.

Ephesians 4:2

Be humble and gentle, be patient with each other, and endure one another in love.

† These qualities describe the character of Christ Himself, and believers were called to reflect that same spirit toward one another (Matthew 11:29).

† The unity of the church wasn't maintained by power or authority, but through humility and patience among believers (Philippians 2:3-4).

† Clement of Rome emphasized that humility and peace among believers were marks of the true church.

Ephesians 4:3

Work hard to keep the unity the Spirit created through the bond of peace.

† The Spirit had already united believers into one body, their responsibility was to preserve that unity, not create it (1

Corinthians 12:13).

† The peace Paul mentioned reflects the reconciliation Christ accomplished between God and humanity and between Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:17).

† Early church writings often described the church as one body spread throughout the world, united by the same Spirit.

Ephesians 4:4

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called into one hope when you were called.

† The body refers to the church, the community of believers joined together through Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12).

† The one hope refers to the completed redemption Christ promised to bring in that generation (Romans 8:23).

† Ignatius of Antioch frequently wrote about the unity of the church as one body under Christ.

Ephesians 4:5

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

† The one Lord is Jesus Christ, the risen King who now reigns over His kingdom (Acts 2:36).

† The one faith refers to the message of the gospel that the apostles preached everywhere (Jude 1:3).

† Baptism symbolized entering the covenant community and identifying with Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4).

Ephesians 4:6

There is one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all.

† This verse emphasizes the universal authority of God as Father over the entire covenant family (1 Corinthians 8:6).

† God's presence working through believers showed that His Spirit now lived among His people (1 Corinthians 3:16).

† Early Christian writers often emphasized the unity of God as

the foundation for the unity of the church.

Ephesians 4:7

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure Christ chose to give.

† Every believer received grace and a role within the body of Christ, not just leaders or apostles (1 Peter 4:10).

† The gifts given by Christ were meant to strengthen and build the church as it grew toward maturity (1 Corinthians 12:7).

† Irenaeus wrote that spiritual gifts were given for the building up of the church.

Ephesians 4:8

Because of this it says, When He ascended on high He led captivity captive and gave gifts to people.

† Paul quoted Psalm 68:18 to show that Christ's victory brought freedom and blessing to His people.

† The phrase led captivity captive reflects Christ's triumph over sin and death through His resurrection (Colossians 2:15).

† Early Christian interpreters saw this verse as describing Christ's victorious reign after His resurrection.

Ephesians 4:9

Now when it says He ascended, what does it mean except that He first descended to the lower parts of the earth.

† This refers to Christ coming into the world in humility before returning to the Father in glory (Philippians 2:6-9).

† His descent shows that the Son entered human history and experienced death before His exaltation.

† Early church teachers understood this as referring to Christ's incarnation and death.

Ephesians 4:10

The One who descended is the same One who ascended far above all the heavens so He could fill everything.

† Christ's ascension signified His authority over heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18).

† His reign continues through His presence working in His people by the Spirit (Colossians 1:27).

† Eusebius wrote that Christ's ascension marked the beginning of His universal reign.

Ephesians 4:11

He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as shepherds and teachers.

† These roles were given to establish and strengthen the early church during its foundational period (Ephesians 2:20).

† Apostles and prophets helped lay the doctrinal foundation of the gospel message.

† Evangelists and teachers helped spread and explain that message throughout the growing church.

Ephesians 4:12

Their purpose was to equip the saints for ministry and to build up the body of Christ.

† The leaders of the church weren't meant to do all the work themselves, they were meant to prepare believers to serve.

† The entire body of believers participated in the growth and strengthening of the church (1 Corinthians 12:27).

† Early Christian communities operated as active bodies where every believer contributed.

Ephesians 4:13

This continues until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, becoming mature and measuring up to the fullness of Christ.

† The early church was moving toward spiritual maturity as Christ completed His redemptive work.

† Unity in faith meant agreement in the gospel message

delivered by the apostles.

† The fullness of Christ reflects the completed covenant community revealed through the gospel.

Ephesians 4:14

Then we will no longer be like children, tossed around by waves and carried by every wind of teaching and human trickery.

† Paul warned against false teachings that attempted to distort the gospel (Galatians 1:6-7).

† Spiritual maturity protects believers from deception and instability.

† Early church writings frequently warned against teachers who altered apostolic doctrine.

Ephesians 4:15

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we grow in every way into Him who is the head, Christ.

† Truth and love must work together in the life of the church.

† Christ as the head means He is the authority and source of life for the body (Colossians 1:18).

† The church grows when believers build one another up in truth.

Ephesians 4:16

From Him the whole body is joined and held together by every supporting part, each part working properly so the body grows and builds itself up in love.

† The church functions like a body where every member has a role and purpose (1 Corinthians 12:18).

† Love is the force that keeps the body unified and functioning properly.

† Early Christian teachers often used the body analogy to describe the church's unity.

Ephesians 4:17

So this is what I say and insist on in the Lord, you must no longer live like the Gentiles who walk in the emptiness of their thinking.

† Paul contrasts the old life of ignorance with the new life in Christ.

† The Gentile world was dominated by idolatry and moral confusion (Romans 1:21).

† The gospel called believers to a completely different way of life.

Ephesians 4:18

Their understanding is darkened, they are separated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardened hearts.

† Sin blinds people spiritually and separates them from God's truth.

† Hardened hearts prevent people from recognizing God's revelation.

† Paul describes this same condition in Romans 1:28.

Ephesians 4:19

They have become insensitive, giving themselves over to impurity and constantly chasing every kind of unclean desire.

† When people reject God's truth they often fall deeper into moral corruption.

† The culture surrounding the early church was filled with idolatry and immoral practices.

† The gospel offered a complete transformation from that lifestyle.

Ephesians 4:20

But that isn't the way you learned Christ.

† Following Christ meant leaving the old life behind.

† The gospel didn't simply change beliefs, it changed how people lived.

† The fulfilled perspective sees this as covenant transition language, old things were passing and the new life in Christ was being fully revealed.

Ephesians 4:21

If you truly heard Him and were taught in Him, just as the truth is in Jesus.

† The message of Jesus revealed the truth about God and salvation.

† The apostles faithfully taught what they received from Christ.

† Truth wasn't found in the old world of shadows, it was fully revealed in Christ.

Ephesians 4:22

You were taught to put away your old way of living, the old self that was being corrupted by deceitful desires.

† The old self refers to the life shaped by sin and rebellion.

† Conversion involved a complete break from that former way of living.

† Paul was calling them to leave behind the corrupt patterns of the old world and walk in the reality Christ had brought.

Ephesians 4:23

Instead be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

† Transformation begins with a renewed understanding shaped by God's truth.

† Paul speaks of the same renewal in Romans 12:2.

† The mind had to be reshaped by the gospel, not by the fading patterns of the old age.

Ephesians 4:24

And put on the new self, created according to God in righteousness and true holiness.

† The new self reflects the restored image of God through Christ.

† This new identity is rooted in the new covenant life.

† What Adam lost in corruption, Christ restored in His people through righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:25

So put away falsehood and speak truth with your neighbor, because we are members of the same body.

† Honesty strengthens unity within the church community.

† Since believers belong to one body, deception harms everyone.

† Truthfulness fits the new creation people, because the body of Christ can't be built on lies.

Ephesians 4:26

Be angry and yet don't sin, don't let the sun go down while you are still angry.

† Anger itself isn't always sinful, but it must never lead to sin.

† Unresolved anger damages relationships within the body of Christ.

† Paul was teaching covenant community discipline, because bitterness spreads quickly when it isn't dealt with.

Ephesians 4:27

And don't give the devil an opportunity.

† Allowing sin to remain unchecked opens the door to spiritual destruction.

† Paul warned believers to remain alert and disciplined.

† Division, bitterness, and falsehood all give room for the enemy to work among God's people.

Ephesians 4:28

The one who steals must steal no longer, instead he should work honestly so he can share with those who have need.

† The gospel transforms not only beliefs but daily behavior.

† Honest work allows believers to support others within the

community.

† Paul didn't just say stop doing evil, he said replace it with righteousness that blesses others.

Ephesians 4:29

Don't let any harmful word come out of your mouth, but only what builds others up and gives grace to those who hear.

† Words have the power to strengthen or destroy relationships.

† Speech among believers should always aim to encourage and edify.

† Grace-filled speech reflects a grace-filled heart shaped by Christ.

Ephesians 4:30

Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God who sealed you for the day of redemption.

† The Spirit's presence marked believers as belonging to God.

† Grieving the Spirit refers to resisting the work of God in one's life.

† The day of redemption pointed to the nearing fulfillment of what had been promised to that generation.

Ephesians 4:31

Remove bitterness, rage, anger, shouting, and slander along with every kind of malice.

† These attitudes destroy unity within the church.

† The new life in Christ replaces hostility with compassion.

† These sins belong to the old man and have no place in the one new body Christ formed.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate toward one another, forgiving each other just as God also forgave you in Christ.

† Forgiveness reflects the mercy God showed through Christ's sacrifice.

† The unity of the church depends on believers extending grace to one another.

† Early Christian writings repeatedly emphasized forgiveness as the defining mark of Christ's followers.

Historical References

† Irenaeus explained that the unity of believers across nations demonstrated the truth of the gospel.

† Clement of Alexandria described Christian humility and love as evidence that the teachings of Christ had transformed the world.

† Eusebius recorded how the early church maintained unity despite persecution and cultural differences.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Believers today are still called to live in humility, patience, and unity with one another.

† The church functions best when every member contributes to the strengthening of the whole body.

† Truth spoken in love protects the church from division and deception.

† Living the new life in Christ shows the world the transforming power of the gospel.

Q & A Appendix

Q Why did Paul emphasize unity so strongly in this chapter?

A Because Jews and Gentiles were becoming one people in Christ, and unity proved that the gospel had broken down the old barriers (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Q What does the one body represent?

A The church, the community of believers joined together through Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12).

Q Why were apostles and prophets given to the church?

A They laid the foundation of the church by delivering the

message of Christ (Ephesians 2:20).

Q What does putting on the new self mean?

A It means living according to the new identity given through Christ rather than returning to the old life of sin (Romans 6:6).

Q Why is forgiveness so important among believers?

A Because God forgave us through Christ, and that same grace must be shown to others (Colossians 3:13).

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

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Source Index

† Ephesians 4

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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